

NOVEMBER 24, 2004

DESERT VOICE



I can't be your
friend

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DESERT VOICE

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photo by Spc. Aimee Felix, photo illustration by Sgt. Matt Millham

Happy Thanksgiving

by Col. Brick T. Miller,
commander Area Support Group – Kuwait

As our friends, relatives and loved ones celebrate this Thanksgiving in the United States, they carry on a long and storied tradition that represents all that's good in our country; a time for reunions with distant family members and acquaintances, a time to sit back and reflect on the accomplishments of the past year. Above all, it's a time to be thankful for the fruits of our labor, which would not be possible without the freedoms of our country.

Protecting those freedoms is no easy task. The tough job of fighting international terrorism and spreading liberty to oppressed peoples around the globe requires tireless strength, lucid vision and everlasting commitment. It's a battle fought on many fronts and in many countries. While the challenge is great, it is one for which you, the men and women of the U.S. military, are well suited.

Many people live their whole lives and never get the chance to truly make a difference. We in the military are blessed in that we get that chance each and every day.

With your hard work and determination, you embody the very values that made our country what it is today. By answering the call to serve you are building a culture of service that strengthens our nation and our world. Through your selfless service you are a beacon of hope to freedom-loving people around the globe.

Already, your resolve and bravery have touched countless hearts and souls. Over the course of the last three years you have liberated two countries and provided millions of people with the opportunity to create their own free and stable societies. You work and fight in foreign lands so that our

friends and loved ones at home don't have to do the same on America's shores. Many people live their whole lives and never get the chance to truly make a difference. We in the military are blessed in that we get that chance each and every day.

For all our successes, however, there is still more work to be done. This Thanksgiving, we must recognize the ties of



Col. Brick T. Miller

friendship and respect that bind us together, and renew our pledge to uphold the timeless principles of freedom, equality and opportunity that have made our country great. In doing so, we will continue to build mutual trust, peace and hope for all across the United States and beyond.

On behalf of myself and the rest of the military leadership in Kuwait, I salute your selfless sacrifice, honor and dedication. All of you have earned our respect and undying support. Though we live in uncertain times, people back in the states can rest easy knowing that you are on their side. In all of your efforts, you have indeed provided Americans with plenty to be thankful for.



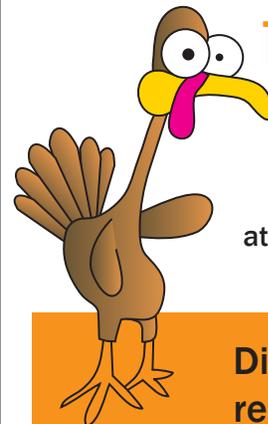
photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army and CFLCC commanding general, speaks to CFLCC staff Nov. 15 at Camp Arifjan. Whitcomb asked his troops to be more disciplined and to hold themselves and others accountable for their actions so that military standards aren't eroded. He also congratulated the gathered troops on their continued success in supporting the war on terrorism and Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Thanksgiving Dining Schedule

Thursday, Nov. 25

Breakfast served regular hours, but will be a light, continental breakfast.



Thanksgiving Day meal

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

at all dining facilities in Kuwait.

Dinner served regular hours.

The biggest gun truck in the Army

story by Sgt. Matt Millham

Chances are that if someone had brought up the term VBIED in casual conversation before the American-led invasion of Iraq began last year, even battle-tested generals would have had to ask naively, what's that?

Now, 19 months after the beginning of the conflict, servicemembers are well versed in the terminology of the insurgents' guerilla tactics. Those tactics have led military members, at all levels of the rank structure, to a number of battlefield innovations. One of those innovations is the modern armored gun truck.

Transportation units in Kuwait and Iraq have tinkered for more than a year with different designs for gun trucks, armored vehicles with heavy weaponry used to defend convoys and others from attack. Most gun trucks are quick, agile vehicles that can hustle up and down the length of a convoy to meet attackers. A new design, recently unveiled at Camp Arifjan by the 175th Maintenance Company, comes from an entirely different philosophy: bigger is better.

At more than 20 tons and 500 horsepower, the Heavy Equipment Transporter is the biggest truck in the Army's fleet and the newest platform, as far as Staff Sgt. James King knows, for a gun truck. Size aside, the unique feature of the HET gun truck is the fact that the gunners' box is easily transferable. It can be moved from one HET to another – without modifying the truck – in about 15 minutes, said King, the truck's primary designer and a member of the 175th.

