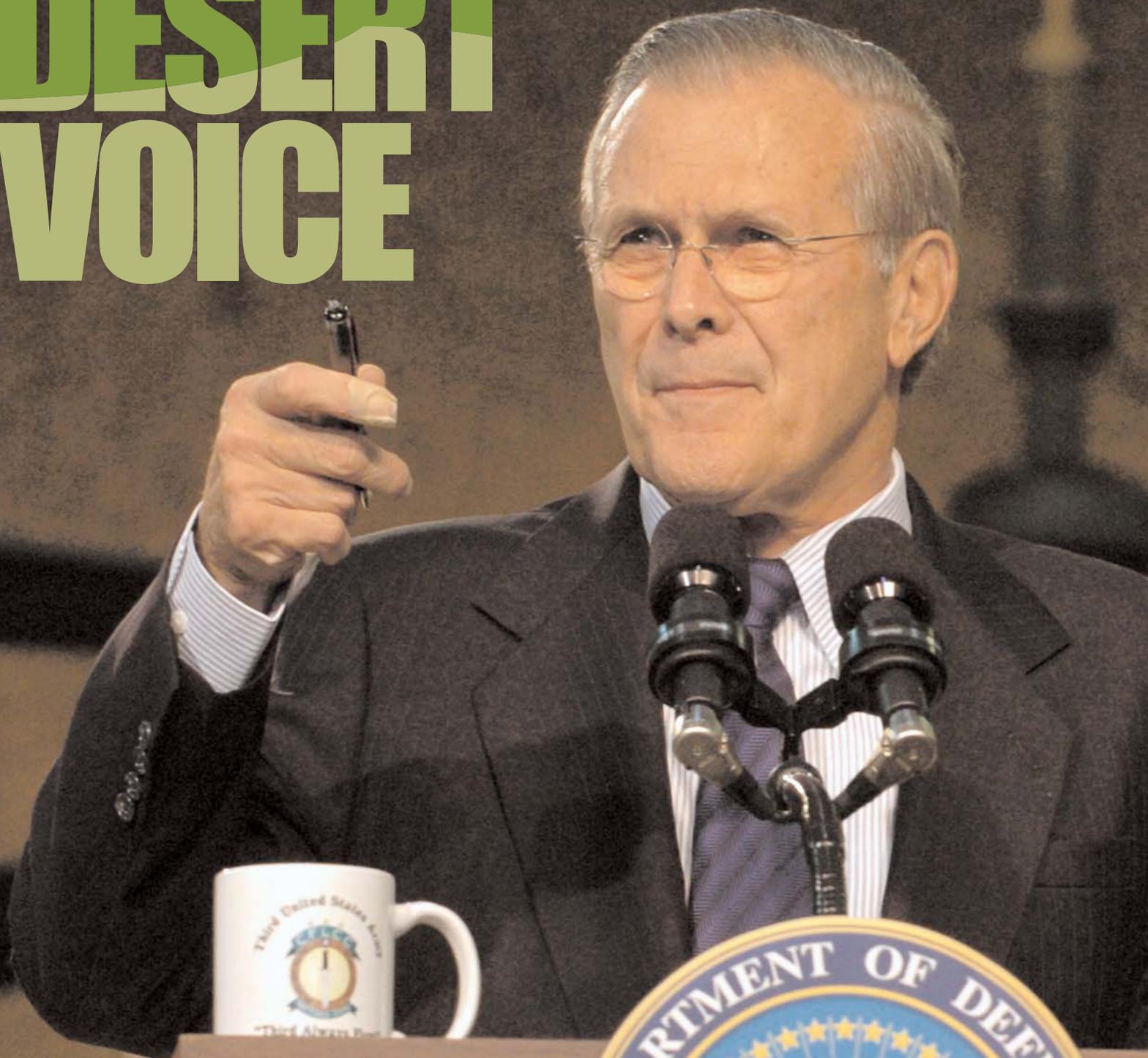


DECEMBER 15, 2004

DESERT VOICE



Secretary
Rumsfeld
takes
troops'
tough questions

Page 6

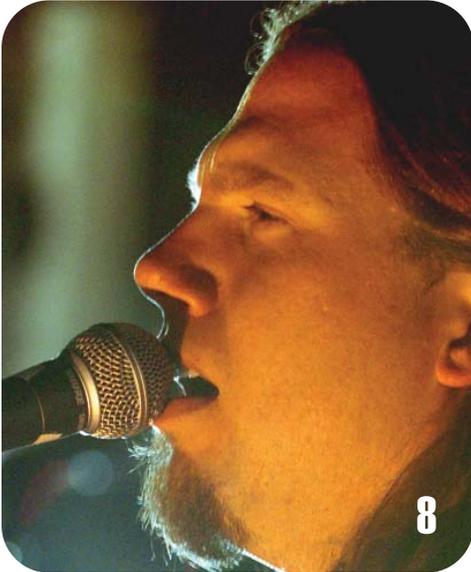
CONTENTS

DESERT VOICE

Volume 26, Issue 18

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18



8

Page 3 Rock that rock

U.S. military engineers have completed testing on how best to excavate millions of pounds of rock and sand from the Persian Gulf near Kuwaiti Naval Base.

Page 4 Tongan troops go home

After a six-month rotation in support of U.S. Marines in Iraq, a contingent of Royal Tongan Marines headed home without being replaced by other Tongan forces.

Page 5 DIY Armor is a hot topic

It's serendipity: A week after the Desert Voice's Spc. Brian Trapp interviewed the 172nd Transportation Company about its armoring efforts, the issue has gotten hot.

Pages 6&7 Rumsfeld answers

At Camp Buehring last week, Secretary Rumsfeld answered some very tough questions that were posed to him by troops.

Page 8 Hello Dave

A small band with little star power hit various camps in Kuwait last week. By some accounts, though, they were the best band to come around here in quite some time.

Page 9 Free stuff is everywhere

There's free stuff for Soldiers at various sites on the Internet - all you have to do is read on.

Camp Buehring Soldiers want to give TCNs a chance to experience Christmas, and they'd like some help.

Page 10 Fake drunk

In a dry country such as Kuwait, it's almost cruel to tease a beer lover with the low-cal swill that is near beer.

Page 11 Community

Sergeant Major of the Army, USO, Robin Williams, 5K run.

