

October 15, 2004

DESERT MESH

The Official Voice of ARCENT - Qatar



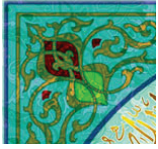
Issue 28

HAPPY
HALLOWEEN

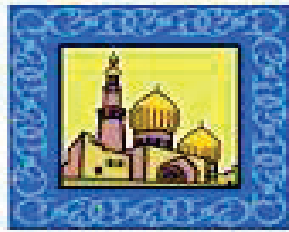
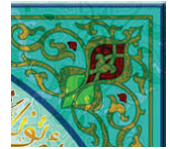
From arcent qatar



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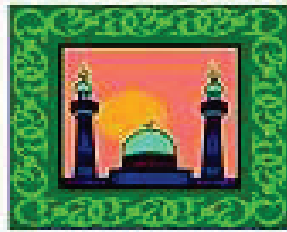
Ramadan



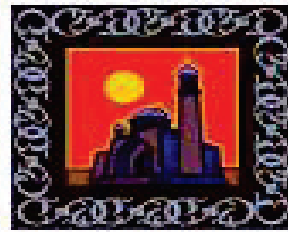
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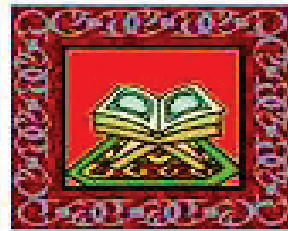
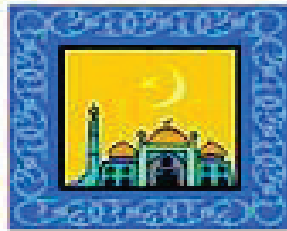
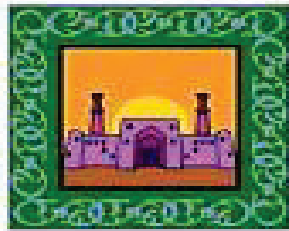
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Ramadan is unlike most Christian holidays in that Ramadan is a lunar holiday meaning it does not fall on a particular day every year but moves through the year and over time, eventually occurring in each of the four seasons.

We are familiar with the origins of most observed holidays but the origins of Ramadan may be unknown. Ramadan is the 9th month of the Islamic lunar year and is the anniversary of several events. It was during Ramadan that the Quran was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. He was alone in the wilderness when the angel Gabriel came to him with a golden tablet in his hands. Gabriel told Muhammad to read what was written on the tablet. The writings on the tablet are said to be the essence of the Quran.



The Islamic faith has 5 Pillars or requirements of Islam. The most well-known is fasting, which begins when the new moon is sighted. Once the new moon is sighted, Ramadan has begun. As stated before, Ramadan moves through the lunar calendar with a new start date every year. Fasting is during daylight only and during summer the days are sometimes 16 hours long. Although not permitted to eat and drink during daylight, Muslims are permitted to swish water in their mouths but are not allowed to swallow it.

Fasting teaches self-discipline and is needed to prepare for the suffering that Muslims may have to face in the course of obeying their God. Fasting is a powerful means of defeating Satan because the poisons that are Satan's weapons are strengthened by eating and drinking. Fasting is done by all, at the same time thus creating a communal experience in which all Muslims know what it is like to be hungry. Muslims start their fast when it becomes light enough where you can tell a white thread from a black thread.

According to the Prophet Muhammad, a few of the things that will undo all the good that comes from fasting are:



1. Telling a lie
2. Denouncing someone behind his or her back
3. Profanity and Slander
4. A false Oath
5. Greed or Covetousness

Iftar (which means break fast in Arabic) is a cause for celebration and usually announced on the radio

cont. on pg 3



Mecca is a city in Saudi Arabia with 1.4 million inhabitants (2003 estimate). Mecca is located about 80 km from the Red Sea Coast, around a natural well. Mecca is the most holy city in Islam. The city is revered as being the first place created on earth, as well as the place where Ibrahim together with his son Isma'il, built the Ka'ba. The Ka'ba, the centre of Islam, is a rectangular building made of bricks. Around the Ka'ba is the great mosque, al-Haram, and around the mosque, in between the mountains, are the houses that make up Mecca. Mecca is important in two points: Centre of the compulsory pilgrimage, and a focal point for all Muslims.

cont. from pg 2 or television. Once the sun has set, Muslims will historically listen for the call from the minarets of the mosque. Once prayer has been completed, the fast is broken by first taking a drink of water and eating a date, just as the Prophet Muhammad did. Afterwards, it is usually customary to begin with a white soup made of wheat broiled in meat broth, which is then followed by a regular meal of meat, rice and vegetables. The Muslim belief states that whoever observes this fasting faithfully and with pure intentions will have his or her sins forgiven. Fasting during Ramadan is said to be 30 times more powerful than fasting any other time of the year.



In many Islamic countries, the beginning of Ramadan is announced by a firing of a gun or cannon at sunset on the eve of the first day. A gun or cannon is also used to signal the beginning and end of each day fast.

During Ramadan, the morning hours are usually spent reciting the Quran, while the rest of the day is spent sleeping, reading and praying.

