

DECEMBER 29, 2004

# DESERT VOICE



**NO ARMOR?  
NO PROBLEM.  
IT'S A BALLISTIC  
STEEL BONANZA.**

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# DESERT VOICE

Volume 26, Issue 20

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**On the Cover** An Army maintenance company Soldier fabricates Level 3 armor, which provides much-needed protection in the hostile climate of Iraq.  
Illustration by Sgt. Matt Millham

# Zone 2 loss is Zone 6 gain

Those who live in Zone 6 have had to deal with a number of inconveniences, like the lack of a PX or a decent gym. But in Kuwait, all you have to do is wait a little while, and things will change.

story and photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

Though there has been no official announcement, three new construction projects in Camp Arifjan's Zone 6 have already begun, giving residents there hope that they won't have to travel across camp by bus to get to the nearest PX or decent gym.

The construction of three buildings in Zone 6 are the highlights of a new town square in the previously austere fringe of Arifjan, and they are only the beginning.

Many of the new town square facilities will come from the Zone 2 town square, which will be replaced by new buildings that will house the support elements that are moving from Camp Doha to Arifjan.

To simply call the transfer of Zone 2's town square a move, though, is an understatement, since the town square in Zone 6 will have more than three times what exists now in Zone 2.

The new town square's scale is justified by the number of troops who will reside in Zone 6. All troops in long-term rotational units, such as support groups and transportation battalions, will live in Zone 6, said Lt. Col. John R. Platt, director of installation support for Area Support Group – Kuwait.

In the first phase of a housing project in Zone 6, 60 4,000-square-foot buildings will replace many of the tents that now house troops there. This phase of the project will be finished just in time for the opening of the new town square in the spring of 2005, said Coalition Forces Land Component Command engineer Maj. Dongha Yi.

Everything in the town square will be built around three 15,000-square-foot butler buildings, which are tall warehouse-like structures like the Zone 2 dining facility.

The three butler buildings will house a community and Morale Welfare and Recreation center, a gym and a PX respectively.

The community and MWR center will be an entertainment hub with everything from a mini-theatre to sound-proof rooms for musically-inclined troops to jam in, said Bill Wasil, MWR officer for Kuwait. Wasil added that troops without instruments of their own will be able to sign out instruments like drums, guitars and keyboards – enough for your average band or jam session. Each room will also have a piano.

Much like Arifjan's Zone 1 community center, this center will also have a TV room



Contractors work on constructing the new Zone 6 gym Dec. 24. The new 15,000-square-foot gym will sport two racquetball courts and a half-court basketball/volleyball court, said Bill Wasil, MWR officer for Kuwait. There will also be an outdoor basketball court.

with several TVs, and a video game room with Play Station 2 and X-Box consoles. The community center will also have an arcade and a room for table tennis and billiards.

The second building, Zone 6's fitness center, will be more like Zone 1's gym and less like Zone 2's gym tent. It will have the usual as far as free weights, weight machines and cardio machines, but it will also have two racquetball courts and one half-sized basketball and volleyball court, said Wasil. There will also be a full outdoor basketball court, he added.

The PX will be like Camp Doha's PX with a wide selection of clothing and food, said Gilbert Mata, AAFES general manager for Southern Kuwait. With 5,000 more square feet of space than Zone 1's PX, room for such a large selection of items will not be an issue.

Zone 6 troops can also look forward to new restaurants like Pizza Hut, Charlie's and KFC, along with the usual Burger King and Subway. A long-awaited Starbucks will also move into the new Zone 6 town square. "And, to cater to the needs of our female troops, the town center will have a beauty parlor and day spa," said Platt. There will also be the usual barber shop, alterations shop and a handful of local AAFES concessionaires.

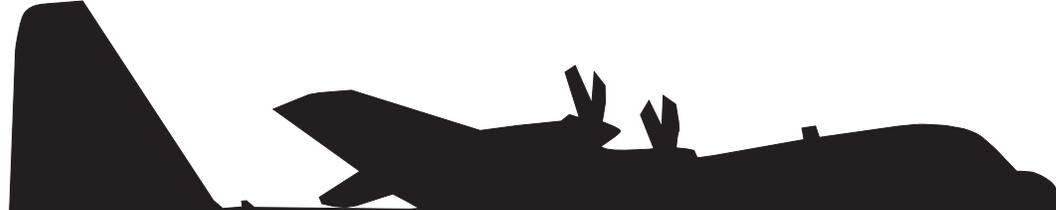
After learning the details of this planning effort, Zone 6 resident Melissa Turla, a Soldier with the 354th Transportation Battalion from Queens, N.Y., said she was

excited about not having to travel to the other zones to get the things she needs. "It'll feel more like home," she said.

While this is great news for Zone 6, it's not necessarily so for Zone 2. The Zone 2 dining facility is scheduled to close when the troops living in Zone 2, except for the residents of building 507, move to Zone 6. The DFAC building will be used for its original purpose, food and water storage, said ASG-Kuwait Engineer Lt. Col. Thomas Mikolins. Taking out the town square and closing the large dining facility in Zone 2 will mean that troops in the zone will have to go elsewhere for entertainment. After the support elements move from Doha to Zone 2, the zone will essentially be a work zone.

Because Zone 2 will mostly be work space, some food concessions are trying to stay in Zone 2, as the lunchtime crowd will increase. Whether or not these concessions stay will be determined by how much space is left after all the buildings needed for work space are built, said Mata. Also, Mikolins said there are plans for a smaller DFAC to open in Zone 2 once the large one closes. There is a possibility, he added, that it would only be open for lunch.