The design and construction of the box was a joint venture between the 175th Maintenance Company and KBR's weld shop on Camp Arifjan. Because of his experience in building smaller gun trucks and in welding and fabricating in his regular job as a military technician, King was chosen by his commander as the lead to design and build the innovative removable box.

"We built the box to fit the truck, said King." The box can attach to the back of any HET at the lifting eyes with a system of plates and bolts. The only modification needed is to the exhaust where removable pipes redirect the exhaust so that it doesn't blow on the gunners.

After King, KBR's Jack Wicke had the biggest role in the box's construction. It took King, Wicke and a team of four other

"It's just like everything else in this country; you've got to beg, borrow and steal." – Staff Sgt. James King



photo courtesy of the 175th Maintenance Company

The Heavy Equipment Transporter gun truck built by the 175th Maintenance Company and KBR at Camp Arifjan is, as far as the 175th's Staff Sgt. James King knows, the first of its kind.

welders four weeks' worth of 12-hour days to design and build the box.

"The hardest part was coming up with some of the materials to do it with," said King. "It's just like everything else in this country; you've got to beg, borrow and steal. We had the armor, but the gun rings we had to find, the Kevlar we had to find and the exhaust we had to find."

"We still haven't come up with an AC system for this thing yet," Wicke joked as he sat in the open-top box last week.

On the road, the HET gun truck's height provides advantages over other, smaller gun trucks. With its gun mounts roughly 13 feet from the ground, the HET box gives a crow's nest view of the area around the convoy. "You get a greater view and field of fire" than you can with a Humvee, said the 175th's Chief Warrant Officer Dave Summerlin, who helped on the project.

"At close range, [attackers] will have to aim very high, and by then, you'll see them," said King.

The walls of the box are protected on the sides by multiple layers of Kevlar, which are fastened away from the box's steel body. The reasoning behind this, explained King, is so that if an RPG hits the box, the Kevlar absorbs most of the impact and the shrapnel. Behind the Kevlar is 3/8 inch steel plating, which is sure to stop up to 7.62 mm rounds, said King.

Because the box is so high off the ground, the floor of the box is reinforced with two layers of 3/8 inch steel plating to protect against improvised explosive devices and car bombs.

Right now, the box is configured to carry one MK-19 and one .50 caliber machine gun, but it also has room for two other gunners or assistant gunners. On the inside, the box is large enough so that if someone is wounded, medics can lay them out and have enough room to work.

Another innovation for the .50 caliber gunner is a storage box that can hold up to six extra 100-round cans of ammunition. The box is located right next to the gunner so they don't have to dismount their gun position to reload.

At about 7,000 pounds, the box isn't nearly as heavy as the HET's normal load of an Abrams Main Battle Tank on a lowboy trailer, so the truck is more maneuverable than usual.

Because the box is a prototype, it is yet to be seen whether it will work like its designers hope it will. "We won't know until an RPG hits it," said King.

If the truck makes it past its first real-world road test in Iraq this week, King and the others who worked on the project will construct seven more boxes for the 7th Transportation Group. Other units besides the 7th have already taken notice and are banking on the design's potential even without a road test.

"Before we even finished this one, there was another company wanting one," said King.

Japanese begin 4th rotation



An entourage of Japanese officers receives and salutes the fourth rotation of Japanese troops supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. They arrived to Kuwait Nov. 14 before deploying to Iraq.

story and photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Although Article 9, or The War Clause of the Japanese constitution reads as follows: "Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized," lawmakers in the Upper House of Japan's parliament passed legislation in October 2001 allowing the country's armed forces to take part in limited operations assisting the War on Terror.

For the first time since World War II, the Japanese military deployed its troops in support of a war. Starting in January 2004, Japan has deployed approximately 2,000 troops. Now on their fourth rotation, Japan continues its support on a three-month humanitarian mission to Iraq.

More than 500 troops with the Iraqi Reconstruction Support Group of Japan arrived at Camp Virginia Nov. 14 before deploying to Iraq a week later for three months. The troops landed at Kuwait's Aerial Port of Debarkation and were received by an entourage of high-ranking Japanese military officers who stood in line to salute them as the troops filed off the plane.

The troops reconfirmed the zeroes on their rifles and conducted live fire training at

Udairi Range. They also conducted anti-tank and convoy live fire training.

While the deployment of these troops has been a controversial issue in Japan, the troops have full support from their families, said Capt. Ryuji Yamanouchi, a graduate of Japan's National Defense Academy who has served in the Japanese military for 13 years. Yamanouchi assured his parents he would be safe because of the intensive six-month training he and the other troops underwent before deploying, which he said makes him feel "ready, of course."