Back page Poems

Poems from Maj. Gerald L. L'Ecuyer and Sgt. 1st Class Phyllis M. Brown



4



10

CFLCC Commanding General
Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb

CFLCC Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Julian Kellman

CFLCC Public Affairs Officer
Col. Michael Phillips

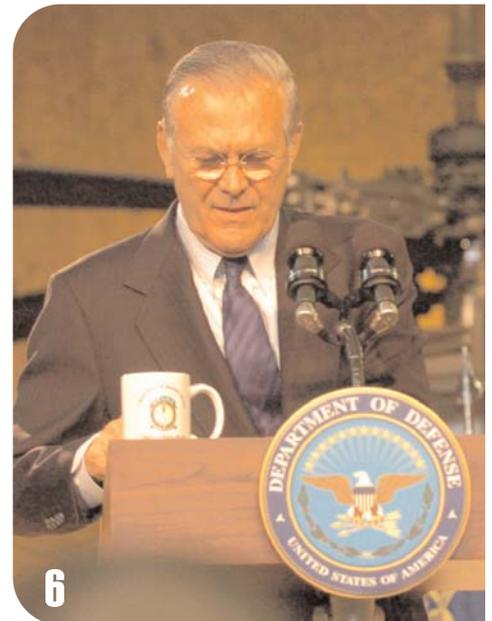
Commander 14th PAD
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Sgt. Matt Millham

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Spc. Curt Cashour
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Sgt. Scott White
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6

On the Cover Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld takes a question from a troop Dec. 8 at Camp Buehring.

Photo by Spc. Brian Trapp



Rockin' out at KNB

A giant explosion at Kuwaiti Naval Base marked the end of a testing period in which the U.S. military tried various methods for lowering the sea floor at the edge of the Persian Gulf.

story and photos by Spc. Aimee Felix

As an underwater blast at Kuwaiti Naval Base erupted to the surface, a plume of water shot nearly 15 feet into the air and continued, fountain-like, for some 20-seconds. The intentional detonation was the first step in a billion-dollar, five-year project at the base.

Engineers at KNB tested different methods of demolition to determine which would most effectively break up the sea floor in order to make KNB the future deep water port of military operations. This will minimize military traffic in the present sea port of operations, Ash-Shuaybah Port, making room for more commercial traffic there in the future.

After a week of demolition testing, the 86th Engineers Detachment found TNT to be the most efficient way to break down KNB's sea floor, said 1st Lt. Eric Marshall, detachment commander for the 86th Engineers.

The testing, which ended Nov. 30, included attempts with shaped-charge explosives. Ideally, the engineers would use a drilling method of demolition where holes are

drilled into the sea shelf and explosives are inserted into those holes, minimizing any disturbance to the area while most effectively breaking down the sea floor. That kind of work requires surface-supplied diving and a vessel large enough to drill from, most likely Landing Craft Units or Landing Support Vessels. None of these vessels are available to the divers because they have been tasked out with deployment and redeployment operations, said Marshall. The engineers were hoping that instead of drilling the holes they could use shaped-charge explosives to make the holes, but that turned out to be inefficient.

At first, a 40-pound cratering charge seemed to be the most effective method, but the blast radius of the cratering charge was too big, considering how close to the piers the detonations will actually occur, said Marshall. So, although it would take a significant amount of TNT to produce the effect of one cratering charge, TNT was the better choice because of its smaller blast radius, he said.

Now that they know which explosive method is best, Army engineers can begin planning for the real thing, and the Kuwaitis

can begin planning to dredge the port. Altogether, the expansion at KNB is expected to take five years to complete, said Marshall.

The ultimate goal is to soften the floor of the main piers at KNB to the point that they can be dredged to at least 35 feet deep – deep enough to handle deep water vessels, said Col. Jack Smith, deputy CFLCC Engineers.

According to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Public Works, the capacity of the five ports in Kuwait is 40 million tons per year, but the demand is expected to rise to 68 million tons by 2020. Kuwait hopes to resolve the 28 million-ton gap between capacity and demand with various port projects, including the demilitarization of Ash-Shuaybah Port and a new container port project at Bubiyan Island.

The U.S. military is making way for the projected increase in Kuwait's commercial traffic, and that is a fair exchange for the years Kuwait has hosted the U.S. military in deployment and redeployment operations at Ash-Shuaybah, said Lt. Col. Benjamin Everson, deputy of CFLCC's Civil Military Operations.



A five-explosive, 40-pound cratering charge goes off in Kuwaiti Naval Base waters. The demolition was part of a test to determine which method of demolition would be best to break down the sea floor at KNB. This is all part of the foundations of a project geared at making KNB the main deep sea port of military operations in Kuwait.

Going home to the South Pacific

story and photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

If you listened closely, past the semi-regular mortar explosions, on any given Monday, Wednesday or Friday evening in Camp Rhamadi, Iraq, you could hear a group of Tongan Marines singing hymns in their native tongue. They'd be seated on cots lined up like benches outside their building. And, although they'd sing in Tongan, they'd sing so well that the language barrier wouldn't matter to you or the audience of U.S. Marines, Department of Defense civilians and third country nationals listening in.

"When they weren't on duty they were in church ... People would come to their services just to hear them sing," said Commander Bruce Anderson, chaplain of the 1st Marine Division Headquarters Battalion in Camp Rhamadi, Iraq. Anderson was referring to the 45 Tongan troops that deployed six months ago to Rhamadi in support of the 1st Marine Division Headquarters Battalion's security and stabilization mission.

On Dec. 13, after 10 days of waiting in Camp Virginia, Kuwait, the platoon-sized element of Royal Tongan Marines went home to a small country less than a quarter of the size of Rhode Island with a population of about 110,000. They left, but not without singing the praises of their U.S. Marine counterparts.

Pvt. Rodney Fakaosi, who's been in the Royal Tongan Marines for three years, said that aside from the support of his family and friends back home, the support of the U.S. Marines was what helped the Tongans make it through this deployment. He was particularly grateful for the bi-weekly morale calls he was able to make home.

The U.S. and Tongan Marines liked each other mutually. "They were outstanding Marines," said Anderson, who added that everyone in Rhamadi had nothing but good things to say about these friendly, hard-working islanders.

While in Rhamadi, the Tongans did everything the U.S. Marines did. Making up part of the camp's guard force, they provided internal and external perimeter security.

Outside of the South Pacific, this was the first ever peacekeeping deployment for the Tongan Defense Service, a service comprised of less than 500 men. About half of the Marines on this deployment have deployed to Papua, New Guinea, on peacekeeping missions during civil conflicts there, but being there is practically like being in Tonga, said Cpl. Sedi Falekaono, who's been in the Royal Tongan Marines for 11

years. As is the case with many coalition troops, deploying to Iraq was a lot different from other operations the Tongan Royal Marines have supported. "In Iraq it's the real thing," said Falekaono.

Almost four months into the deployment, Falekaono's wife gave birth to a set of twins, bringing his number of children up to six. He can't wait to see them, and he missed his wife, but Falekonono said "I felt happy to do the job. No matter how hard or strong, it was my choice to do it." He added that he would do it again if given the opportunity.

Tongan Platoon Commander Capt. Maama Misi praised such moral courage and the hard work and discipline of his Marines in Iraq. Misi attributed how well they did to the training and support they received from U.S. Marines.

A request for the Tongan troops came early last year. Soon after, they began training. They already had plenty of training under their belt, but not the kind of training that prepares troops for the urban warfare troops are now facing in Iraq. So, a unit of Marines in Hawaii went to Tonga to give the Royal Marines a one-week introduction to urban combat skills, convoy security, entry control point operations and combat patrols. The Tongans continued the training from there.