When asked how he felt about the move, Zone 2 resident and CFLCC Chaplain's Assistant Spc. Eric Rodriguez said he wouldn't mind it so much if he knew the Zone 1 PX and gym were being expanded, but joked that people could at least get a workout from walking to Zone 1 for chow.



# WHY DRIVE WHEN YOU COULD FLY?

Though it won't likely reduce the number of convoys into Iraq in the near-term, airlifting equipment and supplies north will at least keep convoy troops from having to make additional trips on Iraq's risky supply routes during the surge.

story by Spc. Brian Trapp

The trucks moving much needed supplies up some of Iraq's most dangerous roads have few choices when it comes to defending themselves from improvised explosive devices and ambushes. Speed, intelligence collection, special jammers to destroy roadside bombs and an offensive posture help, but one alternative does more than all these measures combined to keep troops out of harms way: airlift.

The military increased the number of cargo flights in an effort to minimize the number of convoys in and to Iraq. Aircraft dedicated to the airlift are moving up to 450 tons a day marking a 30 percent increase from October.

"You're not going to move everything by air, but what you do move by air will eliminate a military truck ... and the Soldiers who drive those trucks from the roads," said

Army Brig. Gen. William Johnson, Movements and Distribution director with the Coalition Forces Land Component Command.

The increase in airlifting started in early November. During the recent campaign to drive insurgents from Falluja restrictions on the road called for airlifts to get supplies to the fight.

"I saw a whole lot of activity going into detecting IEDs, and we saw the enemy change his tactics from one sort of IED to another," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper said in the Dec. 2004 issue of Aviation Week. "I asked the simple question, 'What are we doing to get vehicles off the road to take their targets away?' I wasn't satisfied with the answer. I threw a little fit."

CFLCC's logistics air branch was given the task of increasing the number of cargo flights without compromising the movement of troops and their equipment into and out of Iraq, said Army Maj. Brett Challenger,

chief of the logistics air branch with CFLCC. To do that, they redirect C-5s and C-17s as they fly into the theater to pick up and deliver what they can. Additionally, the 64 C-130s already in theater have begun carrying an extra 350 truckloads of Army supplies per day, according to an article posted in December on the website Defensetech.org. Jumper has offered the possibility of upping the airlift to 1,600 truckloads per day in the most dangerous areas of Iraq according to the article. Roughly 25,000 tons are hauled daily into and around Iraq. What the planes move in cargo now accounts for just under two percent of the total cargo moved daily.

Soldiers assigned to convoy duty in Kuwait may not immediately see the impact

of the airlifts because of the amount of supplies and equipment that need to move. Convoy runs haven't slowed down for Capt. George Petropoulos, commander of the 172nd Transportation

Company, which is deployed to Camp Navistar. The amount of convoys they move has remained about the same if not increased, he said.

With the surge of new troops and equipment coming into theater for the third major rotation in Iraq, Soldiers in Kuwait will likely see an increase rather than a decrease in the number of convoys, Johnson said. "We've done an analysis, and we found it would take five-and-a-half C-17s to completely eliminate one Iraqi Express run."

The increase in convoy activity is almost entirely due to the surge, which has increased the volume of cargo into and out of Iraq. The flights, though moving a small percentage of the total, are making a difference. The increase in air operations has kept the equivalent of more than 400 trucks and about 1,050 drivers with military escorts off the most dangerous roads in Iraq, said Lt. Col. William Nichols, an Air Force spokesman.

In the past month, air cargo flights included repair parts, ammo and 44 vehicles. The flights cut down delivery time for up-armored Humvees from three days to just hours. Still, planes won't replace convoys in moving large pieces of equipment, like battle tanks, or fuel and water.

Air Force officials said they envision expanding the cargo flights to move 1,600 tons daily, not including vehicles, into Iraq, according to a Dec. 15 Air Force Print News article.

The cost difference between trucking supplies and flying them is substantial, but "The cost is worth it; to save Soldiers' lives – absolutely," Johnson said. "All leadership is interested in keeping our Soldiers safe."

## Safety Corner

### Convoy Safety

from the 377th Theater Support Command Safety Office

Excerpted from a pamphlet by Brig. Gen. LaCoste, director of Army Safety.

The convoy commander is responsible for the safe movement of the convoy. Control of the movement includes enforcing speed limits, march intervals, crew uniform and seat belt usage. It also requires the ability to stop the march if an unexpected hazard is encountered along the route. Mission requirements have caused some units to become complacent in managing the risks associated with vehicle movements. These control measures include marking vehicles in accordance with local standard operating procedures, traffic control, briefing crews on hazardous conditions expected along the route, pre-combat checks of personnel and equipment, and developing pre-accident emergency contingency plans. Commanders must ensure that assigned leaders of any size military convoy are aware of their responsibilities and perform their duties to ensure the safe execution of the unit mission. Leadership saves lives!

For more information on convoy safety procedures, reference FM 55-30 and FM 100-14. For questions or comments call the 377th Safety Office's Maj. Phelps at DSN 430-6113 or 1st Lt. Surgi at 430-5414.

# Internet through the air

story by Spc. Brian Trapp

Wireless Internet is a relatively new technology based on a relatively old technology. Essentially, it's like a walkie-talkie for your computer to talk with the Internet, so you can browse the web on the move. Through a test program, it's available for some troops in Kuwait.

The Camp Arifjan Zone 2 CyberZone is the test market for AAFES WiFi service. The market testing will determine if there is a demand for the service, and so far, "Wi-Fi was well-received by the troops," said Gilbert Mata, AAFES general manager for southern Kuwait. About 100 people a day access the Internet hot spot, which is located in the Zone 2 town center, said Zone 2 Cyberzone's Mustan Siv Aziz.