A fellow Soldier serving with Yamanouchi, 1st Lt. Imai Tokiemon said he is excited about the deployment. After six years serving with the Japanese military, this is the first time Tokiemon has left Japanese soil. "I have always hoped to engage in this sort of mission; [my] dream has come true," said Tokiemon who has long been interested in being involved in combat.

This group has had an easier time with the weather than the preceding rotation, said Lt. Col. Tetsuya Yano, Japanese chief of training in Kuwait. The desert winter is more comparable to the weather in Japan, "just not as green," he said.

Speaking on the general mood of the troops, Yano said he can tell the troops are excited and "they all have strong intentions for helping the Iraqi people." While they are entering a combat zone, and they aren't huge fans of the desert, several troops said they did enjoy the food in the dining facility.

Yano is very confident in the preparedness of the troops, some of whom trained in the United States.

GET TO KNOW YOUR COALITION PARTNERS

Fun and interesting facts about Japan

The religions in Japan include Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity and other miscellaneous religions. The Japanese as a whole though, are not a religious people. The Japanese love corn, sesame seeds, and mayonnaise on their pizza.

Japan has about 1,500 earthquakes a year.

In the Japanese language, it is considered rude to say the word "no" directly.

Japan has roughly 200 volcanoes.

The Japanese consider it rude to show signs of affection toward a loved one in public.

In Japan you can buy batteries, beer, wine, comic books, hot dogs and light bulbs from vending machines.

Many Japanese people eat rice with or for their breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Never stick your chopsticks upright in your rice in front of a Japanese person. It is considered to be a very ill omen.

The Japanese consider it impolite to tear the wrapping paper off of a gift.

Approximately 85% of Japanese people have never tasted turkey.

Japan is about the size of California and has half the population of the entire United States.

Japan is 70% mountains.

Japan has over 6,000 islands.

The Japanese government is a parliamentary government divided into three branches: Legislative, Executive and Judiciary.

A phallus festival is held every year in Japan where a two-and-a-half-meter wooden phallus is carried between two shrines. Officially known as the Hounen festival, it pays tribute to a Japanese female deity who embodies agricultural fertility.

In Japan, flower arranging is an art.

The country of Japan is referred to by Japanese people as "the land of the rising sun".

In Japan you will find cars by the names of "It's," "Let's," "Sunny," "Perky," "Gloria," "Move," "Toppo," "Lepo" and "Dump".

In Japan, the emperor is a symbolic leader.

The Japanese troops who have already been to Iraq have returned with a great sense of fulfillment, said Yano, and he expects the same thing will happen to these troops.



Stray cats can keep down rodent populations, but Soldiers are prohibited from adopting them as pets or mascots.

photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Don't feed the animals

story by Spc. Aimee Felix

When a redeploying unit from Iraq left their mascot tied to a pole in Camp Arifjan with a tag that granted responsibility to whoever found him, they never imagined they were essentially signing off on this desert dog's execution.

"It was the cutest desert dog I had ever seen," said Camp Arifjan veterinarian Lt. Col Sharon Staples, who commands the 993rd Medical Detachment's Veterinary Services, a National Guard unit out of Aurora, Co. Staples had the unfortunate task of putting the canine to sleep. A Navy working dog unit found it and wanted to keep it, so they went to Staples to see what they could do. She explained that they could talk with their command to try and keep it, but that the dog would likely end up back in her hands if they did, and she'd have to put it to sleep. The Navy unit decided they would try anyway, and the following morning Staples found the dog tied to the veterinary trailer, whimpering with no water or food. The Navy unit's command had turned it away under the guidance of General Order 1A, she imagined, and, as she predicted, it ended up back in her hands.

While it may be hard for Soldiers who are animal lovers to accept, domesticating stray animals puts the lives of these animals at risk, not to mention the health of the Soldiers handling them. The health risks for Soldiers mostly involve mite and scabies infestations, said Lt. Col. Dennis White, the force health protection officer of the 8th Medical Brigade, a National Guard unit out of New York City. Aside from these health risks, domesticating strays can increase the chances of these animals being put to sleep because the more domesticated they are the more visible they are.

Not everyone is an animal lover. For many Soldiers, cats and dogs are the source of sneezing fits and itchy, irritated eyes. Other Soldiers simply don't care for animals and what could potentially come of their domestication, like indoor defecation. These not-so-fans of animals could report or turn in any of these animals to



photo courtesy of Lt. Col. Sharon Staples

Jackie Brown is one of the few lucky dogs Arifjan veterinarian Lt. Col. Sharon Staples has been able to find a home for in Kuwait. It is nearly impossible to find homes for stray dogs, as compared to cats, which are easier to take in, said Staples.

the camp veterinarians or to vector control to be euthanized, and they would be within their right. According to CENTCOM General Order 1A “adopting as pets or mascots, caring for, or feeding any type of domestic or wild animal” is prohibited.

