

DESERT VOICE

February 1, 2006

Serving the U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait



A final tribute

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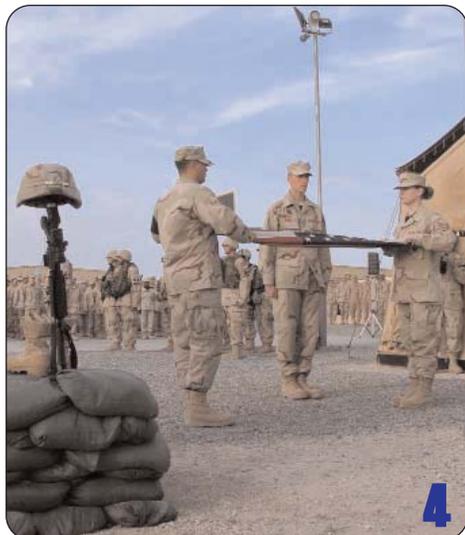
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On the cover

Air Force Staff Sgt. Patricia Findley

A final memorial tribute to Tech. Sgt. Jason Norton and Staff Sgt. Brian McElroy is displayed during a memorial retreat Friday.



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He who writes story gets to tell it

Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb
Third U.S. Army/CFLCC/ARCENT
Commander

"We have no memory of a lost battle to hand on to our children from this great campaign."

Gen. George S. Patton, 1944

When you think about military history, consider both our heritage and our unfolding contemporary history. Maybe you already know a lot about the Third U.S. Army and its colorful history since 1918, particularly during World War II.

The primary mission of a numbered army is campaign planning and command and control of subordinate units. Army staffs are relatively small. The Third U.S. Army staff during World War II was probably around 1,000 to 1,500 Soldiers, about what it is today. This was when everything was typed by hand, with carbon copies distributed to subordinate units. For the most part, an Army staff does not engage in combat but directs subordinate units in battles and campaigns. Consequently, few Soldiers in history have been authorized to wear a Third U.S. Army patch on the right shoulder signifying service in combat. During World War II, though, Third U.S. Army was an operational command under Patton, as we are today as we support OEF and OIF.

George S. Patton Jr. was one of the best-known and most effective American soldiers of World War II. Often surrounded by controversy, this talented general and his Third U.S. Army emerged from the war in Europe as heroes. Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall was the great

planner and military-political leader in Washington, one of the giants of the twentieth century, and Gen. Dwight Eisenhower commanded the allied effort in Europe and became President. But Patton was a colorful warrior, and made news. To the average troop, man or woman on the street he is best remembered for combat prowess. He was a remarkable leader and motivator to those who served under him, and although his command of Third Army was relatively short, 21 months, his name is forever associated with our history.

Patton held high standards and demanded the same from his staff officers and Soldiers. Such was his charisma that today - 60 years after the war - Soldiers who served with him take pride in announcing that they served in Patton's Third Army. The veterans almost universally say "Patton's Third Army" as if it were one word rather than just "Third Army." Veterans who served elsewhere in Europe or the Pacific usually identify with their division.

Patton had a unique impact on the ordinary Soldier - the dog-face who trained, fought the war, and lived to tell about it. Anecdotes of the general providing "on-the-spot guidance" to units, individual "chewing outs," and directing traffic to unclog a choke point are part of the folklore of the war.

Patton shaped the character of Third U.S. Army like no other person or event. Even today meetings end with a salute and "Patton's Own," an unofficial motto that speaks to his continued influence on Third U.S. Army Soldiers many years after

his death.

Each war has a public face. In Operation Iraqi Freedom it was Central Command's Gen. Tommy Franks. However, it was Third Army, functioning in its Coalition Forces Land Component Command role that planned and directed the ground war in Iraq. Again, history was made.

History is not always about the past but the need to document and preserve our contemporary unfolding history. Our Soldiers are too busy fighting and sustaining the war or resolving critical issues to think about their role in history, but making history is exactly what you are doing.