This is the only wireless Internet location in Kuwait for now, said Mata. AAFES services like CyberZone are provided upon command request, and AAFES can only

provide the service with command approval.

Sgt. Chad Prawitz, a truck driver with 864th Truck Company, began subscribing to the wireless service about a month ago to communicate with his family. "It's easier than the phone and more convenient than the phone center," he said. "I write e-mails during the day, then when I get 10 minutes of free time I go up there and send them."

Prawitz is signed up for a month-long contract. "It's good because you have unlimited time, but you need it. It works, but it's slow," said Prawitz.

Normal, non-wireless CyberZone Internet services are available throughout Kuwait at the standard price of \$5 an hour.

"When the Internet café program began in 2003, the price per hour was \$9 compared to \$5 today, even though the costs of operation [in Kuwait] are much higher than at our Internet cafes in the U.S. for High-speed access," said Mata. The price in the states is \$9 an hour, said Mata.

Prawitz said he would probably renew his one month sign-up for Wi-Fi service for the convenience of the e-mail access. "I would recommend it to someone else," he said.

"AAFES surveys to ensure prices are below local market prices," said Mata. "Considering the prices for high speed Internet access is exorbitant in Kuwait, prices were established using stateside pricing and reduced to offer a price for the troops to stay in touch with loved ones."

Only computers equipped for wireless Internet can connect through Arifjan's wireless service. To find out if your computer is compatible, stop by the Zone 2 Cyberzone in the town center.

## Wireless Internet cost at Arifjan

\$1.00 for 15 minutes  
\$3.95 for one hour  
\$9.95 for 24 hours  
\$29.95 for a month

## Troops killed in Dec. 19 hit-and-run accident remembered



photos by Spc. Aimee Felix

At a memorial service for Staff Sgt. Donald Farmer and Sgt. Barry Meza Dec. 22, a firing squad from the 1836th Transportation Company, a National Guard unit out of Fort Bliss, Texas, fires a volley in a 21-gun salute. Both Farmer and Meza were with the 180th Transportation Battalion's 96th Transportation Company from Fort Hood, Texas. They were killed in a hit-and-run accident Dec. 19 near Ash-Shuaybah Port in Kuwait. Farmer is survived by his mother Gwen and his two children, 16-year-old Charon and 8-year-old Da'shawn. Meza is survived by his two children, 6-year-old Richard and 5-year-old Barry. Farmer was born on March 18, 1971 and served in the Marines before transferring to the Army in January 2001. Meza was born on May 18, 1981 and joined the Army in June 1999.



# NO ARMOR? NO PROBLEM.

A Soldier with the 699th Maintenance Company, of Fort Irwin, Calif., welds a ballistic steel door onto a 42nd Infantry Division Humvee at Camp Buehring Dec. 2.

story and photos by Spc. Curt Cashour

When the 699th Maintenance Company came to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, last March, the unit's members performed a variety of services for troops staying at Camps Buehring and New York. They worked at water points, in logistics operations and even in Morale Welfare and Recreation. But as the needs for troops in Iraq have changed, so has the mission of the 699th, of Fort Irwin, Calif.

On top of everything else the unit is tasked with, a small contingent of the 699th produces a large portion of the military's Level-3 armor kits, which gives U.S. troops in Iraq vital protection against insurgent attacks.

Now standard equipment for all vehicles carrying Soldiers convoying from Kuwait to Iraq, vehicle armor is divided into three categories. Unlike the factory produced Level-1 and Level-2 Armor, Level-3 armor is designed, fabricated and installed in theater by units such as the 699th.

The unit's armor-producing efforts started in an attempt to help one Soldier in April, 2004, said Chief Warrant Officer Randal Menough, a 699th Allied Trades Technician. A medic who was worried about the prospect of heading north without any armor for her Humvee came to him for help, he said.

Although a limited number of vehicles with factory-produced armor were available at the time, most safety-enhancing modifications for unarmored Humvees and other military vehicles consisted of sandbags and plywood, which troops would use to reinforce the floor and door panels of their vehicles, Menough said.

Using spare metal and a borrowed welding kit, Menough and Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Kenney designed, built and installed a steel armor set that provided protection to the most vulnerable areas of the Soldier's Humvee, said Kenney, a 699th section chief.

The operation has been growing ever since. Kenney and Menough found suppli-

ers for the ballistic steel from which the armor is made and spent nearly two months armoring vehicles on their own. In late May, the duo secured the help of five other 699th Soldiers who had been tasked out to other missions, Kenney said.

Fueled by positive word of mouth and military commanders eager to provide troops with as much protection as possible, demand for the group's services ballooned. Members of Menough and Kenney's group routinely worked 20-hour days to bulk up the arsenal of vehicles people were bringing them, said Cpl. Ezra Morrison, a 699th day foreman.

"We just didn't want to turn anybody away," he said.

In order to accomplish the mission, the armoring crew adopted a hectic schedule that caused the group to forgo some of the comforts that most troops in Kuwait's U.S. military camps are used to. Showers were few and far between, spare time was almost non-existent, and living conditions were harsh, Morrison said.

"We were sleeping on the ground for a while. Then we moved to a tent with no ends on it. It was like a wind tunnel. I had a trash bag full of toilet paper I used as a pillow," he said.

Part of the reason for the long hours was the fact that the team had to design all the armor kits from scratch, Morrison said. Now, with standardized designs for Humvees, Light Medium Tactical Vehicles, Heavy Expanded Mobile Tactical Trucks, as well as 2 ½ and 5 ton trucks, the shop's operations are more routine.