Another reason not to feed the wildlife is that the more you feed an animal the less likely the animal is to hunt. Feeding them defeats the reason some people want to keep at least cats around, to keep the mouse population down, said Staples. Staples, also a veterinarian in her hometown of Fort Collins, Colo., understands the attachment deployed Soldiers tend to have to animals, but she said feeding them isn’t helping the Soldiers and certainly not the animals.

Were it up to her, Staples says she would implement a “spay, neuter and release” program like the one in Afghanistan, which has proven to be very effective. Unlike in Afghanistan, though, the command in Kuwait has not approved such a program. The last time Staples tried to get approval for the program was around March or April, and her request was denied.

The program would involve capturing animals that hang out in a certain area, spaying and neutering them, giving them a rabies vaccine and then releasing them. The program is effective for a number of reasons, said Staples. One is that it keeps the population of strays down, not just because they can’t reproduce, but because animals are very territorial,

so the treated strays would keep the untreated strays, not from the area, away. Also, the rabies vaccination reduces health risks for Soldiers. Staples has, in limited occasions, treated strays for contract workers who have wanted to keep certain animals around, but for now that’s all she can do.

Sgt. Aaron Gribben, a supply technician with the Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot at Camp Arifjan had a hard time following the rules with one cat. “It was as cool as my cat back home,” he said. He first noticed the cat standing outside the warehouse he works in, and he began feeding it. One day, after a few feedings, the cat came to him in the warehouse, and she eventually settled there. Needless to say, Gribben became attached to the cat and the five kittens she bore on a shelf inside the warehouse. They were a morale booster for him, he said. But, regardless of how sweet the story goes, he was still violating a general order and had to get rid of the cats, so he went to Staples for help.

Civilians are allowed to handle strays so, together with the animal rescue program Progressive Animal Welfare Society, or PAWS, a program run by ex-patriots in Kuwait, Staples found homes for all of the five kittens just as she has with many other

animals that have been turned in to her to be euthanized. Unfortunately, Staples had to put Gribben’s mom cat to sleep because it ingested antifreeze. This happened a week after Gribben’s cat back home passed away at the age of 15.

Staples was lucky enough to find homes for these kittens, but that is not always the case. With PAWS full on a regular basis, and only so many civilian contractors willing to take in strays, most of the domesticated animals that are turned in have to be put to sleep.

This was the case with the dog that was left tied to a pole in Arifjan. When that happened, PAWS had 40 dogs in line for adoption.

“... The more people domesticate these animals, the higher the chances these animals will be reported, and the more animals I have to put to sleep.”

— Lt. Col. Sharon Staples

“I don’t like doing this, but it’s my job, and the more people domesticate these animals, the higher the chances these animals will be reported, and the more animals I have to put to sleep,” said Staples.

While Staples understands the need deployed

Soldiers have for pets, she asks that they don’t domesticate these animals because that Soldier could end up being responsible for that animal’s death. As it is, Staples euthanizes between one and three animals per week on average, a number she’d like to see go down.



photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Staples asks that Soldiers do not feed strays. The more domesticated these animals are the more visible they are. And the more visible they are, the more likely they are to be reported to be euthanized, said Staples.

Desert brownout

story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Across a lonely stretch of Kuwaiti desert the surroundings are bleak. I'm in the middle of nowhere and would be helpless were it not for the two choppers circling far off in the distance.

One of the birds darts over in my direction, changing shape from a green dot on the horizon to the familiar form of a UH-60 Blackhawk. As its pace slows on the landing approach, I can't help thinking how strange it is seeing something that big float through the air so slowly.

As the Blackhawk nears the ground, the loose desert sand rises up, swallowing the helicopter in a massive cloud of sand, rocks and camel dung. The Blackhawk's outline grows fainter by the second, and a moment later disappears.

It's what people in helicopter circles refer to as a brownout: the moment when the wind from a helicopter's rotors whips enough sand and dirt around to completely hide the aircraft, or as Sgt. First Class William O'Hara puts it, "when you can't see #!@&."

While that type of instantaneous cover might be useful in evading the eyes of insurgents armed with rocket propelled grenades, it actually poses a tough challenge to helicopter pilots and crew members as well. The challenge being that they can't see anything either.

