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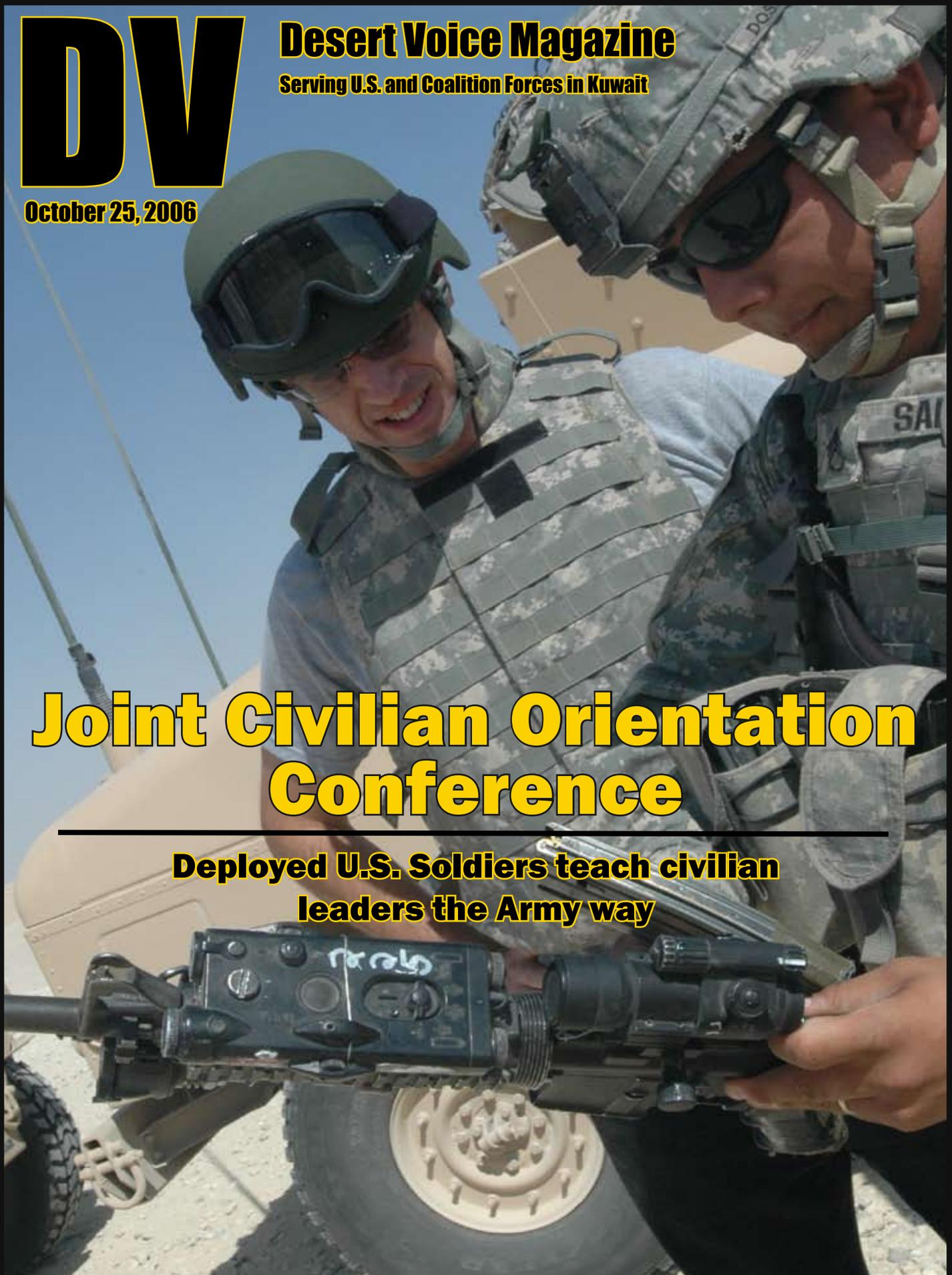
Desert Voice Magazine

Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

October 25, 2006

Joint Civilian Orientation Conference

Deployed U.S. Soldiers teach civilian leaders the Army way



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Army Strong: A look at the
new logo

On the cover

A U.S. Soldier trains Joint Civilian
Orientation Conference attendee,
Timothy Clark, on rifle safety and
marksmanship on a training range
in Kuwait, Oct. 19.

Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

Physically, emotionally and mentally **ARMY STRONG.**

**Troops of Third
Army/U.S. Army
Central:**

On 9 October 2006, Honorable Francis J. Harvey, Secretary of the Army, and our Chief of Staff, General Peter J. Schoomaker announced the launching of the Army's new advertising campaign, *ARMY STRONG*, at the Association of the United States Army's Annual Symposium in Washington, D.C.