Once sunset approaches, Muslims gather in the mosque to read the Quran and pray. When the cannon announces the end of the fast, they return home to eat (Iftar). Fasting is compulsory for every Muslim over the age of 12. Children learn to fast by doing so gradually, until they are old enough to do so without endangering their health. Muslims that are traveling, pregnant or sick do not have to fast at that time but must make it up at a later date.

Ramadan is a time for self-examination and increased religious devotion. The fast ends when the new moon is again sighted and the month of Shawwal begins. It is followed by the Eid Al-Fitr feasting and celebration as well as the exchange of gifts.

Ramadan Guidelines

Ramadan dates are approximately 15 October to 14 November 2004.

The exact dates are determined by the sighting of the new moon.

Ramadan is a very special time for Muslims and there are certain guidelines that must be followed.

On post it will be business as usual. There are Muslim staff, contractors, and TCNs on post. If you are unsure who is fasting - just ask.

Do be considerate and refrain from eating, drinking, or smoking in front someone who is fasting.

Guidelines for non-Muslims during the month of Ramadan:

Abstain from eating, drinking, or smoking in public (this includes vehicles, shops, or city streets) from Sunrise to Sunset.

Do Not eat any food items

Do Not chew gum

Do Not chew tobacco

Do Not smoke - this includes cigarettes, cigars, or a pipe

Do Not drink any liquid - to include water

TO DO SO COULD LEVY YOU A FINE OR EVEN TIME IN JAIL.

Dress more conservatively during the month. No tight fitting clothes. Arms and legs should be covered - this applies to men and women.

All restaurants and fast-food establishments are closed during the fasting hours. They all open after sunset. The hotels are the exception; they will have at least one restaurant open during the day.

Halloween Happenings

- 15 Oct– Horseshoe Tournament
Time: 1700 hrs
Venue: Horseshoe Pit by the Swimming Pool
Registration: Gym Bldg 109 checkout counter
- 19 Oct– Domino Tournament
Time: 1900 hrs
Venue: Gym Bldg 109
Registration: Gym Bldg 109 check out counter
- 20 Oct – Galloping Ghouls Race (5k & 10k run)
Time: 0530 hrs
Starting Point for the run: by the chapel
Registration: Gym Bldg 109 checkout counter
- 21 & 28 Oct – Bingo Night
Time: 1900-2100 hrs
Venue: Gym Bldg 109
Registration: Gym Bldg 109 checkout counter
- 23 Oct – 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament
Time: 1100 hrs
Venue: Gym Bldg 106
Registration: Gym Bldg 109 checkout counter
- 24 Oct – Tennis Tournament
Time: 1700 hrs
Venue: Tennis Court beside the swimming Pool
Registration: Gym Bldg 109 checkout counter
- 26 Oct – Bench Press Competition
Time: 1900 hrs
Venue: Gym Bldg 109
Registration: Gym Bldg 109 checkout counter
- 31 Oct – Halloween Party
Time: 2000 – 2330
Venue: Top-off bldg. 406

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Thank you, to those "unseen"

From hip-hop band Pomeroy, comedian AJ Jamal, and jazz performers Tommy Z many groups have rocked our stage. This is the story of the "unseen" cast.

There I was. The worst was over and I was waiting for a volunteer to go on stage. With one last bit of courage I, Spc. Lisa Schwartz, went up on stage to...RAP, and I still live to write the story!

When taking care of our performers after many emails, phone calls, and much footwork we finally meet them at the gate. They are then shown to their venue for the night. All is unloaded from stake beds to SUV's. Many guests can't believe there is a stage in a warehouse! After the shock they are awed again by the dining facility with sandwich chefs, salad bars, and deserts from ice cream to slushies.

Introductions are then made with Lt. Col. Corbett and our visitors' book. Here they learn all about Qatar and about our very own camp. Honors of autographs and photos will be added too today's visit.

Then the juices start to flow as sound check begins. Many things can and do go wrong. Equipment failure, equipment missing! Electricity, transportation, and exhaustion tend to plague the stage. Quick fixes lead our performers to see the sights of camp. The pool, PX, and day spa are must visits. Along the way our guest share stories with soldiers at work or play.

Nerves appear as that magical time rolls round as the stage lit as music flows. All the goods and bads fade away as the crowd fills and the warehouse rocks. Volunteers are asked to the stage and after the show hands are shaken. "Thank you for serving," and, "Thank you for playing." The trucks are packed and they head to their next stop.

If all goes as planned the performers came and played, audiences came and listened. Very few times do those making the calls and flipping the switches get recognized. In any successful show that is the way it should be. Packing crates is second to a laugh and a handshake.

Thank you to those "unseen" workers that make these shows happen. To our Armed Forces Entertainment crew Sgt. 1st Class Gary Everingham, Spc. Lisa Schwartz, and Sky Siemers, Moral, Welfare and Recreation (MWR). To all of our camp supporters Anne Muhammad MWR, Alfred Rivera Transportation Motor Pool, James Withers Department of Public Works, and those that help in planning our command visits. Thanks also to our audience our most distinguished guests and the biggest thrill to our performers visit. *By Spc. Lisa Schwartz*