O'Hara and the other crew — 3 pilots and 2 crew members — aboard the chopper are out for an afternoon of training to teach them how to handle brownouts. They belong to A Company of the New Jersey National Guard's 1st Battalion, 150th Aviation Regiment. The group will head to Iraq in the next few months with its parent unit the 42nd Infantry Division, a National Guard unit headquartered in New York.

The brownout training marks the latest step in what has been a long gear up to the unit's impending deployment. The 1-150th spent six months at Fort Dix, New Jersey, where they received not just aviation training, but also lessons in base operations and building clearing, before coming to Kuwait.

I meet up with the group just before noon at Buehring's Udairi Airfield.

Exhibiting a playful mix of pleasantries and professionalism, they walk around the aircraft in every direction, exchanging wisecracks as they make their last-minute checks.

O'Hara is a platoon sergeant with A

Company. He says he rides along with the pilots on missions so he can report back to his Soldiers what needs to be fixed on the aircraft. He can't even finish telling me he used to serve on active duty with the 101st Airborne Division when Flight Instructor Sgt. Kevin Koellish cuts in. "Hundred and worst," Koellish jokes.

O'Hara shrugs it off, attributing the comment to the fact that Koellish used to serve on the active duty side with the 82nd Airborne Division.



During takeoffs and landings, powerful winds generated by the rotor kick up dust and dirt, blocking the pilot's vision.

"A Huey's a Volkswagen, and a Blackhawk's a Cadillac," O'Hara explains, in an attempt to demonstrate his love for the aircraft we're about to board. To hammer home his point he adds, "The way I put it is it's the most fun you can have with your pants on."

When they make the trip up North, the 1-150th will conduct troop transport missions along with equipment hauling operations according to executive officer and pilot Maj. Dan Dreher.

"Whatever the [brigade combat teams] need, we'll move it and get it there quick," he says in a no-nonsense tone.

Dreher and the other pilots, Chief Warrant Officer James Daum and 1st Lt. Erik Rautenberg break for their pre-flight brief, while O'Hara gives me a quick safety brief of my own.

The plan is to head out into the desert with another Blackhawk and conduct a series of brownout takeoffs and landings.

We all get strapped in and begin to taxi towards our takeoff point. With the engine revving and rotors blazing, the bird drifts into the air so seamlessly I hardly even notice we're off the ground. Before long, we're traveling into the depths of the Kuwaiti

desert.

Camp Buehring is now a distant memory. I can't see anything but sand and sky. The Blackhawk cuts through the thick air with ease—smooth and steady like a Cadillac.

The terrain is flat, repetitive and slightly disorienting. I can't tell how high we are until I start seeing random piles of trash, rusty bed frames, even an abandoned, dilapidated guard tower. Maybe they're leftovers from the Gulf War, I think to myself.

From our vantage point, the ground looks fluffy and soft as a pillow. Our bird drifts lower toward the ground as we follow the other chopper in for a landing. We creep closer to the earth, and the ground begins to dance. Waves of sand jut from under the Blackhawk's body and create a plume of dense dirt that hides our surroundings.

The open cabin fills with dust. Particles of sand whip around violently and pelt everything inside. I'm glad my only exposed skin is on my hands, which receive minimal abuse from the commotion.

This is where things get tricky for the pilots. Daum had told me about the process before we took off. The pilots of both aircraft can't see one another, so they have to rely on their flight instruments and radios to get back in the air without incident.

The sand of Southwest Asia has a much thinner consistency than the sand back in the states, Daum said. The dust the Blackhawk kicks up back in New Jersey can't even compare to the opaque fog the aircraft creates during desert operations. Perhaps that's why Coalition Forces Land Component Command requires all helicopter pilots to complete the brownout training before heading up north.

After a short wait on the ground, we head skyward again. The procedure was repeated several times that day, each with the same result: A steady, earthward descent, a pause on the ground long enough to envelope the helicopter and its occupants in a thick brown wall followed by a quick leap into the clear skies above.

I'm exhausted when we get back at the airfield. We weren't in the air for two hours, but the dirt-filled wind bursts have taken their toll.

My day is nearly done, but the pilots and crew are only half finished. They'll break for dinner and meet back at the airfield for more brownout training — this time with night vision goggles.

I wander out ahead of the parked bird and set down some of my gear. "What did you think," O'Hara says curiously.

Trying to hide my fatigue, I pipe up with an enthusiastic, "It was a blast."

"And we get paid to do this," he says.

Leaders prep for success in new program

story by Sgt. Matt Millham

Hey leaders, here's something that's probably news to you: You don't know everything.