So far, there are no replacements for the Tongan troops, and Misi doesn't know if there will be any in the future. As they return home to families, friends and – for three of the Tongan Marines – newborn children, those they leave behind in Iraq greatly miss them, said Anderson.



Tongan Marines play a game of dust rugby in Camp Virginia three days before returning home to Tonga after six months in Iraq.

Tongan facts

Tonga lives under a hereditary constitutional monarchy. It is the last Polynesian monarchy.

Tongans live by the concept of tauhi vaha'a, a Tongan vow to maintain ties between family and community, helping to preserve the culture from outside influences.

The history of people living in Tonga dates back more than 3,000 years.

Tongans live under a two-tier caste system: royalty and everyone else.

Every Tongan village has a work house for women to weave in and a meeting house for men to meet in.

Tongan men have kava ceremonies where they drink kava, a drink made of the crushed root of a pepper shrub mixed with water. This drink, which is known to have a narcotic effect, is also used in many other South Pacific islands.

Every male in Tonga is allowed 10 acres of agricultural land.

Aside from 300 or so Europeans, everyone in Tonga is pure Polynesian.

The "ng" in the word Tonga isn't heavily pronounced like it is in the word finger. It's pronounced like you would pronounce it in the word singer.

Haggling is considered rude in Tonga. If a seller asks for a price, that's what he or she wants for it. It would be ill-mannered to try and bargain for a lower price.

The natural hazards in Tonga are hurricanes that happen between the months of October and April, earthquakes and volcanic activity on Fonuafo'ou.

Most, if not all, Tongans are Christian, primarily Wesleyan. The Free Wesleyan Church in Tonga claims over 30,000 followers.

Because it is a very Christian nation, everything in Tonga, even taxi service, shuts down on Sundays.

In Tonga it is illegal to go shirtless anywhere but in the beach.

Rugby is the popular sport in Tonga.

Like their Polynesian neighbors, Tongans perform a war dance called the sipi tau before rugby matches.

Tonga is an archipelago, a string of islands, made up of 171 islands.

The archipelago is affectionately known as the Friendly Islands. Capt. Cook, a Scottish explorer, named them so in the late 1700s because of how well he was received by the natives.

DIY armor: yet another growing battlefield innovation

story by Spc. Brian Trapp

The M915 line haul truck tractor didn't have an armor kit when the 172nd Transportation Company, a Reserve unit from Omaha, Neb., came to Camp Navistar to move supplies into Iraq. After a wake up call that came in the way of an ambush, the company took action. They created an armor kit for their own use, but now an estimated 2,000 trucks have been outfitted with the kit as it has gone into theater-wide use.

It started with an idea that developed into a doodle made in bed in January as the 172nd mobilized at Fort Riley, Kan. The rough drawing eventually evolved into a life-saving answer to a growing problem.

"Everyone in the company kicked around ideas on how to get the trucks up-armored," said Staff Sgt. Rob Cohee, assistant truck master with the 172nd. There was just one snag; "We didn't really have the means or the design."

Capt. George Petropoulos, commander of the 172nd, had his rough sketches. "I knew we were coming over here to this part of the world without any armor, and I just wanted to give my Soldiers a little bit more," Petropoulos said.

The event that actually made a reality of the idea for the homegrown, locally-fabricated armor, now a staple on the company's trucks, was a fierce ambush during a convoy on Easter Sunday while the company transported supplies in Iraq earlier this year.

First a Humvee was hit and some of its tires were blown out. The rest of the convoy moved on to a rally point, leaving the downed Humvee behind to change tires and catch up. That's when the convoy received the full-on assault. Small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades came in a barrage, striking at Soldiers, civilians and trucks. One truck with two Soldiers inside was hit by an RPG, forcing the troops to abandon the vehicle. In the mêlée, one of the Soldiers jumped into a passing truck with a foreign national and the other jumped onto the catwalk of a passing semi, returning fire as they moved out of the kill zone.

By the end of the assault, two foreign nationals were dead, one was injured, and four contractor "white trucks" and one Army truck were lost.

"When my unit was hit, it was a real eye-opener," Petropoulos said. "That was the last straw; we had to do this."

From Petropoulos' sketches, he and two of his maintenance Soldiers began work on a prototype. They made blanks out of cardboard, then "we traced them on to steel and just cut it out with the torch," said Staff Sgt. Nick Tietjens, mechanic with the 172nd. "It took about a day from the blanks to finish-

ing the first truck."

The first truck to be outfitted with the kit was dubbed "Medusa" because with a different gauge of steel on either side of the rig, it wasn't pretty.

After creating the prototype, they took the plates off the truck and carried out ballistics testing with different small arms at different distances, to find out what the armor could withstand.

"After the ballistics test, we put the plates on display for the drivers to see,"

Petropoulos said. "It gave my Soldiers the ability to drive and know there will be something there if someone shot at them."

"[Petropoulos] said there was something down in the motor pool that I had to go check out," said Cohee. Back in the real world, Cohee is a senior consultant for a computer aided design consulting firm, and when Petropoulos told him the unit needed to have the armor plans in AutoCAD, a computer-aided drafting program, Cohee joked, "do you want it in 2-D or 3-D?" he said.

Petropoulos had an advantage that most commanders don't. With Cohee's experience, the drawings and the prototype on the truck were quickly turned into a 3-D model. From the computer model, they were able to get total weight, find stress points quickly and easily and make changes to the design in a matter of minutes.

Cohee's mechanical drafts "were really the reason for our success," Petropoulos said.

Even with the mechanical drafts, the hardest part was translating the arch for the window from the draft just right, Petropoulos said. The arch, which partially covers the window, is designed to protect Soldiers in the cab while giving them an opening to return fire from.

"We didn't have any technical drafting tools, so we had to improvise," Petropoulos said. A metal ruler that he keeps next to his desk and the lid of a Gatorade bottle were among the makeshift tools that helped them construct the armor kits.

When they got the design down, Tietjens and Spc. Josh Kaup, a 172nd mechanic, really went to work, Cohee said.

"We worked 26 hours straight," Tietjens said. "We started at six at night and cut out



photo courtesy of the 172nd Transportation Company

Spc. Josh Kaup cuts an armor panel for a 172nd M915 Line Haul Truck earlier this year. Kaup played a big role in the fabrication of the first armor kits for the M915.

kits until the next day." They didn't do it alone though. For the month and a half they were in heavy production, they had help from the 699th Maintenance Company from Fort Irwin, Calif., and from the Allied Trades shop in Camp Doha.

At the peak, they were outfitting 15 trucks a day with the kit. "We were going until we ran out of steel or all the trucks were done," Petropoulos said.

Once trucks started rolling around theater with the kit, emblazoned with the 172nd's crow, calls and e-mails started coming in daily as other units tried to find out where the 172nd got their armor.

As interest in the armor grew, the 172nd turned production over to the Allied Trades shop at Doha.

The theater-wide use of the kit wasn't expected when the project started, but it was a resourceful solution that couldn't be ignored by the rest of the transportation Soldiers.

"It never would have worked the way it did without [Petropoulos] working so hard to save Soldiers' lives," Cohee said.