Equipment and Soldiers have trickled in over the course of the deployment, and the operation has grown to include a staff of nearly 30 699th members. The shop occupies an open-air complex near Buehring's convoy staging area and is filled with multiple welding sets, metal-cutting saws, blow torches and stacks of the ballistic steel sheets used to reinforce military vehicles.

The shop typically operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with the Soldiers

rotating in 12-hour shifts, Menough said.

"I wish there was an eighth day. I could get another 12-hour shift in there," Menough said.

To maintain the high operational tempo during Kuwait's rainy season, which typically runs from December until March, 699th members will move into a metal shelter next week, said Maj. John Murillo, a support operations officer for the 158th Corps Support Battalion, the higher headquarters element for the 699th. In the next two months, the 699th, along with two other maintenance companies and three civilian contractor entities, is scheduled to provide armor for about 11,000 Iraq-bound vehicles.

Soldiers who work at the shop, which had provided armor for about 6,800 vehicles as of late November, keep in contact with some of the troops whose vehicles they equip. So far, 699th members have heard from 17 troops who said the armor has saved their lives during attacks in Iraq, said Capt. Angelica Martinez, 699th commander.

But it's not just those Soldiers praising the unit. The armor shop has hosted visits from several generals, all whom had positive things to say about the efforts of the 699th, Menough said. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld even praised shop members during his Dec. 8 town hall meeting at Buehring with roughly 2,300 troops.

"There's not another maintenance company that compares to what they do," said Murillo, adding that the unit has earned the recognition.

While it's nice to be acknowledged for a job well done, Kenney says the best part of the job is when he hears stories of how the armor makes a difference for the troops serving in Iraq.

"It makes you know that your long hours and hard work are worth it," he said.

The 699th is scheduled to redeploy early next year. The 276th Maintenance Company, a Reserve unit from Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico, will assume operations of the armor shop.



**The 699th armored more than 2,000 vehicles in just three weeks in December.**

Clockwise from top left: Spc. Hector Velez of the 276th Maintenance Company, which is training with the 699th and will take over Buehring's armor-producing operations early next year, cuts steel with a chop saw. A 699th member makes some last minute welds to make an armor plate ready to mount. Soldiers weld a fabricated armor door onto a previously unarmored Humvee. The nearly-finished door awaits a handle as a stack of doors in the background wait to be mounted on other vehicles.

# Hungary's last troops leave early

story by Spc. Aimee Felix

After mounting pressure from the people of Hungary, who are largely against the American-led war in Iraq, the Hungarian parliament in early November voted to withdraw the third and last rotation of Hungarian soldiers from Iraq by the end of the year, two months earlier than they were originally expected to return.

So 300 Hungarian soldiers packed their bags and rushed to finish a mission they thought they'd have until February to complete. Hurrying to finish their tightened deadline, they arrived in Kuwait Dec. 18. After a four-month deployment in Al-Hillah, Iraq, they made it home Dec. 24, right in time for Christmas.

This last-minute decision to bring the soldiers home early provoked mixed feelings of excitement, stress and disappointment among the Hungarian soldiers. They would be home in time for the holidays, but at what cost?

"A lot of the troops volunteered for this mission because they needed the extra money," said Capt. Esztev Skrinya'r, the Hungarian's public information officer. She explained that withdrawing two months early meant soldiers would be leaving with 600 to 6,000 euros less than they expected to earn in mission pay, depending on rank.

Leaving two months early also meant they'd have that much less time to complete a mission to move the Multinational Division Central-South's logistics support center from Babylon to Divanijah. This was on top of their main mission, which was to transport food, water, weapons and equipment to small, nearby camps in their area of responsibility, which included the cities of Al Kut,



Karbala, Divanijah, An Najaf and Al Taji. In light of the last-minute decision, the Hungarian soldiers didn't have to finish the task, as their replacements would have taken over, but the rotation pulled together and completed the move in time for their return home. "We were to finish the mission we were given," said Skrinya'r.

Skrinya'r, a single soldier with no children, was one of the troops disappointed about leaving early. She said she enjoyed where they were stationed and the company they had there. They were stationed in Camp Charlie – the headquarters of the Multinational Division Central-South, which has been under Polish command for more than a year – with Slovak, Latvian and Romanian troops, and they all lived in buildings instead of tents. Also, the Hungarians had shower containers they'd brought with them as part of their equipment. "It was easy," Skrinya'r said.

Not everyone, though, was as excited as Skrinya'r was to be there, nor as disappointed as she was to be leaving. For 1st Lt. Istavan Bark, Camp Charlie's relatively good living standards and the extra money weren't enough to make him want to spend any more time away from his wife and child. "My wife was thrilled when the defense minister announced the mandate, and so was I," said Bark.

In addition to being glad about his early reunion with his family, he was glad to be away from potential danger. While most of the Hungarian troops didn't have to go outside of their comparatively safe area of responsibility on the two to three convoys they made a day, Bark's job required travel farther abroad. As liaison officer between KBR and the Hungarian Transportation Battalion, Bark often had to travel far beyond the safety and comfort of Camp

Charlie and its surrounding camps for up to six days at a time.

"I was fearful at times on the road when an Iraqi would get close to the car or when we would pull over to conduct maintenance on a vehicle," he said. But he also said he was lucky enough to never have to take action against anyone.

While he was a bit afraid at times, Bark was confident in his skills because of a one-year observer mission he had to the Sinai Peninsula. That was a peace-keeping operation and he had no weapons, but still he said it turned out to be good practice for this mission, which was still a peace-keeping mission. This mission, though, required flak vests and rifles.