That's the reason we, in the military, train. But while we are deployed, it's hard to find time to learn everything we need to know to be better leaders.

Earlier this month, Maj. Gen. Paul E. Mock, commanding general of the 377th, directed the 43rd Area Support Group to take up the task of developing an officer and noncommissioned officer professional development program. At the core of Mock's reasoning for the program lay a desire for developing successful military leaders.

"Our soldiers need to be properly equipped and trained to build their units into success stories," said Mock. "Leaders setting leaders and soldiers up for success is critical. If we all work to ensure everyone around us is successful then the organization is successful."

A big part of the program is to help every American troop in Kuwait understand the capabilities of all the different units and sections, said Lt. Col. Timothy A. McKernan, 43rd Operations and Training officer, who is the primary coordinator and execution officer for the program. Many times, people



photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Master Sgts. Rebecca Corley, right, and Jackie Green, both of the 377th Theater Support Command, take notes during a class Nov. 20.

come to a unit or section asking for help. If that unit or section isn't responsible for what is being asked for, they should be able to point the person in the right direction. Unfortunately, it is often the case that only a handful of people in the entire country may know where to direct someone who is looking for help.

"Everyone comes here with their own expertise," said McKernan. "We could stay here for a year and just work our own lane, but we wouldn't become better-rounded leaders."

This program hopes to mitigate this by

encouraging different units and sections to take an active role in teaching their area of military expertise to others.

"We're actively pursuing both additional topics the leaders would like taught as well as volunteers to teach them," said McKernan. "There's a lot of stuff going on here where they have the subject matter experts in the whole Army."

The idea is to get people invested on both ends of the program so that "everyone's got a piece of the pie," said Sgt. 1st Class Alan Versaw, 43rd Battle NCO, who chose many of the program's topics.

In general, no RSVP is required to attend the weekly sessions, though there may be instances where space becomes an issue. During the first class Nov. 13, 43rd's Capt. Dan Rempfer, who instructed the session, had to turn away more than 200 people because of a lack of space. Rempfer held an additional session Nov. 20 to accommodate all the people who missed out on the first class.

The OPD/NCOPD sessions are scheduled for Saturdays, usually beginning at 3:30 p.m., but the classes will adjust for the surge and the holidays, said McKernan.

For more information on the program, to suggest a topic or to offer expertise, contact the 43rd ASG S3 at DSN 430-6084.

What is it? Will it bite me?

story and photos by Spc. Brian Trapp

Troops may have seen the swarms of strange looking bugs by light sets and tents or even crawling on their uniform lately. Just after someone gets used to dealing with the flies something else steps in.

Fortunately, these bugs won't be staying long, possibly just for a couple weeks. They're just stink bugs, just like the ones back home. There are actually several types of stink bugs, and they're a rather cosmopolitan insect that lives all over the world.

The brown stink bug, or *euschistus servus*, may be a pest, but it does not bite. In lieu of leaving bright red marks and other uncomfortable skin conditions on humans, these insects like to feed on plants. The stink bug feeds mostly on buds and seedpods by piercing a plant with their needle-like mouthparts and sucking the sap out.

Although these little guys don't attack people, they are not friends of the farmer. They can decimate crops by ruining the seeds of plants, leading to low levels of germination, according to the North Carolina Integrated Pest Management Information

website.

Since the Army is not a farmer, "we're just going to let them run their cycle," said Doyle Lawhorn, KBR vector control manager. The life cycle of the bug is about two weeks. Because the bugs aren't really a threat in the desert, Lawhorn said it's not worth exposing people to the chemicals.

The most undesirable aspect of the stink bug is in the name; simply put, they stink. They discharge a foul odor from glands near their hind legs. The odor serves to discourage or repel enemies, similar to the way many men repel women at the gym.

The bugs came out in droves, because "when the temperature hits just right, and the right time of year, it's mating season," Lawhorn said. Another reason for the seemingly concentrated swarms at night is they're simply attracted to the light and heat. It also may be partly because stink bug eggs are laid in clusters of 20 to 70 little barrel shaped eggs in rows near a food source.

Even in their massive numbers the bugs "don't pose a threat to the water supply or to people; they are more of a nuisance than



Stink bugs infest a post at Camp Arifjan Nov. 11. Inset: The little stink bugs do not pose a direct threat to humans.

a threat," said Air Force Maj. James Rypkema, commander of the preventative medicine team with the 8th Medical Brigade.

The bugs, like a visit from the in-laws, will undoubtedly be annoying and overstay their welcome, but like in-laws, they're here because we are.