This announcement marked the beginning of an internal campaign aimed at informing and educating the Army family before officially releasing *ARMY STRONG* to the public on Nov. 9. This campaign will help build support for the campaign by ensuring a greater understanding of the new campaign. I ask each and every member of the Third Army/ARCENT team to watch the *ARMY STRONG* video by clicking on the following links [low resolution] https://freddie.forscom.army.mil/3a_ra/army_strong/low_res.wmv, [high resolution] https://freddie.forscom.army.mil/3a_ra/army_strong/high_res.wmv. I believe it precisely captures the true character of the American Soldier, the Army family and our Soldiers in Slacks—our



**Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb
Third Army/ARCENT
Commanding General**

civilian work force, and is a visual representation of the "ethos" of this campaign.

Our Army team is mentally, emotionally and physically strong. Our Soldiers develop their enduring strength through challenging training, teamwork, shared values and personal experience forged

by ongoing operations around the world.

More than any advertising campaign can convey, each of you represents and reflects the essence of our Army. The Third Army/ARCENT team's presence in Atlanta, Kuwait, Qatar and throughout our area of responsibility, conveys Army strength, professionalism and capability in a time of war. In your daily lives, interacting in your community, an airport, at work and at Army installations and small villages around the world, you demonstrate the *ARMY STRONG* message.

ARMY STRONG is about every Soldier. It is about the generations of men and women who have served, are serving today, and will serve our Nation tomorrow.

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Magazine

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Avoiding disaster

Soldiers hone skills on aviation equipment

Story and photo by

Staff Sgt. Patrick N. Moes
Desert Voice Editor

From planes and helicopters to bullets and artillery shells, the one thing they all have in common is they use the same airspace to get to their destination.

With the realization of possible friendly-fire accidents as a result of these flying pieces came the need for a system to monitor every asset in the air. The system to monitor this airspace is known as the Tactical Airspace Integration System, commonly referred to as TAIS.

Developed shortly after the Gulf War, TAIS filled the need to manage the military's airspace, said Carlos Bonilla, a Brown International Corporation contractor.

"TAIS will give an overall view of assets to include aviation, helicopter and unmanned aerial vehicles," said Sgt. 1st Class Louis Monroe, the Third Army/U.S. Army Central C3 Aviation noncommissioned officer in charge. "It allows commanders the ability to safely assess the current situation and also allows them the opportunity to make more sound decisions."

In addition of the view of the battlefield, TAIS gives Soldiers the ability to determine whether aircraft is friendly, enemy or civilian. Monroe said it also assures aviation elements have clean routes to their destination without the fear of artillery shells flying overhead.

Introduced to Third Army/ U.S. Army Central around the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Bonilla said it is being used to monitor all aircraft transfer orders in the theater.

TAIS is one of many Battle

Command Systems that allow for staff elements to clear air space. The aviation staff works directly with the fire support staff ensuring aviation and artillery are not in the same air space at the same time.

Monroe, a Lorain, Ohio, native, said his staff is also using TAIS to track the flights in and around Kuwait.

Although the majority of flight approval comes from the 4th Battlefield Coordination Detachment in Qatar, Third Army/ U.S. Army Central C3 Aviation still tracks all the requests.

Their tracking is due in part to the staff's ability to rapidly deploy as a part of Third Army/ U.S. Army Central's mission to establish an early entry control point. By tracking the ATOs, the staff has the ability to stay up to date on their equipment, said Bonilla, the Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, native.

In addition to being ready to deploy at a moments notice, Bonilla provides sustainment training for the aviation staff. He added Third Army/ U.S. Army Central has a lot of the best equipment in the Army and the



Carlos Bonilla, a Brown International Corporation contractor, installs cable monitors in preparation for sustainment training on the Tactical Airspace Integration System with the Third Army/ U.S. Army Central C3 Aviation staff.

Soldiers learn many systems here. The retired sergeant first class said the Soldiers needed the sustainment training to stay among the best.

The training provided by Bonilla allows the aviation Soldiers to be fully capable and battle ready, which enables the Soldiers to move forward at a moments notice.

THE GATEKEEPERS

U.S. Navy Customs Battalion 'Romeo' deployed to find prohibited items coming back to the United States

Story and Photos by

Sgt. 1st Class Sharon G. McBride
40th PAD NCOIC

"The weirdest thing I've ever come across when I was checking a bag was a huge spider. I saw that and about jumped out of my skin," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Tamica Burris. "It was a souvenir and the (Soldier) got to keep it because it was preserved

correctly and in glass. I just have a 'thing' about bugs."