The two-month training the Hungarians undertook before deploying added to Bark's confidence. The training, which included convoy live fire, weapons and cultural training also included several cross-country convoys in Hungary.

One thing Skrinya'r and Bark did agree on was that the troops felt prepared for the deployment. This was evident by the amount of countries that asked the Hungarians to escort their convoys or for permission to tag along with the Hungarian convoys, said Skrinya'r.

Another thing Skrinya'r and Bark and many other Hungarian troops agreed on was that they couldn't avoid missing home because they were in a desert, a landscape that doesn't even come close to Hungary's beautiful green hills and forests, said Skrinya'r.

While most of the Hungarian troops would like to have stayed the full six months, the family members of the Hungarian soldiers are glad they are coming home early "because it's Christmas time," said Skrinya'r.

## Who's in the coalition?

The Multi-National Force-Iraq and Multi-National Force Iraq website has not updated its list of nations contributing troops since October 15, 2004. As of that time, 28 nations were contributing troops to the coalition effort in Iraq. With the loss of Hungary, the coalition now stands at 27. Those nations are: Albania, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, United Kingdom, and Ukraine.

# Guard troops attracted by \$15K re-up bonus

story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Christmas came early this month for some Army National Guard Soldiers and potential recruits when Guard officials announced significant increases in cash signing bonuses and other Guard benefits Dec. 16.

Highlights of the new benefits include:

- A \$7,500 lump sum bonus for Soldiers reenlisting or extending for three years
- A \$15,000 lump sum bonus for Soldiers reenlisting or extending for six years
- \$18,000 of Student Loan Repayment Program benefits for Soldiers reenlisting or extending for six years
- A \$10,000 bonus for new recruits with no prior military service

The changes, which also include expanded health, dental and educational benefits, have brought the Guard's bonuses and benefits to their highest levels ever, said Sgt. Maj. Bob Graham, a theater retention sergeant major with the National Guard Bureau who is serving at the National Guard and Reserve retention office at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

"Without a doubt, this has done more for recruiting and retention in one week than I've seen in the past ten years in the National Guard," said Graham, who has worked in recruiting and retention for 13 years.

Before the changes were announced, about 15 to 20 Kuwait-based National Guard Soldiers per month were reenlist-

ing or extending their service contracts. That number is now expected to double, said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Garmong, a senior recruiting and retention noncommissioned officer also with the Arifjan retention office. Garmong added that he was scheduled to reenlist or extend at least 15 Soldiers on Dec. 24 alone.

The new benefits, which took effect Dec. 14 and are not military occupational specialty related, have sent National Guard retention NCOs scrambling to get the word out, Garmong said. To do their part, he and Graham are sending out e-mail notifications to qualified Soldiers and will be conducting a series of town hall meetings throughout the Central Command theater in the coming weeks.

The benefit increases apply only to Soldiers enlisting for service with Military Table of Organization and Equipment units and come as the Guard fell about 1,000 Soldiers short of its recruiting goals in November and missed its target by 30 percent in October, according to Dec. 16 article in USA today.

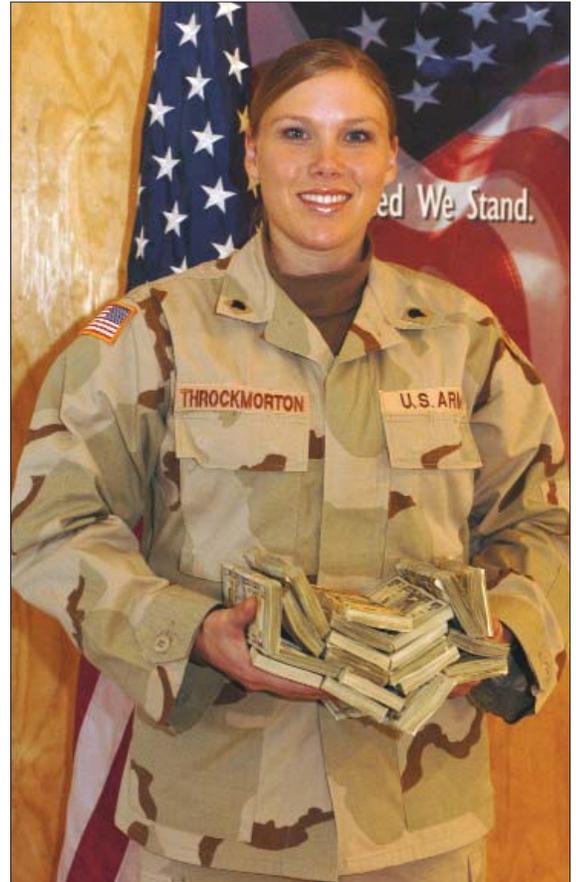
For more information, guidelines and restrictions contact the Guard retention office closest to you.

Kuwait: DSN 318-430-7193, Cell 965-937-7659 or 965-986-9802

Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq: DSN 318-829-1128  
DNVT 318-529-8252

Forward Operating Base Caldwell, Iraq: DSNVT 302-646-1043

Afghanistan: DSN 318-231-4353 or 318-231-2234



Spc. Rebekah Throckmorton poses with \$15,000 Dec. 23 after she earned a bonus of the same amount by extending her contract with the National Guard for six years. Throckmorton has been in the Guard for nine years and is currently serving at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, with the 230th Area Support Group from Dyersburg, Tenn.



photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

Members of Battery E, of the Kansas National Guard's 161st Field Artillery's 1st Battalion's target acquisition battery fire M-249 Squad Automatic Weapons Dec. 19 at Udairi Range, Kuwait. Based in Larned, Kan., the unit is scheduled to deploy sometime in the next few weeks to Iraq, where they will identify potential targets by tracking incoming mortar and rocket attacks, said Battery Commander Capt. Ralph Heady.