"We've provided plenty of harborage for them; sandbags and underneath tent floors are great places for them to hide out," Lawhorn said.

Until the temperature drops low enough for the bugs to go back into their version of hibernation, it looks like troops will just have to cohabitate with their new smelly room-mates.

First to fight for the right to party

story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Offering more than 200 occupational specialties, the Army has careers as varied as the people and personalities that fill its ranks.

With job titles like guitar player, tuba player and enlisted band leader, the Soldiers of the 389th Army Band, the Army Materiel Command's own, are about as varied as it gets.

The folks of the 40-Soldier unit based at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, travel the globe to accomplish their mission of entertaining servicemembers at home and abroad. Currently, band members are on a near month-long swing through Southwest Asia.

Leaving its ceremonial contingent back in the states, 18 389th members made the trip to the Central Command area of operation for a series of concerts in Kuwait, Qatar, Afghanistan and Iraq. The concerts began Nov. 20 and end Dec. 15. To cover more ground, the Soldiers have split up into two groups: a rock sextet that plays, well, rock 'n' roll and a 12-member show band that kicks out a mix of styles, including rock, blues, Latin and patriotic tunes, said Sgt. Maj. David Oberg, 389th enlisted band leader and trombone player.

This year's tour follows a similar trip to the area the band took last year. If 389th Commander Chief Warrant Officer Robert Larsen has his way, the tour will turn into an annual event, because the soldiers in the CENTCOM AOR deserve a break, he said.

"We can't say enough about the soldiers over here serving," he said.

Last week, the show-band element of the 389th was at Arifjan's Zone 1 Gym rehearsing tunes for their upcoming performances. Dressed in Army physical training uniforms, the Soldiers previewed a mix of songs they will perform at various military installations. The concerts are designed to provide a little something for everybody, Oberg said.

It's rare to find a band that can play a wide variety of styles and play them well. The 389th show band does both of these things. They rip through decades-old rock with a tenacity that seems straight out of the '50s, and their four-piece horn section is perfect for the lush '60s and '70s R&B and frequent salsa-flavored Latin numbers they perform.

Although the primary mission of the 389th is entertainment, a place in the unit isn't all fun and games. The band has to work normal Army activities like physical fitness and common task training into their schedule, which has them traveling the



Staff Sgt. Hiram Figueroa of the 389th Army Band sings during a Nov. 18 rehearsal at Camp Arifjan's Zone 1 Gym. Figueroa and seventeen other 389th members are currently on a near month-long tour of military installations around Southwest Asia.

world about 90 days a year, into their playing commitments at military ceremonies and various local concerts around the Aberdeen area, Oberg said.

In addition to performing and staying proficient on their respective instruments, each band member performs additional duties similar to those in conventional Army units, said Staff Sgt. Hiram Figueroa, who serves as a squad leader with the 389th.

Although band Soldiers are generally a little older than other Army troops, Oberg said there isn't much difference between his Soldiers and those in other occupational specialties.

"A Soldier's a Soldier. [Our Soldiers] have a skill with music, but they do missions just like any other unit," said Oberg, adding that there are bands deployed to Iraq that pull security details in addition to their band requirements.

Because of the unique aspects of the job, one might think that bands like the 389th would be turning volunteers away. But the band, one of about 30 in the Army, has encountered some difficulty finding qualified players, Oberg said. The Army is currently experiencing shortages with oboe, bassoon, clarinet and piano players.

While the majority of Army band members are experienced musicians recruited from the civilian sector, it is possible for Soldiers from other occupational specialties to retrain for the band, Oberg said.

"We've got a guy who was a tanker, and I

was an infantryman, so it's been done before," he said.

Soldiers wishing to join a group should contact a band directly and request an audition, Oberg said.

AMC Band Kuwait Performance

Show Band

Nov. 25 at Camp Arifjan
Nov. 26 at Ali Al Saleem Air Base
Nov. 27 at Camp Victory
Dec. 6 at Camp Doha
Dec. 8 at Camp Buehring
Dec. 10 at Kuwaiti Naval Base
Dec. 12 at Camp Navistar

Rock Band

Nov. 29 at Kuwaiti Naval Base
Dec. 1 at Camp Buehring
Dec. 3 at Camp Navistar
Dec. 5 at Camp Victory
Dec. 7 at Ali Al Saleem Air Base
Dec. 9 at Camp Virginia
Dec. 11 at Camp Arifjan
Dec. 13 at Sea Port of Debarkation
Dec. 15 at Camp Doha