He who writes the story gets to tell the story. Those units who take the time to preserve and retire their written records are remembered in the future as historians use their surviving information to write and interpret history. During World War II, all documents - orders, after-action reviews, operations logs, intelligence summaries, prisoners of war interrogations, etc. - were typed on paper. At the end of the war these reports were all retired to the National Archives and Records Administration where they are preserved and available to the public today. Our World War II military records are an unsurpassed national treasure.

Today's computer environment presents new challenges for historians. History is not a thing of the future but is here now and can be electronically shared at all levels immediately. The potential is unlimited.

But it is hard to preserve and access digital information as time passes. Technology changes



Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb almost daily, storage devices and operating systems are replaced with better and faster versions. How long will a compact disk last in storage, only ten years or so?

Another contemporary history issue is our dependence on the Power Point slide. Critical decisions are made verbally based on the outcome of a slide presentation with just a few bullet points, but staffs seldom record the outcomes on paper. In time, everything becomes old and is deleted from the computer to make space for new and more relevant information.

As we continue Third U.S. Army, ARCENT and CFLCC's role in this current war as part of a Joint and Coalition team, I hope that you and your teammates will make a point in your commands, staff sections and functional groups to document, preserve and store your work and records. If our service is to be remembered, now is the time to start - I look forward to reading of your exploits! PATTON'S OWN.



Memorial services held for fallen Airmen

Air Force Staff Sgt.

Jasmine Reif

386th Air Expeditionary Wing

More than 500 Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and multinational partners attended a memorial service Friday at Camp Arifjan to pay their final respects to two Airmen who were killed in Iraq by an improvised explosive device Friday.

Tech. Sgt. Jason Norton, 32, and Staff Sgt. Brian McElroy, 28, were assigned to the 586th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, 70th Medium Truck Detachment. Their home base was Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. Both men were experienced members of Elmendorf's police force, the 3rd Security Forces Squadron, and left behind wives and children.

The memorial was held at the Zone 1 chapel and at the front of the room was a final memorial tribute and photos of the two Airmen.

The final tribute ceremony included a firing party, a roll call acknowledging their absence and emotional words from friends and colleagues.

When the memorial began it was standing room only and there wasn't a sound made amongst the attendees as a bag pipe musician began to play *Amazing Grace* from the back of the room.

The first speaker was Air Force Capt. Kimani Alston, 70th MTD commander, who spoke emotionally about the two Airmen.

"Sgt. Norton was my 'go-to guy.' His last mission was the first for our detachment to that new location. He was one of our best and was excited to go on the dangerous mission," Alston said. "Sgt. McElroy was chosen to be the driver and a driver must be strong and capable. The fact that he was chosen to drive should speak for itself."

Col. Mike Trapp, 586th Expeditionary Mission Support



Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Patricia Findley

Col. Tim Hale, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, prays for two fallen Airmen during a memorial retreat.

Group commander, asked everyone to remember why they were there.

"We're here to remember two Airmen who gave the ultimate sacrifice. They put the welfare of others above their own. Jason and Brian were called upon to join a new group of warriors and be transporters," Trapp said. "People were worried the Air Force wouldn't be up to it, but they were wrong and the Airmen have made the Air Force and Army proud. They leave behind a legacy of leadership and service that will follow me the rest of my life."

Close friends of the two Airmen then stood before the crowd and told personal stories about their friends they said they will never forget.

"Jason loved NASCAR, hunting and fishing and always had plenty of amusing stories to share," said Master Sgt. Timothy John, 70th MTD. "He loved the squad he commanded and his troops would follow him anywhere. He also loved his family and had very strong family values and we will all miss him."

Paying tribute to McElroy,

Staff Sgt. Richard Cleary, 70th MTD, said, "Brian always made us laugh and he always knew when to jump into a conversation to make us laugh even more. He was a family man and really enjoyed talking to his wife and kids. His mother gave him a gold cross that he always wore around his neck to remind him to never lose his faith. If you look back, remember the good times and remember him as a good friend."

Near the end of the ceremony Army Chaplain (1st Lt.) Dan Urquhart, gave a memorial message and the final roll call was performed.

Through the open chapel doors, the voice of a firing squad team leader gave commands. Following each series of commands, the crack of synchronized rifles firing single shots echoed through the doors.