Checking bags for illegal items and coming across unusual stuff is part of her normal work day, she said. Burris is part of the Navy Customs Battalion "Romeo" in Kuwait.

"Romeo" is made up of U.S. Navy Reservists from across 44 states and they are responsible for inspecting every piece of baggage and luggage that goes in and out of theater in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Last year, over one million bags came through here," said Navy Lt. j.g. Linda Ashford, assistant commander of Co. B, Navy Customs Battalion "Romeo." On a daily basis, thousands of servicemembers from every branch of the military go through the customs point.

That's a lot of baggage, she said. And most days each bag comes with stuff that has its own special story.

"Stuffed animals sent from loved ones, lingerie, cards... you know, sentimental items that you wouldn't expect servicemembers to have necessarily," she said.

"But we are checking for things that would hurt the U.S. if it slipped through the system," said Ashford. Typical items might be like illegal weapons, agriculture or illegal war trophies, she said. "The weirdest thing I found was an old grenade," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Kristen Bauman, about going through a bag. "The servicemember was not allowed to keep that."

Servicemembers who are transitioning home don't always know what to expect, she said.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Kristen Bauman talks with Maj. Derek Bonaldo at an amnesty checkpoint. Bauman belongs to the Navy Customs Battalion "Romeo" and is responsible for helping servicemembers to not take illegal items like war trophies out of theater.



Soldiers get their baggage checked by an X-ray machine. The Sailors of the Navy Customs Battalion "Romeo" are responsible for checking every piece of luggage.

"They are immediately briefed on what they can and cannot take home," she said. Amnesty boxes are placed in convenient areas, so servicemembers can get rid of items discreetly if the need arises.

"Most (servicemembers) aren't intending to do something illegal by packing unauthorized items," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Jennifer Cox, who works in the amnesty area. "But we give them several opportunities to get rid of stuff before they get into trouble."



A Soldier puts an item in the amnesty box booth. The booth provides privacy for Soldiers wanting to get rid of items that they legally can't take out of theater.

In most cases, said Ashford, the inspections go smoothly and no real problems arise.

"Sometimes they feel like we have invaded their bubble," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Evelyn Sellers, said about her job of inspecting bags.

Servicemembers are required to empty out their bags entirely while a member of the "Romeo" battalion inspects the contents piece by piece.

"But most take it in stride because they know it's a

necessary last step before going home to be with loved ones," said Sellers.

KUWAIT MAIL TERMINAL READY FOR 5.5 MILLION POUNDS OF MAIL IN 2 MONTHS: 'WE'

Story and photos by

Sgt. Chris Jones
Desert Voice Staff Writer

The Joint Military Mail Terminal-Kuwait is gearing up for, by far, its busiest two months of the year, the time when servicemembers are sending and receiving packages for the holiday season.

The staff at the JMMT-K at Camp

Arifjan are taking steps to ensure the mail process doesn't miss a beat during November and early December.

According to statistics provided by the JMMT-K, approximately 2.5 million pounds of mail was sent to servicemembers in the JMMT-K area of operations last November, and more than 3 million pounds was sent home by servicemembers.

One of the first things the Soldiers, contractors and DoD civilians at JMMT-K are doing to get ready for this influx in mail is, simply, preparing to work some long hours. With unwavering resolve to process mail on the day it arrives, the staff knows there will be plenty of overtime involved.

"Whenever the volume of mail increases, we do work longer hours," said Allen Watson, branch manager of JMMT-K. "We're ready to work long hours, because it's the [holidays], and those Soldiers want their packages."

Watson, an Air Force retiree who had deployed to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, said his prior military experience gives him understanding as to how deployed servicemembers feel when they receive mail, especially during the holidays.

"I know what it feels like to be deployed and get mail," Watson said. "You're on camp all the time...and then you get a package in the mail – it's such a morale boost."

Where does this mail go? The JMMT-K processes mail coming in and out of every camp in Kuwait, as well as a few in Southern Iraq – Camp Delta, Camp Adder and Camp Bucca. Altogether, the facility manages a total of 10 post offices in the region.

The JMMT-K is the focal point for all mail in the region. After it is processed, outgoing mail heads to Bahrain (the main hub for the Central Command area of operations), then to the U.S., while incoming mail is shipped off to Kuwait and Southern Iraq.

"We're basically a hub, a distribution center," said Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Arrington, JMMT-K noncommissioned officer in charge and member of the 3rd Personnel Command, which recently relieved the 1st Personnel Command.