## Traffic safety: lessons learned from the fatal accident Dec. 19

- If a breakdown happens, every effort should be made to move off of high speed highways and to a location where there is enough space to either repair the vehicle or wait for a recovery team.
- Personnel should not exit or stand on the driver's side of the vehicle. All vehicle occupants should either exit through the passenger side of the vehicle or stay in the vehicle. After exiting the vehicle move far off the road way or to the other side of the guardrail if possible.
- Every effort should be made to have a means of communication between each vehicle in a convoy and a means to contact higher headquarters for assistance.
- American Soldiers should not be used to direct traffic on Kuwaiti roadways.

# Final exam

For months, the 379th Chemical Company has been training the Kuwaiti military how to respond to Nuclear Biological and Chemical attacks. Dec. 20 tested their knowledge.

story and photo by Spc. Aimee Felix

They were supposed to arrive across the street from Camp Virginia's main entrance at 8:30 a.m. and start training at 9 a.m. Instead they arrived at 9:15 a.m. with a small convoy of SUVs trailing a bus. With the vehicles parked, 30 or so soldiers from the Kuwaiti Army Chemical Directorate filed out of the bus and one by one grabbed a sandwich and a Mountain Dew from the back of an SUV. The Kuwaitis sat on the ground and ate as the officer handing out breakfast offered food to the 379th Chemical Company Soldiers who had been waiting for 45 minutes to begin a joint training exercise. Punctuality being a hallmark of Army discipline, the Americans were uncharacteristically patient, and without hesitation, the Soldiers joined their Kuwaiti counterparts in their morning picnic.

The mood was light, though the Kuwaitis would soon be under the gun as they faced their first full-on training exercise.

After breakfast, the Kuwaitis were ready to begin. They put on their nuclear, biological, chemical protective suits – some in British and some in Iranian gear – and donned their masks.

The Dec. 20 exercise was a sort of final exam for the Kuwaitis. Three months ago the 379th began training them on how to react to NBC attacks and how to decontaminate MOPP gear, vehicles and all other operational equipment. This was the first time the Kuwaiti Army Chemical Directorate conducted a decontamination exercise of this kind, said Capt. Andrew Talmadge, a platoon leader in the 379th.

When the Kuwaiti soldiers were all dressed up and ready to go, they confronted a scenario of contaminated vehicles and people. Now the Kuwaitis had to show that their three months of hands-on NBC training had stuck.

The scenario the 379th provided the Kuwaitis was that security elements of the Kuwaiti Coalition Command had come under mortar attack by unknown terrorists near Ali Al Salem Air Base. After fighting to eliminate the threat, five Humvees full of American Soldiers now in full MOPP gear were possibly contaminated, and they needed to be thoroughly decontaminated before continuing on to their next mission.

The Kuwaiti soldiers set up vehicle and personnel decon sites as a few Army specialists and sergeants oversaw them every step of the way.

At about 10:15 a.m. the actual mock



A soldier in the Kuwaiti Army's Chemical Directorate performs the final scrub down in the decontamination of a Humvee. The decon was part of an exercise held by the 379th Chemical Company Dec. 20 to test the Kuwaiti Chemical Directorate after three months of NBC training.

decontamination began. For the vehicles, the Kuwaitis had set up a system fairly new to the U.S. Army itself called a Fixed Site Decontamination System, which has the capability of cleaning the side of a building up to three stories high. Trailers attached to pick-up trucks held part of the system, including a 1,000 gallon water tank with hoses on either side. As the five Humvees drove in between the two pick-up trucks the Kuwaiti soldiers hosed them down. At the same time the Kuwaitis decontaminated troops that had been "contaminated" in the attack.

"They did really well. There was at least a 90 percent increase in their performance – better than in November," said Maj. Edward Dawson, 379th's commander.

In November the Kuwaitis finished the first part of their training, the basics of NBC, before going on to decontamination training. Dawson said he could tell they had practiced on their own, and he also noticed more leadership involvement. "They followed our Army model of leadership this time," Dawson said.

Staff Sgt. Justin Mckuzes, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the training program, noticed an improvement whenever the 379th did hands-on training with the Kuwaitis, as opposed to training in a classroom environment. Mckuzes said that the

Kuwaiti leaders caught on to that and practiced with their soldiers accordingly, hence the improvement in their performance.

This training program was developed between the 379th Chemical Company and the NBC advisor in the Office of Military Cooperation in the U.S. Embassy to Kuwait. The goal of the continuing training program is to develop the Kuwaiti army's expertise in military decontamination to the point of self-sufficiency, said Talmadge.

"We want to use it in the future to keep the soldiers constantly informed," said Lt. Mohammed Abdulla, an officer with the Kuwaiti Chemical Directorate. The Kuwaitis hope to learn all NBC and decontamination procedures so that they can continue teaching every soldier in the Kuwaiti army.

"NBC training will be the standard for all the soldiers," said Col. Mohammed Yousef Shamsaldeen, commander of the chemical directorate.

While they've learned a lot, they still have far to go before they know everything there is to know about NBC agents. The unit replacing the 379th will provide the directorate with more technical NBC training, which will include NBC reconnaissance training, hazardous materials training and toxic industrial chemical response training.

"We have to become experts in this field," said Shamsaldeen. "It will save lives."