There was hardly a dry eye as the official party began to render honors to the fallen heroes. After the ceremony ended, dozens of people waited in line to get the opportunity to render honors to their comrades in arms.

Later that afternoon, more than 600 Airmen at the 386th Air



More than 500 Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and multinational partners attended a memorial service Friday at Camp Arifjan.

Expeditionary Wing held a memorial retreat in Norton's and McElroy's honor. The retreat included a missing-man guardmount roll call and a 21-gun salute. During the memorial retreat, Col. Tim Hale, 386th AEW commander declared, "They have left us a bright torch to carry, men and women, fellow warriors, let's keep the torch moving forward. We owe it to these heroes. Drive on."

Slovakia mourns victims of crash

Spc. Janine Coogler
CFLCC PAO/11th PAD

Slovakia held a national day of mourning Jan. 23 in honor of 42 Slovakian soldiers and civilians who were killed in a plane crash in Hungary Jan. 19 when the plane flew off course and descended too early. There was only one survivor.

During the day of mourning, the Slovakian embassy held a memorial for the plane crash victims. Various political figures and military leaders came to express their condolences to the Slovakian ambassador.

The soldiers were headed home after completing a tour of

duty in Kosovo. The soldiers were a part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization-led Kosovo peacekeeping mission.

As a show of support to the country, various Coalition partners came to the Slovakian embassy sign a memorial book in respect for those who died.

Flags were flown half-staff during the day of mourning to grieve the loss and to remember the sacrifices of the deceased.

“It is good to see the amount of support from the Coalition

countries,” said Slovakian Dr. Jan Lisuch, Slovakian ambassador. “Most countries have lost troops in various efforts across

“The Slovakian soldiers honored their country by conducting missions for peace and progress. They showed dedication and courage by protecting other people’s lives

the globe. But no matter the cause, it is always a tragedy to lose life.”

A small country, Slovakia is one of many that volunteers troops to assist in various peacekeeping missions throughout the world, said Slovakian Master Sgt. Stefan Corma, Slovakian logistics officer.

“The Slovakian soldiers hon-

ored their country by conducting missions for peace and progress,” Lisuch said. “They showed dedication and courage by protecting other people’s lives and paid the ultimate price in doing so.”

The Slovakian military transport crashed and burst in flames in the mountainous region of northeastern Hungary, only 20 kilometers from its destination.

First Lt. Martin Farkas, the only survivor, was found in the plane’s restroom, which had minimum damage.

The crash is considered one of the deadliest in the country, Corma said. “It is so sad, especially since they were that close to home.”

Slovakia opens logistics office

Spc. Janine Coogler
CFLCC PAO/11th PAD

The Slovak Republic began preparation for establishing permanent accommodations to assist Slovak logistic officers in Kuwait in January.

Capt. Pavol Kobik and Master Sgt. Stefan Corma, Slovakian logistics officers, came to Kuwait to assist in the rotation of troops and make preparation for Slovakian troops.

“We are necessary for the smooth process of moving soldiers, materials and other requirements our troops need from the American side,” Kobik said.

The first resource for supporting Coalition Force troops is the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreements, Kobik said.

The ACSA is a mutual logistic support agreement between the United States and governments of North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the United Nations organization.

Under the ACAS policy the U.S. military is authorized to acquire and provide logistics support, supplies and services directly to eligible countries and international organizations.

“Our country is the second source of support,” Kobik explained. “The process of moving materials, equipment and troops must be coordinated and approved by our government.”

The third source of support comes from

the host nation, Kobik said.

“We purchase items that are too expensive to ship from Kuwait to assist in missions,” he said.

Although the logistics officers diligently work to make sure their troops in Iraq are equipped with everything necessary to complete

missions, Kobik and Corma said the success of their job contributes to the success of their troops.