The understated Tietjens said he feels "pretty good" about the kit "because it's helping people out so they can get back home."

Now in heavy use, the armor has been to battle, and Petropoulos said he's been told it's saving lives.

"Like my old boss used to say; 'the proof is in the pudding,'" Petropoulos said. "One truck was hit with some flak and the only thing that made it through the armor was a big ball bearing. That bearing did hit the Soldier driving in the arm, but they swore if it wasn't for the armor, they wouldn't be alive today."

Hard answers

When Secretary Rumsfeld came to Kuwait to meet the troops, they greeted him as if he were a rock star. But business is business, and when he asked for tough questions, he got them.

story by Sgt. Matt Millham

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld came under tough questioning Wednesday, but it wasn't at the hands of reporters or congress or even the president, all of whom regularly pry into affairs at the Pentagon – the questions came from his own troops, many of whom were in the process of making last-minute preparations on their way into Iraq.

In a town hall style meeting Dec. 8, the secretary spoke with roughly 2,300 troops at Camp Buehring and answered some hard-hitting questions ranging from the Department of Defense's Stop Loss program to the allocation of new equipment among the Army's active, Guard and Reserve units.

After the secretary gave his opening remarks, which largely focused on the troops' roles in creating the conditions for peace and democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan, Staff Sgt. Donald Ross Jr. of the 67th Signal Battalion's Bravo Company began the question and answer session by asking how the Pentagon planned to provide troops to prevent terrorist attacks in the United States when so many troops are committed to overseas operations.

The problems that have arisen in manning Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, Rumsfeld said, don't stem from a lack of forces and don't affect the military's ability to protect the homeland.

The active and Reserve components of the U.S. armed forces – including the Individual Ready Reserve – number more than 2.5 million, “so you can assure that we have the capability we need,” said Rumsfeld. “There are elements of the force however that have been stretched,” he admitted candidly. The military has not had the right balance between the active and Reserve components or the right skill sets, he said, “and some skill sets and some capabilities have been overused.”

He summed up by saying, “No one in the

world should think that because of the fact that we have some stresses in portions of the force and that because we have a large number, up to 200,000 deployed to the CENTCOM area of responsibility, that our country is not capable of fulfilling any conceivable contingency.”

When asked about the role of U.S. forces in Iraq after elections next month, the secretary's reply was mostly speculative and vague.

“You go to war with the Army you have, but not the Army you might want or wish you had at a later time.”

– Secretary Rumsfeld

“What we need to do is to have the appropriate number of forces in Iraq to help create an environment for them to succeed in moving their country off the path of a dictatorship towards a democracy,” said

Rumsfeld. He said he could not answer the question of how long American forces would be in Iraq, and that the “facts on the ground will determine what will happen, and it's hard to predict precisely what will take place.

“But there's a strong belief on most of our

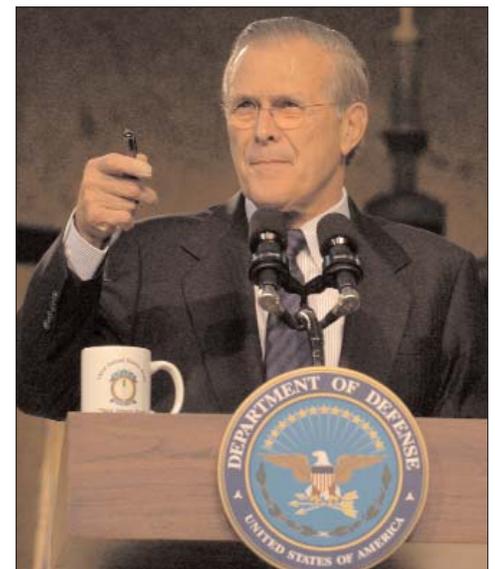
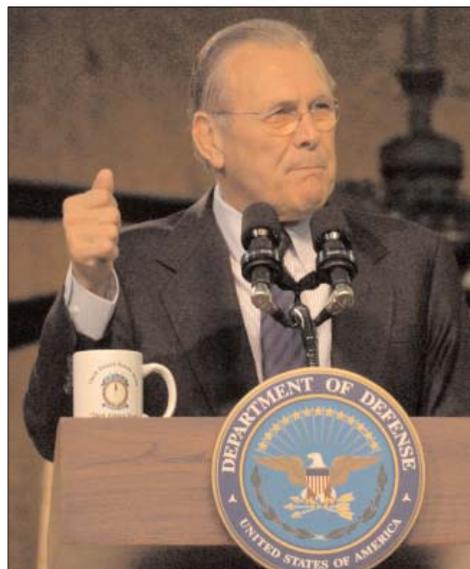
parts, including this individual, that once the Iraqis begin having their elections ... that the people of Iraq will see that they have a stake in the future of that country and that they will then begin to assume greater and greater responsibility for the management of their country,” said Rumsfeld.

As the Iraqis take back responsibility for their own security, “you'll see a reduction in the forces of the coalition parties,” he said, but again he concluded that there is no timeline attached to that reduction in forces.

A media storm has swelled out of a question in which a National Guardsman on his way into Iraq asserted that he and his colleagues had to dig through landfills to find materials to armor their vehicles with.

“Now why do we Soldiers have to dig through local landfills for pieces of scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass to up-armor our vehicles, and why don't you have those resources readily available for us?” asked Spc. Thomas Wilson of the Tennessee National Guard's 278th Regimental Combat team.

The question drew a rousing applause, and the secretary paused, then asked the Soldier to repeat the question before giving



photos by Spc. Brian Trapp

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld didn't falter when answering a tough question on armor for vehicles heading into Iraq. The armor question posed to Rumsfeld has opened a Pandora's box into the Army's efforts to armor its vehicle fleet.



In the middle of the controversy

From the left: An up-armored or Level-1 armored Humvee sits outside a warehouse at Camp Arifjan where the final touches will be put on the vehicle to make it ready to go north. A humvee with an add-on armor kit, also known as Level-2 armor, waits to go back to its unit after having been upgraded. A Humvee with locally-fabricated armor, also known as Level-3 armor, will soon head into Iraq.

a response.

Armored vehicles “have been brought from all over the world from wherever they are not needed to a place here where they are needed,” said Rumsfeld. He mentioned that somewhere in the neighborhood of 400 additional armored Humvees a month are being produced for use in the Iraq conflict.

That number, actually 450 a month, only includes so-called Level-1 armored Humvees, also known as up-armored Humvees, which are factory-built and have armor incorporated into every aspect of their construction. These are brand-new vehicles that are rolling off assembly lines in the United States.

There are two other levels of armor as well, though, and Lt. Gen. R Steven Whitcomb, commander of the Third U.S. Army, U.S. Army Central Command and the Coalition Forces Land Component Command, held a press conference with the Pentagon press corps Thursday to further clarify the armor issue.

“Back in August of 2003, we were producing about 30 [up-armored Humvees] a month,” said Whitcomb. “We’re in the category now of over 400 per month being produced,” he said. Since production stepped up, the Army produced more than 6,000 additional up-armored Humvees.