# Community

## happenings for Dec. 29, 2004 through Jan. 5, 2005

### Special events around Kuwait

#### Arifjan

##### Wednesday

Ping Pong Tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center

Foosball Tourney, 7 p.m., Zone 2 MWR tent

##### Thursday

Texas Hold 'em Poker, 7 p.m., gym tent

##### Friday

New Year Party, 7 p.m., gym

##### Saturday

Chick Fil-a Peach Bowl, 7 p.m., Community Center

Outback Bowl, 7 p.m., Community Center

Persian Carpet Seminar, 7 p.m., Zone 2 gym tent

##### Sunday

SBC Cotton Bowl, 2 a.m., Community Center

Rose Bowl, 11 a.m., Community Center

Fiesta Bowl, 4:30 a.m., Community Center

Salsa Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent

##### Monday

Cowboys v Giants, 4:30 a.m., Community Center

##### Tuesday

Dominoes Tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center

##### Wednesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Community Center

#### Doha

##### Friday

New Year Party, 7 p.m., Frosty's

##### Saturday

New Year's Day 5K, flagpoles

No-touch 8 Ball Tournament, 7 p.m., Frosty's

##### Tuesday

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

##### Wednesday

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

### 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., Zone 1 gym tent

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

##### Thursday

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Community Center

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

##### Friday

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

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Community Center

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

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

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

##### Saturday

R&B night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent

Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR tent

Combat Kick Boxing 5:30 a.m., Power Stretching

8 a.m., Bench/Step Workout 10 a.m., Body Pump Workout 1 p.m., Combat Kick Boxing 3

p.m., Zone 1 gym tent

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

##### Sunday

Bench/Step Workout 5:30 a.m., Super Abs 8

a.m., Power Stretching 10 a.m., Body Pump

Workout 1 p.m., Bench/Step Workout 3 p.m.,

Zone 1 gym tent

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

##### Monday

Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., 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.,

Zone 1 gym tent

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

Aerobics, 6 p.m., Zone 6 gym tent

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

##### Tuesday

Spa Day, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., 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.,

Zone 1 gym tent

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

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

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

For more information, call 430-1202

#### Buehring

##### Wednesday

BCS Championship, 5 a.m., MWR tent

For more information, call 828-1340

#### Doha

##### Sunday

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

For more information, call 438-5637

#### Kuwaiti Naval Base

##### Wednesday

Independence Bowl (Iowa State v Mia.), 2:30

a.m., movie tent

College Basketball (Tulsa v Okla.), 3 a.m., movie

tent

College Basketball (Gonzaga v Okla. State),

5 a.m., movie tent

Insight Bowl (Ore. State v Notre Dame), 5:45

a.m., movie tent

Marine Corps Martial Arts, 1 p.m., TMC

Foosball Tournament, 7 p.m., new gym

##### Thursday

Houston Bowl (Colo. v UTEP), 12:30 a.m., movie

tent

Alamo Bowl (Ohio State v Okla State), 4 a.m.,

movie tent

Self Defense 1, 10 a.m. at the Aerobic Room

Bowling (NAVELSF/Miuwu 204), 12 p.m., Bowling

Alley

Marine Corps Martial Arts, 1 p.m., TMC

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

Techno Dance, 7:30 p.m., temp gym tent

Continental Tire Bowl, 9 p.m., movie tent

##### Friday

Emerald Bowl (Navy v N.M.), 12:30 a.m., movie

tent

Pac Life Holiday Bowl (Texas Tech v Calif.), 4

a.m., movie tent

College basketball (Gonzaga v Mo.), 4 a.m.,

movie tent

Silicon Valley Football Classic (N. Ill. v Troy), 7

a.m., movie tent

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

Bon fire 6:30 p.m., beach

BBQ, 6:30 p.m., beach

Open Mic, 6:30 p.m., beach

Disco/Latin, 80s, R&B Night, 7:30 p.m., beach

Basketball Tournament, 8 p.m., Kuwaiti gym

Music City Bowl (Ala. v Minn.), 8 p.m., gym

Vitalis Sun Bowl (Ariz. State v Purdue), 10 p.m.

movie tent

AutoZone Liberty Bowl (Louisville v Boise State),

11:30 p.m., movie tent

##### Saturday

Peach Bowl (Mia. v Fla.), 3:30 a.m., movie tent

Chapel New Year picnic, noon, beach

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

Ping Pong Tournament, 6 p.m., new gym

Softball, 6 p.m., new gym

Outback Bowl (Ga. v Wis.), 7 p.m., movie tent

Gator Bowl (Va. v Fla. State), 8:30 p.m., gym tent

Capital One Bowl (Iowa v LSU), 9 p.m., gym tent

College basketball (Ga. Tech v Kan.), 10:30 p.m.,

movie tent

##### Sunday

Rose Bowl (Mich. v Texas), 12:30 a.m., movie

tent

Fiesta Bowl (Utah v Pitts.), 4:30 a.m., movie tent

Ultimate Footbal, noon, Kuwaiti Soccer field

Flag Football, 2 p.m., Kuwaiti Soccer field

Country Dance Instruction, 8 p.m., White tent

west gate

NFL Sunday, 9 p.m. and 12 a.m., movie tent

##### Monday

Cowboys v Giants, 4:30 a.m., movie tent

Darts Tournament, 6 p.m., Aerobics Room

Chess, Spades, Checkers, Dominoes, 6 p.m.,

new gym

##### Tuesday

Self Defense 1, 10 a.m., Aerobic Room

PS2 Tournament, 5 p.m., new gym

Chess, Spades, Checkers Dominoes, 6 p.m., new

gym

Country Western Dance, 8 p.m., White tent west

side

Self Defense 2, 8:30 p.m., gym (open area)