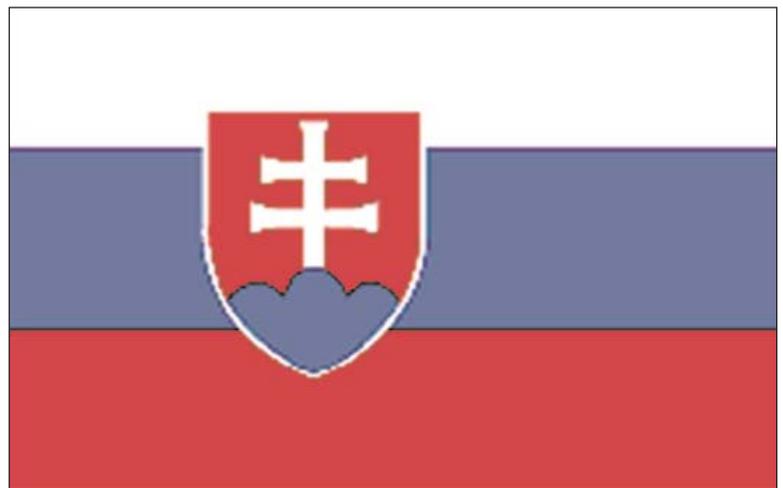
“Their mission is critical because it clears the area of ammunition that terrorists could possibly use to make more IEDs,” Corma said.

The troops collect the scattered ammunition around the area of responsibility and safely dispose of it.

In addition to the engineer unit, there are a few Slovakian troops who assist in the NATO training implementation mission in Iraq.

The troops help the Iraqi interim government with the training of its security forces.

With more than 100 troops in Iraq, the Slovak logistics officers came to Kuwait prepared to take on the task, Corma said.



“I’ve worked in Iraq directly with our engineering unit, so I am fully aware of items, equipment and the needs of our troops,” he said.

Kobik has more than two years of experience as a senior logistics officer in Kosovo, and Macedonia.

Their experience has helped in preparing their workspace in Kuwait, Corma said.

“Setting up our office and everything we need is normal routine. It is better that we have a routine because we know what to do and where we need to go,” he said.

Preparing to act as the communication link between the U.S. military and the Slovak military, the logistics officers begin their task to set up everything their troops need for rotation.

Commanding generals observe

Spc. Jonathan Montgomery
CFLCC PAO

The commanding generals of two U.S. armies visited Udairi Range Jan. 25 to observe Soldiers training on the counter-improvised explosive device training exercise lanes.

Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, First U.S. Army commanding general, and Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third U.S. Army/U.S. Army Forces Central Command/Coalition Forces Land Component Command commanding general, talked about the need for Soldiers to stay current on their operational tactics, techniques and procedures.

"IEDs are one of the biggest killers," Honore said. "The fact that you're here is indicative of that."

Talking with Soldiers just coming back from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan remains the best route to defeating IEDs, Honore said.

"Recruit people demobilizing, especially the young gunners out there coming off the battlefield," Honore said. "Take advantage and debrief them. Make sure your information stays fresh."

Adaptive training is an essential tool to winning the Global War on Terrorism, Honore said.

"Training is only limited to the imagination," he said. "Keep it interesting and relevant and continue to codify and keep it up to date."

"This war is just a picture of the future," he added. "It might be in a different country but the enemy will extend these (improvised) techniques as a way to influence political policies."

Honore said setting the stage for IED defeat means keeping the situation training exercises as realistic as possible.

"The first word in IED is 'improvised,'" he said. "That says the enemy created this stuff

out of a junkyard. Go to the junkyard and grab what you need to make your training station lanes realistic."

Whitcomb spoke to troops on the need to focus on pre-combat checks and pre-combat rehearsals prior to heading to places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Change starts with the individual," Whitcomb said. "We have to clean up the battlefield and make it a thinking-man's environment versus a shoot-your-way-out environment."

Throughout the convoy C-IED lane exercise, 1st Armored Division Soldiers reacted to downed vehicles, vehicle-borne IEDs, casualty evacuations, detainee arrests, and navigating a convoy through traffic and crowded streets.

"It's going to be you out there running this kind of operation," Whitcomb said about achieving tactical proficiency.

He added, "This is a hard, hard business. You are the tip of that bayonet."

"This kind of scenario is coming at you fast," he said. "Think, stay a step ahead of the enemy, and use all your resources. Common sense is your greatest weapon."