In & Around Our Community

Special and weekly events around Kuwait's U.S. military community for Nov. 24 – Dec. 1, 2004

Special Events: Arifjan

Wednesday

Thanksgiving Dinner and Dance, 7 p.m. at the Community Center

Saturday

Turkey Trot 5K run

Sunday

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

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

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

Martial Arts, 7 p.m. Spinning Class, 5:30 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

Friday

Open Mic Night, 5:30 p.m. at the MWR stage
Step Aerobics, 7 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

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

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

Martial Arts, 7 p.m. at the Zone 2 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

Cardio Pump Kick Boxing 3 p.m. at the MWR stage

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

Martial Arts, 7 p.m. Spinning Class, 5:30 p.m. at the Zone 2 gym tent

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

For more information call 430-1202

Special Events: Doha

Wednesday

Holiday Boxing, 7 p.m. at the Fitness Center

Thursday

Turkey Trot 5K Run, 6 a.m. at the Flagpoles

Thanksgiving Football Night, 7 p.m. at Frosty's

Saturday

Thanksgiving Bingo Night, 7 p.m. at Frosty's

Monday

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

Weekly Events: Doha

Sunday

Spa Day, 11 a.m. at the Marble Palace

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

For more information 438-5637

Events: Navistar

Thursday

Thanksgiving float competition and pie-eating contest.

For more information call 844-1041

Events: Victory

Wednesday

Dominoes Tournament, 7 p.m. at the MWR tent

Thursday

Bootleg Movie Night, 7 p.m. at the MWR tent

Friday

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

Sunday

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

For more information call 823-1033

Events: Virginia

Wednesday

Ping Pong Singles Tournament, 7 p.m. at the Dusty Room

Country Western Night, 7 p.m. at the Dusty Room

Thursday

Karaoke and Game Night with cash prizes, 7 p.m. at the Dusty Room

Friday

Salsa Night

Saturday

Hip Hop and R&B Night, 7 p.m. at the Dusty Rm.

Sunday

Old School Slow Jams Night, 7 p.m. at the Dusty Room

For more information call 832-1045

Events: Buehring

Friday

Dominoes Tournament, 7 p.m. at the MWR bunker

Tuesday

Jeopardy, 7 p.m. at the MWR bunker

For more information call 828-1340

Religious Services: Arifjan

Catholic Mass

Sunday, noon, Zone 1 Chapel

Saturday, 5:30 p.m., Zone 1 Chapel

Contemporary Christian Services

Sunday, 10 a.m. and 9 p.m., Zone 1 Chapel

Traditional Christian Services

Sunday, 10:30 a.m., building 506 conference room and 7 p.m., Zone 1 Chapel

General Protestant Services

Sunday, 10 a.m., Zone 6 Chapel

Gospel Worship

Sunday, 2:15 p.m., Zone1 Theater

Saturday, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Chapel

Friday, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Chapel

Episcopal/Lutheran

Saturday, 3 p.m., Zone 1 Chapel

Seventh Day Adventist

Saturday, 10 a.m., Zone 1 Chapel

Spanish Protestant Worship and Studies

Sunday, 11:30 a.m., Zone 6 Chapel

Latter Day Saints

Sunday, 5:30 p.m., Zone 2 Chapel

POC Master Sgt. Randall Palmer, 430-6127

Islam Jum'u'ah

Friday, noon, Zone 1 Chapel

Thanksgiving Services

Thursday, November 25

Zone 1 Chapel

Traditional Protestant, 10 a.m.

Catholic Mass, 5:30 p.m.

Spanish Protestant, 6:30 p.m.



Doha movie schedule

WED, Nov. 24	1730	NAPOLEON DYNAMITE
	2000	CELLULAR
THU, Nov. 25	1730	FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS
	2000	PAPARAZZI
FRI, Nov. 26	1730	HERO
	2000	FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS
SAT, Nov. 27	1400	VANITY FAIR
	1730	SKY CAPTAIN AND THE WORLD OF TOMORROW
	2000	HERO
SUN, Nov. 28	1400	HERO
	1730	WIMBLEDON
	2000	HERO
MON, Nov. 29	1730	SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
	2000	WIMBLEDON
TUE, Nov. 30	1730	HERO
	2000	SURVIVING CHRISTMAS

For more information, call 965-974-6174

WHO SAYS THERE ARE NO GREAT
THANKSGIVING DAY CARDS



by Lt. Col. Michael Verrett, theater container manager, CFLCC C4

**DESERT
VOICE**

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**StrongSoldier Competition
has been cancelled**