To augment the need for armored vehicles. The Army then looked at add-on armor kits, which are also known in the Army as Level-2 armor, said Whitcomb. These kits are factory-produced and provide protection on all sides, including the glass, but not from below or above, he said. So far, the Army has armored a little fewer than 10,000 Humvees with these add-on kits.

As a stopgap measure to meet armor needs until more up-armored Humvees and add-on armor kits could be produced, the Army turned to armor fabricated locally in Iraq and Kuwait. This is much like the armor that was initially produced by units responding to growing insurgent threats during the summer of last year, except now the Army is providing units with ballistic-quality steel plating. This locally-fabricated armor is now referred to as Level-3 armor and usually consists of steel plating on the doors and

side panels. Occasionally, the floors and roofs are armored in this way as well.

The focus for the level 3 armor, said Whitcomb, is not Humvees, but other trucks used in operations in Iraq. Roughly 4,500 trucks have been outfitted with the Level-3 armor so far, he said. Though not the focus of this method, some Humvees are still armored in this way.

The actual rate at which armored vehicles and armor are being added to the Army fleet is in the neighborhood of 2,600 vehicles a month, according to figures from the Coalition Forces Land Component Command’s logistics section. This includes the 450 brand-new vehicles being added to the fleet and older vehicles being outfitted with Level-2 and-3 armor. Roughly 1,200 of these are being outfitted with Level-2 armor and about 1,000 with Level-3. “The reason the Army isn’t producing armor for vehicles at a faster rate isn’t a matter of money,” said Rumsfeld, “it’s a matter of production and capability of doing it.”

Armor Holdings, the parent of a smaller company that produces some armor kits for the Army, also produces armor for new Humvees. The company told the Army last month that it had the capacity to increase its production to 550 vehicles a month, up from the 450-or-so it produces now. After this fact

surfaced last week in a story in the New York Times, the Army announced it will increase its output of up-armored Humvees to 550 a month.

Despite the military’s evolving need for armor on vehicles that were traditionally used behind enemy lines, Rumsfeld dismissed the assertions by some that the Army was sent to war without the proper equipment, an allegation he suggested is being made only in hindsight. “You go to war with the Army you have, but not the Army you might want or wish you had at a later time,” he told troops.

This comment by Rumsfeld, in an indirect way, was part of his rationale in explaining his answer to another tough question: How much longer does the Pentagon plan to keep using the Stop Loss program?

“If you think about it, the whole principle of stop loss is based on unit cohesion, and the principle is that in the event that there is something that requires a unit to be involved and people are in a personal situation where their time was ending, they put a stop loss on it so that the cohesion can be maintained,” he said. “My guess is that it will continue to be used as little as possible, but that it will continue to be used,” he concluded, suggesting that the Pentagon has no plans for ending its use in the near term.



Secretary Rumsfeld addressed roughly 2,300 troops in a hangar at Camp Buehring Dec. 8.

Hello Dave says hello to Camp Arifjan

story and photos by Spc. Curt Cashour

Chicago rockers Hello Dave marked the halfway point of their first Southwest Asian tour with a nearly two hour show at Camp Arifjan Dec. 9.

Although the crowd started off small, it seemed to grow with each song as folks walking by the Zone 2 Morale Welfare and Recreation stage stopped to listen to the band's eclectic mix of musical styles.

Equal parts country and rock with obvious blues and jam band influences, the five-piece group whipped the crowd into several rousing ovations over the course of their performance.

Opening up with a few original country-fried numbers, the band used its back-and-forth bass lines and happy-sounding guitar riffs as a buildup to its three-part vocal harmony heroics on a cover of the Eagles' "Seven Bridges Road."

One of the highlights of the night came when guitarist Mike "Magoo" McGohan led the band in a blistering version of Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Pride and Joy." The crowd erupted in cheers as the band climbed out of a jazzy breakdown into McGowan's bar-



Lead guitarist Mike "Magoo" McGohan belts out Hello Dave's version of the Allman Brothers Band's "Soulshine."



Hello Dave singer/rhythm guitarist Mike Himebaugh howls during the band's performance at Camp Arifjan Dec. 9. The band also played Camp Doha on Dec. 8 and Ali Al Salem on the 10th before heading into Iraq.

rage of Texas-style licks and Warren Haynes-inspired singing.

The band worked in the covers between tunes from their six-album catalog. Each of Dave's original songs tells a story, taking listeners on a backseat ride with the band in its adventures throughout the United States and abroad.

During the Arifjan performance, lead singer/rhythm guitarist Mike Himebaugh crooned stories about everything from nagging girlfriends to stolen equipment while bassist Allen Wetzel, drummer Bryan Resendiz, keyboardist Tony Orant and McGohan created a backdrop of all-American musical textures honed during the 10-plus years the band has spent touring the world.

Dave has been participating in Armed Forces Entertainment shows for about three years. The band sees the tours as an opportunity to bring a piece of home to U.S. troops serving abroad while experiencing things most working bands never have the chance to, Wetzel said. Their five previous tours with AFE have taken them to military installations across the South Pacific, Far East and Mediterranean regions. Their current tour includes stops in Kuwait, Bahrain, Djibouti and Iraq.

The band crisscrosses the states 150 to 200 days a year, playing in front of hundreds, sometime thousands of fans a night, but Himebaugh said military audiences are always the best.

"It may take them a while to get into it, but by the end of the show it's always like this," said Himebaugh, referring to the crowd of about 50 fans who descended on the stage after the show to chat and take

pictures with the band.

The AFE tours do have their challenges, however, Wetzel said. The planes and helicopters the military flies the band around in have strict weight limits. The restrictions have caused band members to leave behind some of the gear they normally take on the road with them.

"It's really taught us a lot about how to get by on the bare minimum," Wetzel said.

By the time Dave launched into its final songs, spot on versions of Pink Floyd's "The Happiest Days of Our Lives" and "Another Brick in the Wall (Part II)," complete with helicopter sound effects, the crowd had grown to about 250 people. Some clapped, some sang along and some just sat back with smiles on their faces, happy to have seen a competent rock band in a country whose only two English-speaking radio stations are saturated with Roxette, Ace of Base and news reports about African politics.

"I've been waiting all year to see a decent rock concert, and I finally got one before I leave," said Spc. Robert Boissonneault, who has been deployed to Arifjan since December of 2003.

For all things Dave, visit www.hellodave.com where you can download songs or purchase one the group's six CDs. A portion of the proceeds from downloads and album sales go to Operation Uplink, a project that provides free phone cards to military personnel and hospitalized veterans, Himebaugh said. The band's latest studio effort, "Perfect Day" was produced by Don Gehman, who has also worked with John Mellencamp and Hootie and the Blowfish.

Freedom isn't free, but care packages are

story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Being a servicemember has its benefits. The GI Bill, Veterans Administration loans and free health care are all ways Uncle Sam says thanks to those who serve.

Now, with the aid of the Internet, numerous organizations and businesses are helping ordinary citizens show their appreciation for troops who have been and are currently serving overseas and in the states.