One of the worst things a Soldier can do is fall into complacency, Whitcomb said.

"It's what I like to call the 'loose-strap syndrome,'" he said. "When I see a Soldier who likes to wear his chin strap loose and lay his rifle up against the wall... that's where I want to attack."

"The enemy is smart," Whitcomb added. "They watch what you do, your tactics. If you're having success now, you'd better change what you're doing in two weeks."

Overall, Whitcomb and Honore said Soldiers everywhere are doing a great job to make the world a safer place for future generations.



Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third U.S. Army/ARCENT/CFLCC commanding general, speaks to 1st Armored Division Soldiers during an after action review summing up a convoy operation exercise geared toward countering improvised explosive devices Jan. 25 at Udairi Range.



Lt. Gen. Russell Honore, First U.S. Army commanding general, (far left) fields Soldiers' questions on training the force. Earlier in the day, Honore viewed a convoy operation exercise geared toward countering improvised explosive devices Jan. 25 at Udairi Range.

"I remain proud of you guys," Whitcomb said. "You guys are well trained."

"It's a thinking-Soldier's

game," Honore said. "Nothing matches the intuitive sense you have. Thank you for your service."

ve counter-IED training



Photos by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

Soldiers participate in a convoy operation exercise geared toward countering improvised explosive devices Jan. 25 at Udairi Range.



Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, First U.S. Army commanding general, talks to troops during convoy counter-improvised explosive device training operations Jan. 25 at Udairi Range.

The HEAT is on

Spc. Robert Adams

Assistant Editor

A new training device is being developed by Coalition Forces Land Component Command personnel in Kuwait to reduce or eliminate injury or death suffered by troops involved in humvee rollovers in theater.

The device evolved from a comment by then Forces Command commanding general, Gen. Larry Ellis following the deaths of three Soldiers Dec. 8, 2003, when their Stryker overturned into a canal, said Chief Warrant Officer Rik Cox, Forces Command safety officer.

"The aviators train on the Dilbert Dunker, why can't we do something like that for the ground troops?" Ellis said, according to Cox.

That comment was the impetus for the FORSCOM Safety Office to investigate expanding the helicopter egress training device into a ground-based program called the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer or HEAT, said Cox, HEAT project organizer.

Cox got the go-ahead in March 2005 to develop a device based on the Dilbert Dunker, a Navy Aviator training device that teaches air crews how to escape following a ditching at sea. He said the first Soldier was hanging upside down from his seatbelt in the first HEAT prototype built by U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers in September 2005.

With a photo of the first prototype, Forward Repair Activity, Army Materiel Command technicians in Kuwait decided to take the idea and immediately design an upgraded prototype here in Kuwait.

"We were presented with an idea to save troops' lives," said Christopher Turner, Forward Repair Activity, Army Materiel Command.

To build the first prototype in theater, Turner and Ricky Kline, FRA, AMC, acquired the humvee



Sgt. Jeffery L. Johnson, 233rd Transportation Company truck driver, crawls out of the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer Jan. 23 at Camp Arifjan.

shell, gear boxes and stand from the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office and the retro-grade yard and built it in one month.

The equipment wasn't going to be used; everything was used parts, so this saved the Army a lot of time and money to put together, Kline said.

Coalition Forces Land Component Command is now using the prototype as a proactive measure to prevent future rollover accidents by applying the HEAT concept to train Soldiers in Kuwait and, eventually, to troops all over the Middle East region.

The newly built HEAT prototype is composed of a suspended humvee cab mounted to an elevated M-1 engine maintenance stand raised on a trailer. The attached motor can turn the device 180 degrees in either direction in six seconds to simulate a humvee rolling over.

"We took something that didn't exist in theater and made it work," Turner said. "We are now testing it to make sure it is going to save a Soldier's life, which is what this is all about." Approximately 250 Soldiers have been severely injured in rollovers since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Another prototype is currently in production and will be tweaked pending any suggestions from trainers who have tested the initial model. In the near future, six HEAT simulators will be



Photos by Spc. Robert Adams

Sgt. Shawn Heitzman, 233rd Transportation Company truck driver, sits in the driver's seat of the HEAT trainer Jan. 23 at Camp Arifjan as it simulates a humvee at a 30-degree angle before rolling over. The HEAT simulations program teaches servicemembers about roll-over conditions, avoidance and immediate action taken after one has occurred.

located at camps throughout Kuwait to train Soldiers.