##### Wednesday

Foosball Tournament, 7 p.m., new gym

For more information, call 839-1009

#### Victory

##### Monday

MWR Bazaar, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., MWR tents

For more information, call 844-1138

#### Navistar

##### Wednesday

Karaoke Night, 8 p.m., MWR tent

##### Friday

New Year's Eve/Day party, MWR tent

For more information, call 823-1033

#### Virginia

For more information, call 832-1045

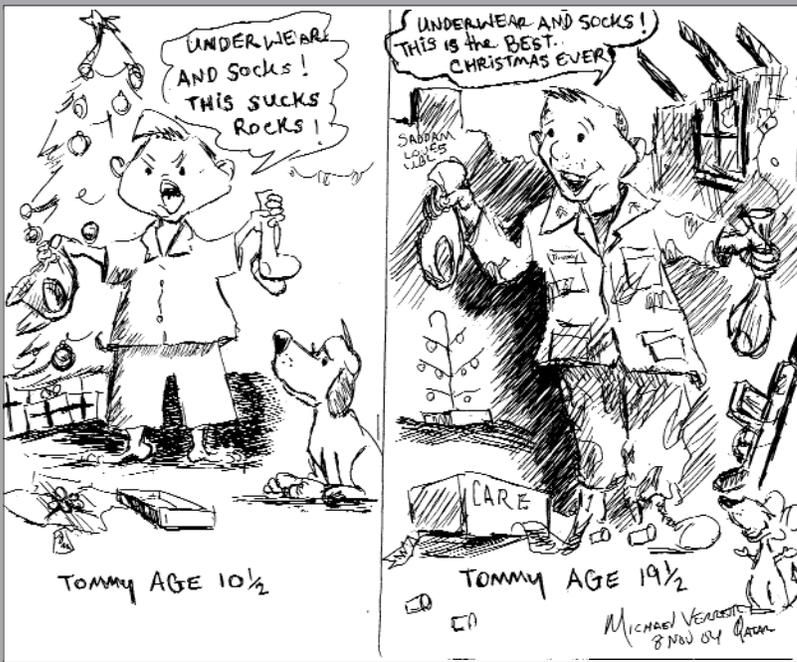
### Doha/Arifjan Shuttle Schedule

| Departs Doha Stop 1* | Arrives Doha Stop 2* | Departs Doha Stop 2* | Arrives Arifjan | Departs Arifjan | Arrives Doha Stop 1 |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
|                      | 0700                 | 0715                 | 0830            | 0845            | 1000                |
| 1015                 | 1025                 | 1040                 | 1200            | 1300            | 1430                |
| 1445                 | 1450                 | 1505                 | 1615            | 1630            | 1745                |
| 1900                 | 1910                 | 1925                 | 2045            |                 |                     |

\* Stop 1 is behind the Building 6 PAX Tent

Stop 2 is between Buildings 28 and 31

Please send your event to the DV editor. E-mail and address is listed on back of this issue.



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

# Some day

by Ruth Bracket

I remember when sacrifice was the hour I'd kill  
Ironing your uniform and packing up for drill  
48 hours to serve your country  
And two weeks in the summer was eternity

It's six months now since you were last home  
And like lots of other wives I spend my nights alone  
When I'm going to bed, you're getting up instead  
We make love in my dreams, my heart, my head

But that's okay  
Because some day  
You'll come home

I was out the other day mowing so things would look nice  
Came in for a drink of water and wiped the sweat from my eyes

Complained to myself that it's humid and there's no breeze  
What am I doing out here when it's nearly 90 degrees

Then I thought of you in the sand armoring up those  
Humvees  
Last time you called, said it was 128 degrees  
You work so hard trying to protect all those young boys  
Headin' up north in their supply convoys

And how dare I be mad, or the least bit sad  
Because some day  
You'll come home

Funny how time apart brought us closer together  
No doubt in my mind that I'll love you forever  
You're my hero now and you always will be  
I'm trying so hard to be good to make you proud of me

Happy letters are what good girls write  
But sometimes we include some little white lies  
Like nothing's broke and we're really fine  
Don't want to worry a Soldier with war on his mind

And I count the days left  
Too damn many days left  
Until some day  
When you'll come home

Then you'll step off that plane back to reality  
Into a life that's safe in the home of the free  
I'll give back the shirt you wore the day before you left  
Because it smelled of you, I just couldn't bring myself to  
ever wash it

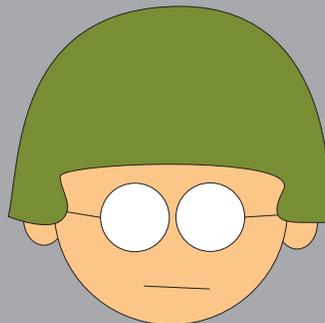
Honey, lots of things make me cry  
Like Toby Keith songs or watching eagles fly high  
That your son is getting taller while you're away  
Or jet streams since 9-11 on a crystal clear day

And I pray to God  
To keep you safe and strong  
'Til I can say I love you and hold you in my arms  
Some day  
Baby, some day  
You'll be home

# Texas thunder

by Staff Sgt. Dionicio Peña, 1836 Transportation Company

Insurgents take heed,  
beware out thunder  
For wherever the need,  
we'll go there and yonder  
We are Transportation,  
biggest trucks on the highway  
We'll leave you in frustration,  
and we'll do it our way  
Well roll through your gunfire  
your bombs on the road  
Through the muck and the mire,  
and deliver our load  
From Texas we hail,  
longhorns on our sides  
And we'll send you to hell,  
without breaking stride  
You'll know it was us,  
rolled through your futile attack  
You'll stomp, spit and cuss,  
your friend's dead on his back  
Insurgents beware,  
run and go under  
The Texans are there,  
all around, hear the thunder?



**DESERT  
VOICE**

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