With names like Treats for Troops, Books for Soldiers and Soldiers' Angels, these organizations pair servicemembers with folks who want to show their gratitude in the form of care packages, letters and other goodies.

A non-profit organization that helps provide troops with pen pals, care packages and other assistance, Soldiers' Angels was founded by Patti Patton-Bader in June 2003. She got the idea for the operation after her son, Cpl. Brandon Varn, wrote her from Iraq telling her that some of his fellow servicemembers weren't receiving much mail, according to the organization's website, www.soldiersangels.org.

What began as essentially a letter-writing campaign among Patton-Bader and her friends and relatives has evolved into a

worldwide Internet community of businesses and individuals who donate time, money and items to a variety of military causes.

Another non-profit, Books For Soldiers, specializes in providing books and DVDs to servicemembers who are deployed or spending time in VA hospitals. After registering with the service, troops can post specific requests for items in a discussion forum on the organization's website, www.booksforsoldiers.com.

Treats for Troops came to fruition in the wake of the Defense Department's post-9/11 requirement that care packages had to be addressed to specific troops, said Deborah Crane, president and founder. The company allows customers to buy items and have them sent directly to troops, wherever they may be serving.

Visitors to the company's website, www.treatsfortroops.com, can have items sent to troops they know personally or pick recipients from a list of profiles submitted by servicemembers and their families. About 4,000 servicemembers have registered with Treats for Troops so far, and Crane said she is looking for more troops to sign up so she can spread the wealth of the approximately 10,000 packages she expects to ship by the end of December.

Spc. Paul Neal, who is deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, requested a pen pal through the Soldiers' Angels website after receiving a tip from a Soldier headed back to the states. The response, Neal said, was overwhelming.

Two weeks after his request, Neal, of the 43rd Area Support group from Fort Carson, Colo., started receiving letters and care packages — sometimes as many as 15 a day — containing everything from snacks and coffee to hygiene products. One lady even sent him a compact disc player, which Neal donated to another soldier who didn't have one, he said.

He's received so much stuff, in fact, that he's been able to share with many of the folks in his unit, he said.

Getting registered with each of the sites is easy. Follow these links and instructions to get started.

www.treatsfortroops.com

Click on the "Military Registration" link

www.booksforsoldiers.com

Click on the "Enter" icon

www.soldiersangels.org

Click on the "Submit a Soldier" link

Soldiers lay Christmas cheer on TCN co-workers

story by Spc. Curt Cashour

Hailing from countries like India, Nepal and Pakistan, third country nationals leave their friends and families behind in search of employment opportunities in Kuwait. Many find work at the country's various U.S. military installations, where they labor alongside servicemembers and civilian contractors in jobs ranging from cooking to construction.

While the job of a TCN can be thankless, two Soldiers deployed to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, will send a special message of appreciation to their foreign coworkers this Christmas.

Sgt. Shekeyle Yancey and Spc. Angel Eskew are accepting donations for a Dec. 25 gift giveaway for the nearly 120 TCNs working at Buehring's dining facility.

A shift manager at Buehring's DFAC, Yancey has worked closely with TCNs since arriving at Buehring in February. One of the things that struck her about the TCNs was their work ethic, she said.

"They are hard workers. Any job you give them they do it to the fullest," she said.

She came up with the idea for the gift

giveaway in November as a way to help provide some holiday relief to the TCNs, who typically send a large portion of their paychecks to their families back home, she said.

"I though it would be good to share with them the true meaning of Christmas," said Yancey, a member of the 171st Aviation Battalion, a National Guard unit from Atlanta.

Over the course of her two months at Buehring, Eskew has befriended a number of TCNs, learning about their cultures and homelands and swapping stories with them. One of these workers is 32-year-old Bangladesh native Aminul Islam, known to DFAC workers as Sunny.

Sunny has worked in U.S. and coalition forces DFACs for the past 14 years. He has been at the Buehring facility for about a year. Although he is married and has no children, Sunny still sends most of his money to his parents in B'baria, Bangladesh, he said.

"I have no money. I take care of my family," he said.

After seeing one of Yancey's flyers, Eskew, the DFAC's command cell represen-

tative and a member of the 317th Quartermaster Battalion, a Reserve unit based in Lawrence, Kan., decided to help with the effort. She coordinated with TCNs and made a list of items — toiletries, undergarments and warm clothing — they needed and put up additional flyers around Buehring, she said.

Yancey and Eskew said they have received quite a few items so far. The duo has enough toiletries for each of the TCNs, but they still need sweatshirts, sweatpants, socks and other warm clothing. The items don't have to be new, but Yancey and Eskew ask that the donations be in good condition.

TCNs will receive their gifts in a Christmas day ceremony hosted by Yancey and Eskew at the Buehring DFAC. The event will take place at the 7 p.m. shift change, when all TCN employees will be present.

For more information or to make a donation, call DSN 828-1404 or Cell 618-7253. Donations can also be sent to the following address care of Yancey or Eskew: Camp Buehring Dining Facility APO AE 09330

Get fake drunk with fake beer

Anatomy stands in the way of alcoholism with near beer on the menu

story and photo by Spc. Brian Trapp

Non alcoholic beer; the great tease of a dry country.

It has a long history, some of it stemming from a dark time in America known as the prohibition. Since the 18th Amendment was repealed with the 21st Amendment in 1933, all of those hard-working people back in the states have enjoyed partaking in a drink every now and then. While troops in theater have taken an unspoken vow of sobriety, we are given a mocking alternative to keep a taste of home alive in our minds.

It's been said that the person who called it near beer was a bad judge of distance. The kicker is, near beer is brewed as the real thing before they dumb it down to the decaffeinated version.

Non alcoholic beer, or NAB, can be brewed through several different processes. Some of the more popular methods are vacuum evaporation and arrested fermentation. Using the vacuum evaporation method, the brew master initially brews a normal beer, then taking advantage of the different boiling points of alcohol and water, the batch is heated and the alcohol more-or-less evaporates from the batch. This process also kills the yeast that naturally carbonates the beer. This flattening can be remedied by forced carbonization, like carbonating seltzer water, or by adding some fresh yeast and a little priming sugar or malt.

In arrested fermentation, yeast is added to an unfermented beer. Before considerable fermentation happens, the batch is cooled to make the yeast dormant. The yeast ferments sugars, transforming them into alcohol, so with the arrested fermentation method, the brew ends up being a bit sweeter because the sugar isn't converted into alcohol.

The history and possible origin of the non-alcoholic beers can be traced to prohibition and the Volstead Act, which said no brewed beverages could contain more than 0.5 percent alcohol by volume. "This led to brewing of a wide variety of "tonics" as the breweries struggled to stay in business," according to an article by John Naleszkiewicz from the magazine *Brew Your Own*. After the repeal of the Prohibition, the breweries began to brew beer with higher alcohol levels again.

Some say the prohibition set the stage for America's preference for lighter beers -

not necessarily light beer itself but our normal dark brews, which are thin as water compared to some German and British beers that make one feel as though they are drinking gravy.