Troops got the opportunity to test out the simulator Jan. 23 at Camp Arifjan in conjunction with the CFLCC quarterly safety conference.

"I'd make it mandatory for everybody because when you roll up north you never know what will happen," said Sgt. Jeffery Johnson, 233rd Transportation Company truck driver.

Johnson is a master driver and will eventually train his Soldiers on the same simulator.

"The training helps you get out of the truck quickly," Johnson said. "It helps you realize that when you lose your bearing, you have to keep calm."

After Soldiers fasten their seat belts, the operator first turns the humvee in either direction 30 degrees to simulate the point when it is expected to rollover, Cox said.

The humvee will then complete a 180-degree turn to suspend the humvee upside down.

"When you actually hang upside down from your seatbelt while wearing full battle rattle, the seed is planted that the seatbelt just might save your face in a real accident," Cox said.

"It sends a blood rush to your head," Johnson said. "When you

release your seatbelt you fall on your head, you get jammed, and you have to wiggle your way out."

Soldiers must unfasten themselves and work together to get a door open and exit to safety as quick as possible.

"Repeated training will take a crew from fumbling their way out of the vehicle in 45 to 90 seconds to having all four members of the crew outside the vehicle ready to engage the enemy in six seconds," Cox said.

Servicemembers going through the HEAT program will also learn about rollover conditions, avoidance and preventive checks and safety measures.

The training will build upon current humvee training, enhanced and safe drivers training courses, and existing in-unit rollover drill training.

"The most important part of HEAT is to educate our Soldiers so they will avoid getting into a rollover situation," said Col. John Gallagher, CFLCC Army Reserve Affairs chief of staff. "Then they will have the confidence to react as they were trained and survive."

"Cox saw a problem and did something about it," Gallagher said. "That fact alone will save countless lives in the future."



Sgt. Matthew Acosta

Soldiers and their M3A3 Cavalry Fighting Vehicles from the 3rd Infantry Division, Task Force Liberty, provide backup firepower for Iraqi police at a traffic control point in Tikrit.

Same war, new mission

3ID Armor Soldiers find new duty

Spc. Michael R. Noggle

CFLCC PAO/11th PAD

They were the first to invade Iraq, rolling through the streets of Baghdad in tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. Millions around the world viewed on national television as the armor units of the 3rd Infantry Division marched into a country defended by the forces of Saddam Hussein's army and insurgents.

Following 3rd ID's deployment the Army released a plan to turn the one-time mechanized division into several units of action, taking Soldiers who were once M1 Abrams and M2 Bradley tank operators and making them infantrymen.

"The biggest thing was walking around a lot," said Spc. Verjell Williams, Company D, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment tank operator. "As tankers, we are driving everywhere, but in Iraq we walked around patrols throughout the red zone."

Williams, like many within the unit, was required to leave the driver's seat of his tank and switch to the leg-work of infantrymen just months prior to their deployment.

"They switched it up on us," he said about

his unit. "The whole year we trained on the tanks, went to the field with the tanks... Two months before deployment they trained us on how to be infantry."

The unit needed personnel to conduct sweeps and raids through the hotbed of all insurgent activity.

"When you went out the door, you were bound to get something shot at you," said Master Sgt. Sidney Colon, 3rd Bn., 69th Armor Regiment. "Samara was out of control and insurgent heaven."

"It was nerve-racking at the beginning going out on these missions," Williams said. "We didn't have the same protection walking around as if we were in the tanks. We had to be concerned with the snipers and mortar rockets."

With the need for their armor capabilities, the mechanized units were scattered north of Baghdad, providing security along the main support route as well as force protection on their camps and checkpoints throughout the city of Tikrit and nearby villages.

"Our armored units were used effectively," Williams said. "Once the insurgents heard our tanks reacting to an attack, they ran."