Recently, light beers have gained popularity. Whether this is because Americans are becoming more health conscious or succumbing to millions of marketing dollars is unclear. Because alcohol is high in calories, light beers, which have low alcohol contents, have fewer calories than regular beer. Along with the light beers, non-alcoholic beer has also seen more production from major American and even European breweries.

There's one aspect about near beer that people can't seem to accept; trying to become intoxicated from it is an exercise in futility. What bars inebriation is something that can be described as bad beer math.

If a normal 12 ounce beer is 4 percent alcohol by volume, and the strongest NAB is .5 percent, then it will take at least eight NABs to equal the amount of alcohol in one normal beer. For those trying to achieve a buzz by guzzling beer after beer, it becomes a matter of anatomical inability. It takes three drinks in one hour for a 160-pound man to have a blood alcohol content of .08, the legal driving limit in most states. That means a 160-pound man must consume at least 24 NABs in one hour to reach a similar level of intoxication. That comes out to about 2.25 gallons of bad-tasting beer.

Although some have tried, the anatomical road bump is the capacity of a human stomach; it can stretch to just a little more than one quart. One would have to consume

more than eight times the capacity of their own stomach to get a buzz.

Desert Voice is not staffed by doctors, but it's safe to say that to attempt this feat can't be good for a person. Just to double check, though, we did have the doctors weigh in. "You drink too much, you're just going to start throwing up," said Col. Charles Callahan with the 8th Medical Brigade.

Still, drinking NAB will raise a human's blood alcohol content. "You can have a measurable blood alcohol level after drinking near beer," said Callahan. "An individ-

ual's response to alcohol is unique; some are impaired by very little alcohol while alcoholics develop a tolerance. Everyone needs to know and monitor themselves."

Like most things in life, when taken in moderation, NAB may be better for you than drinking normal beer in moderation, according to a study from Germany.

"Consumption of dealcoholized beer could provide cardiovascular benefit without the negative effects of alcohol," conclude Steffen Bassus, MD, PhD, and colleagues at the Deutsche Klinik fuer Diagnostik, in Wiesbaden, Germany. Their report appears in the May issue of *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*.

Beer drinking decreases components that help form blood clots, as does alcohol by itself. But NAB works about the same as regular beer - except it actually did a better job of decreasing one extra blood clotting substance. Regular beer and alcohol each had the opposite effect; they increased this extra substance associated with blood clotting, according to a "WebMD" article by Daniel DeNoon.

Medical benefits aside, it comes down to taste. Food critic Waverley Root described American near beer as "such a wishy-washy, thin, ill-tasting, discouraging sort of slop that it might have been dreamed up by a Puritan Machiavelli with the intent of disgusting drinkers with genuine beer forever," according to the website *Wikipedia.com*.

Ironically enough, some believe the earliest records of beer date back over 4,000 years ago, and brewing evidence has been found in Sumeria, which is in modern-day Iraq. Welcome to the birth place of beer.



photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

From the left: Sgt. James Abbott, 1st Sgt. Vincent Roach and Sgt. William Duncan, all of the 3rd Battalion, 278th Regimental Combat Team's L Troop, stack duffle bags Dec. 7 at Camp Buehring shortly before the troop's trip to Iraq. The troop will head north as part of the 42nd Infantry Division's Task Force Liberty.

In & Around Our Community

Special and weekly events around Kuwait's U.S. military community for Dec. 15 – Dec. 22, 2004

Special Events: Arifjan

Wednesday

Christmas Movies at the Zone 2 MWR Tent
Tree Trimming Party, 7 p.m. at the Community Center

Thursday

Texas Hold 'em Poker, 7 p.m. at the Zone 2 MWR tent

Friday

Sergeant Major of the Army Holiday Tour, at the Zone 1 PX parking lot

Saturday

Sundae and a Christmas Movie Marathon, 7 p.m. at the Community Center

Persian Carpet Seminar, 7 p.m. at the Zone 2 Gym tent

Salsa Night, 7:30 p.m. at the MWR stage

Sunday

Scrabble Tournament, 7 p.m. at the Community Center

Table Tennis Tournament, 4 p.m. at the Zone 2 Gym Tent

Tuesday

Jingle Bell Rock 5K Run, 6 a.m. at the Zone 1 gym

Wednesday

Christmas Party, 7 p.m. at the Community Center
Dominoes Tournament, 7 p.m. at the Zone 2 MWR tent

Weekly Events: Arifjan

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., High/Low Aerobics, 7 p.m. at the Zone 1 gym tent

High Impact Aerobics, 7 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

Thursday

Country Music Night, 7:30 p.m. at the Community Center

Spinning Class, 5:30 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

Friday

Open Mic Night, 7:30 p.m. at the MWR stage

Salsa Night, 7 p.m. at the Community Center

Step Aerobics, 7 p.m. at the Zone 1 gym tent

High Impact Aerobics, 7 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

High

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m. at the pool

Doha/Ali 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		

Saturday

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. at the Zone 1 gym tent
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m. at the pool

Sunday

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. at the Zone 1 gym tent

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m. at the pool

Monday

Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m. at the MWR stage

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. at the Zone 1 gym tent

High Impact Aerobics, 7 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m. at the pool

Tuesday

Spa Day, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

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. at the Zone 1 gym tent

Spinning Class, 5:30 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

R&B Night, 7:30 p.m. at the MWR stage

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m. at the pool

[For more information, call 430-1202](#)

Events: Buehring

Thursday

Mile 8 Reggae Band, 7:30 p.m. at the MWR area

Saturday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. at Tent 1

Spa Day, at Tent 4

[For more information, call 828-1340](#)

Special Events: Doha

Wednesday

Kuwait Singers, 7 p.m. at Frosty's

Saturday

9 Ball Tournament, 7 p.m. at Frosty's

Tuesday

Dominoes Tournament, 7 p.m. at Frosty's

Wednesday

Holiday Celebration, 7 p.m. at Frosty's

Weekly Events: Doha

Sunday

NFL Night, 10 p.m. at Frosty's

[For more information, call 438-5637](#)

Events: KNB

Thursday

Bowling (NAVELSF/NCWG2), noon at the bowling alley

Texas Hold 'em Poker, 7 p.m. at the new gym

Friday

Bowling (SDDC 598th), 4 p.m. at the bowling alley

Basketball Tournament, 8 p.m. at the Kuwaiti Gym

Saturday

Tennis Tournament, 4 p.m. at the side of the Kuwaiti gym

Softball, 6 p.m. next to the soccer field

College Football, 7:30 p.m. at the MWR movie tent

College Football, 10:30 p.m. at the MWR movie tent

Sunday

Flag Football, 2 p.m. at the Kuwaiti Soccer Field

PSU 307 Bowling, 6 p.m. at the Bowling Alley

NFL Sunday, 6 p.m. at the MWR movie tent

NFL Sunday, 11 p.m. at the MWR movie tent

Monday

Darts Tournament, 6 p.m. at the new gym

Spades/Chess/Checkers/Dominoes, 6 p.m. at the new gym

Tuesday

PS2 Tournament, 5 p.m. at the new gym

Chess/Spades/Checkers/Dominoes, 8 p.m. at the new gym tent

Country Western Dance, 9 p.m. at the dry DFAC

[For more information, call 839-1009](#)

Events: Navistar

Thursday

Reggae and R&B Night, 7 p.m. at MWR tent #1

Saturday

Flag Football Tournament, 10 a.m. at the track

Sunday

Flag Football Tournament, 10 a.m. at the track

[For more information, call 844-1138](#)

Events: Victory

Wednesday

Karaoke Night, 7 p.m. at the MWR tent

Thursday

Christmas Movie Day, at the MWR tent

Friday

Mile 8 Reggae Band, 6:30 p.m.