"The armor was the heavy force," Colon said. "Once they showed up, all insurgent activity would quiet down."

Colon credited this operation to the one similar in 2001, when units rotated in and out of Kosovo and Bosnia, performing essential peace-keeping duties. It started a trend for these units to be "non-linear" on the battlefield. He said it's not that everyone is an infantryman, but everyone has to be well aware of what's on the battlefield.

"They started to get the deal in Kosovo and Bosnia," he said. "Everyone needed to be prepared. The tankers and scouts would be doing raids and sweeps just like the infantry."

Along with the patrol mission, some Soldiers from Williams' unit trained Iraqi Soldiers, transforming them from an Iraqi National Guard to an Iraqi Army.

"We trained the Iraqi National Guard," he said. "We taught them the basic infantry tactics, conducting sweeps and searching buildings. Once that happened, they did their own missions."

Williams said he plans to forgo additional training on infantry and resume his job as tank operator once he redeployes.



Photos by Spc. Jonathan Montgomery

Two troops look through the shipment of sporting goods to start making kits. The kits will go out to troops in Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar and the Horn of Africa.

Operation Slugger hits a home run for troops overseas

Spc. Jonathan Montgomery
CFLCC PAO

Marine Lance Cpl. Christopher Sherman has a problem. It's not the roadside bombs or the rooftop snipers that endanger him and his comrades in Iraq on an almost daily basis. It's his gear ... his sports gear, or lack thereof.

"We have one ball and one wood bat," he writes from the war-torn country.

"The ball is torn up, because we don't have gloves to catch the ball, so we play home-run derby with rocks. It's not very much fun, so if there is any way that you could help us, we would greatly appreciate it," he continued to write.

Well, because of Operation Slugger, help is literally on the way.

A 40-foot container packed with 26,000 pounds of assorted sporting goods and worth approximately \$499,000 was recently rail loaded in Louisville, Ky., arrived in San Pedro, Calif., and then boat loaded for a final Pacific voyage to the Port of Shuwaik, Kuwait, for proportional distribution to U.S. troops.

Through the donated sports equipment program, U.S. troops stationed overseas in Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, Qatar and the Horn of Africa are receiving 300 sports kits worth approximately \$1,700 each.

The number of kits will be divided up based on the U.S. military population of each country: Iraq will get 230 kits; Afghanistan 29 kits; Kuwait 26 kits; Horn of Africa five kits; and Qatar 10 kits.

Each kit includes baseball and softball gloves, bats, balls and hats, footballs, basketballs, rugby balls and soccer balls. Each kit also includes volleyball and badminton sets, Frisbees, an air pump, Hacky Sack and a duffel bag to hold it all.

Operation Slugger came about after a famed bat-manufacturing company in Kentucky received numerous e-mails from U.S. Soldiers requesting baseball bats and gloves to replace equipment that had worn out from repeated use or for those troops who didn't have any sporting equipment.

The Operation Slugger team, comprised of nationally known businesses and organizations with USA Cares as the lead team, spearheaded the campaign dedi-

cated to boosting morale among U.S. troops in the Middle East.

Some 100 Veterans of Foreign Wars posts located across the country served as collection points for the donated equipment.

Roger Stradley, chief operating officer for USA Cares, a Kentucky-based nonprofit group that offers support to military families, said the Operation Slugger program signals to the troops that they haven't been forgotten back home.

"A lot of us ride around with bumper stickers on our cars," he said. "But this is more than a bumper sticker. This is a display of the emotion and the passion that I believe Americans have for their troops."

Sgt. 1st Class Larry Laster, Coalition Forces Land Component Command Surface Branch noncommissioned officer in charge responsible for tracking the Operation Slugger shipment into the Port of Shuwaik, agreed.

"The Soldiers will be well-pleased with this equipment. It'll take their minds off being deployed and being so far away from home," he said. "It'll also bring the Soldiers closer together and show them that Americans do care."



Navy Senior Chief Raymond Covarrubias checks out the shipment of bats.

Navy Senior Chief Raymond Covarrubias, a storekeeper stationed in Balad, Iraq said the amount of support coming from those back home never ceases to amaze.