Latin Night, 7 p.m. at the MWR tent

Christmas Caroling practice, 7 p.m. at the Chapel

Tuesday

Christmas Movie Day, all day at the MWR tent

Saturday

Christmas Movie Day, at the MWR tent

Sunday

Christmas Caroling Practice, 7 p.m. at the Chapel

Monday

Ping Pong Tournament, 7 p.m. at the MWR tent

Tuesday

Christmas Movie Day, at the MWR tent

Wednesday

Karaoke Night, 8 p.m. at the MWR tent

[For more information, call 823-1033](#)

Events: Virginia

Friday

Mile 8 Reggae Band, 7:30 p.m. at the Dusty Room

Sunday-Tuesday

Desert Christmas Photos

Wednesday-Thursday

Christmas Decoration Contest

[For more information, call 832-1045](#)

Army beats Navy in sandlot game at Victory

by Captain David J. Quatrino, 395th CSB

Screams of “he caught it”, “I can’t believe he caught the ball” rang out all across the sidelines of the Army versus Navy flag football game played at Camp Victory, Kuwait, Dec. 4th. With Army down and needing something to inspire them into battle; Charles Whitfield of the 395th Quartermaster Battalion hauled in a miraculous catch on fourth and 25 yards, and landed in the Navy end zone. A two-point conversion on the next play put Army back into the game and set the stage for the most exciting final 10 minutes of football.

In the spirit of Army versus Navy football lore, the game played at Camp Victory did each service proud. As both teams dueled in the sand; nothing was held back by either team. “Nate” Cotton, former University of Connecticut All-American nose guard, coached the Army, with Howard “Chief” Thomas commanding the Midshipman of Navy. Both teams battled with leads changing several times throughout the game. Neither team managed to control the flow of the game. Both teams fought hard and tempers flared, igniting shouts and taunts from both sides. And just like the rivalries of the past, it came down to the final play of the game.

During the weeklong pre-game buildup, both teams exchanged well calculated “trash talk”. Navy personnel placed banners all along the main camp walkways so everyone knew they were serious. Army countered with a placard that predicted a landslide victory, and positioned it so everyone visiting the command cell would see it. All aside, both teams displayed professionalism and answered the call when the ceremonial coin toss signaled the start of the game.

Navy struck first and quickly on a 30-yard pass completion, which caught Army scratching the sand out of their heads. A failed two-point conversion and it was 6-0 Navy. For the next 18 minutes both teams dug in and defenses dominated with interceptions and ground stopping tackles. It was trench warfare at its finest.

Finally with Navy driving in the closing

seconds of the first half. With just 8 seconds left Whitfield snagged an errant pass and scooted along the sideline for a 40-yard return and Army finally drew blood. Army connected on the two-point conversion and the half closed at Army 8, Navy 6.

A crowd of around 70 Soldiers and Sailors enjoyed the festivities on the playing field at Camp Victory. Airmen from the Postal Unit at Victory officiated the game. The weather cooperated and a sunny afternoon with a cool breeze gave the game a feel of a fall Saturday in everyone’s hometown.

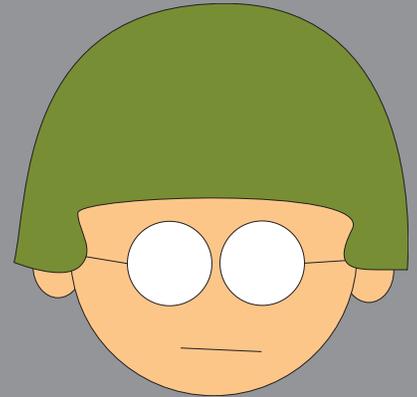
Both teams used the halftime to recoup and change strategies, and prepare themselves for the final 20 minutes of battle. Navy again struck first, on a 20-yard pass from quarterback Brett Meyers to Joshua Thomas capping a five-minute drive after a solid defense stopped Army short and forced Army to punt. Another missed two-point conversion and it was 12-8 Navy. Army continued their ground game and marched onward to score with the aerobatics of Whitfield and took the lead back at 14-12.

Navy fired back with a spectacular circus catch of their own. Thaddeus “Superman” Russell soared high over two Army defenders and tip toed into the Army end zone, leaving Army sitting in the sand looking at empty hands; it was 18-14 Navy. “ He must have gone 20 feet into the air over two defenders to catch that ball,” exclaimed an onlooker. Navy converted the two-points and it was 20-14 Navy with just under nine minutes to play. Navy held strong and stopped Army on fourth and short yardage. A solid clock grinding drive finished by a dive to the right and it was Navy 26 Army 14.

Army supporters were searching for a comeback with just six minutes remaining. Navy continued to defend hard, and critical time was moving into history for the Army black and gold. Army, desperate, changed quarterbacks, and one trick play later were standing in the Navy end zone with a completed arial bomb of nearly 50 yards to a wide-open receiver. Army missed the two-point conversion, and remained down by six with fewer than three minutes to play. Navy again drove the clock down before Army stiff-

ened on defense and regained the ball with a minute and 40 seconds.

With the crowd chanting “DEFENSE, DEFENSE,” Navy held Army to a series of dropped passes and regained the ball with 58 seconds to go to victory. But two failed snaps from the center and Navy had to attempt a pass to drive for a first down. Army dug down and intercepted on their 10-yard line. With 33 seconds left and the entire length of the field to tie the game, Army used quick out passes to control the clock and with two seconds left found themselves on the goal line. A slot right pass to the corner of the Navy end zone sealed the tie for Army. A rush up the middle on the conversion try ended the day for Navy. Army finished on top 28-26. Both teams exchanged handshakes and parted with next year on the minds of the players.



Safety Corner

Cold

from the 377th Theater Support
Command Safety Office

If you have been here during the summer months, you probably never imagined that you'd be hearing about cold-weather injuries here in theater. Here are some ways to protect yourself during the winter months.

C – Keep it CLEAN
O – Avoid OVERHEATING
L – Wear it LOOSE and in LAYERS
D – Keep it DRY

Taking these steps to take care of yourself and your buddy will help you prevent any injury problems with the cold weather. If you have any questions about this matter, please call Preventive Medicine at 430-7157 or the 377th Safety Office at 430-5414 or 6113.

**DESERT
VOICE**

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