"It's nice that people go out of their way to provide for the troops," said Covarrubias. "To get something like this sends a little of home to us. It's good to see. Make sure to tell them thanks."

Community

happenings for Feb. 1 through Feb. 8

Arifjan

Wednesday

Be My Valentine photo e-card, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Community Center

Texas Hold 'em poker, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Bench-press competition sign-up, Zone 1 and 6 Fitness Centers

Winter basketball league, through February 28

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
Cardio kickboxing, 5 a.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Thursday

Bench-press competition sign-up, Zone 1 and 6 Fitness Centers

Kickboxing extreme, 6 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Ballroom dancing, 8 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Brazilian Jujitsu, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Friday

Boxing class, 8 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Saturday

Pool tournament, 8-ball, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Community Center

Bench-press competition, mandatory weigh-in, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m., mandatory briefing, 6:30 p.m., competition, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Fitness Center

Brazilian Jujitsu, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Old-School Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 food court

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
Cardio kickboxing, 5 a.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Sunday

Super Bowl XL, 11 p.m., Zone 1 and 6 Community Centers

Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage

Hip-Hop Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Monday

Karaoke Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Brazilian Jujitsu, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Tuesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Kickboxing extreme, 6 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Brazilian Jujitsu, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Fitness Center

Ballroom dancing, 8 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center

Cardio kickboxing, 5 a.m., Zone 1 Fitness Center

Wednesday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 Community Center

Country Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage

For more information call

430-1205/1302

Buehring

Wednesday

Valentine Card making, 10 a.m., MWR Oasis
Weekly fun run 7.5k, 5:30 p.m., Hole-in-One donut

Texas Hold 'em tournament, 7 p.m., MWR Oasis

Friday

Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Events tent

Saturday

Spa Day

Super Bowl Punt, Pass, Kick, 9 a.m., field

Chess tournament, 3 p.m., MWR Oasis

Checkers tournament, 5 p.m., MWR Oasis

Sunday

Spa Day

Darts tournament, 7 p.m., recreation center

Super Bowl Party, midnight, MWR stage

Monday

Spoon tournament, 7 p.m., MWR Oasis

Aerobics class, 7 p.m., Aerobics tent

Tuesday

Aerobics class, 7 p.m., Aerobics tent

Wednesday

Weekly fun run 10k, 5:30 p.m., Hole-in-One donut

Halo tournament, 7 p.m., Palms

For more information call

828-1340

Kuwait Naval Base

For information call 839-1063

Navistar

For information call 844-1137

Spearhead/SPOD

For information call 825-1302

Victory

Wednesday

Spa Day, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., MWR dayroom
Black History trivia, 6 p.m., MFT

Thursday

Groundhog Day 5k, 6 a.m., Gym

Bazaar, 9 a.m. - 7 p.m., MFT

Friday

Flashback Fridays Dance, 8:30 p.m., MFT

Saturday

Hip-hop and R&B Night, 8:30 p.m., MFT

Monday

Super Bowl XL party, 2 a.m., MFT

Spa Day, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., MWR dayroom

Tuesday

Spa Day, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., MWR dayroom

Horseshoes, 3 p.m., MWR courts

Wednesday

100 man 10-k march, 6 a.m., Gym

Spa Day, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., MWR dayroom

black history art contest starts

1000 pound club contest, 3 p.m., Gym

For more information call

823-1033

Virginia

Wednesday

Pingpong tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center

Thursday

Basketball tournament, 5 vs. 5, 6 p.m.,

Basketball court

Karaoke Night, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

Friday

Bazaar, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Dusty Room

Salsa Night, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

Saturday

Black History month 5k run, 4:30 p.m.,

Dusty Room

Sunday

Old-school Jams, 8 p.m., Dusty Room

Monday

Super Bowl XL, live, 2 a.m., Dusty Room and Community Center

Chess, 7 p.m., Community Center

Tuesday

Unit Feud, 7 p.m., Dusty Room

Wednesday

Uno Night, 7 p.m., Community Center

For more information call

832-1045

Paying final respects