A Soldier in the Army Reserve who back home works at a similar civilian mail hub in Asheville, N.C., Arrington said his role in Kuwait is to assist the contractors at the JMMT-K in any way he can.

"[The contractors] are in charge, we



A contractor with Combat Support Associates sorts out packages of retro-grade mail to be sent out of theater, at the Joint Military Mail Terminal on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 17.

OR HOLIDAYS

RE READY TO WORK LONG HOURS.'



After packages exit the X-ray machine, a Combat Support Associates contractor stacks packages and bags of mail at the Joint Military Mail Terminal on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 17

Soldiers are here to make their life easier,” said Arrington.

Another role the military plays at the JMMT-K is to send distribution reports to camps in Kuwait and southern Iraq to let the post offices know how much mail they should expect to arrive.

Every piece of mail that goes through the JMMT-K goes through a high-tech X-ray system. With this particular X-ray, every once in a while the computer will show a picture of a weapon or another illegal item that isn’t really in the package, and it is the operator’s job to identify it. These images are preloaded in the computer and appear from time to time.

“The computer plays those little tricks; it helps keep the operator alert,” said Maj. Sharon Weston, JMMT-K officer-in-charge. “It’s a way to keep the operator fresh, and make sure he’s seeing what he needs to be seeing.”

After the inspections, mail is packaged by Kellogg, Brown and Root and distributed by contractors from Public Warehousing Company. PBC faces a dangerous job, as three of the camps they

deliver to involve crossing the Iraqi border.

Another job of the JMMT-K is to keep an updated roster of units in Iraq and Kuwait, so mail can automatically be forwarded to the Soldiers, if their unit relocates.

As the holiday season approaches, the JMMT-K is gearing up for a hefty workload – but it’s the kind of work that couldn’t be any more rewarding, said Arrington, who spent four years active duty with the 101st Airborne Division, before heading to the Army Reserve.

“Just today, I got a letter from my work buddies back home,” said Arrington. “That means a lot.”

As for Watson, who has now worked in Kuwait for six years, he recalled when the Iraq war began. He and other civilian contractors were given the option of going back to the U.S. He stayed put, and he hasn’t thought about going home since.

“I have a passion for mail,” said Watson. “I got that passion from my time in the military, and now that I’m on the other side, it feels good to help.”

DON’T PACK

- WEAPONS (INCLUDING KNIVES WITH BLADES WHICH OPEN BY HAND PRESSURE)
- DRUGS OR ALCOHOL (.5 PERCENT OR MORE ALCOHOL BY CONTENT)
- FOOD PRODUCTS LACED WITH ALCOHOL
- PERISHABLE MATTER, TO INCLUDE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES UNLESS PRESENTED IN A DRY CONDITION
- SEXUALLY-ORIENTED MATERIAL
- PRINTED MATERIAL INCITING VIOLENCE
- HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, INCLUDING FLAMMABLE AND COMBUSTIBLE LIQUIDS, GASES AND SOLIDS
- MATCHES AND CIGARETTE LIGHTERS
- MAGNETIZED MATERIALS, INCLUDING COMPASSES
- SAND AND SOIL
- MILITARY-ISSUED EQUIPMENT
- NON-MAILABLE WAR TROPHIES, DEFINED AS ANYTHING CAPTURED OR ABANDONED ENEMY MATERIAL.

Note: The post office recommends packaging gifts seven to 10 business days before Dec. 25.

Joint Civilian Orientation Conference

Civilian leaders spend 2 days in the life of a deployed U.S. servicemember

Sgt. Chris Jones
Desert Voice Staff Writer

Forty-five civilian leaders from across the United States spent two days with servicemembers in Kuwait, learning about their jobs and gaining appreciation for what it takes to be deployed.

Geoffrey Stack, managing director of the California-based Sares-Regis Group, said the trip was rewarding because, "I got to find out about what's going on over here, and show my support in doing so."

After a briefing at Camp Arifjan Oct. 18, Joint Civilian Orientation Conference attendees were set for two busy days of simulated

rollovers, weapons firing, improvised explosive device training and a hearty military lunch – a meal ready to eat.

After the briefing Oct. 18, JCOC attendees paid a visit to Forward Repair Activities. At the FRA, attendees got a chance to see the men and women who work to up-armor Soldiers' vehicles. Many also geared up in helmets and body armor to take part in the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer, commonly known as HEAT.

Attendees spent the following day at Udairi Range, participating in many of the military's pre-deployment training, including an improvised explosive device training range. On the IED range, participants went along with Soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division, looking out

for IEDs as well as potential enemy ambushes.

Each vehicle on the IED lane included two Soldiers and two JCOC participants. The JCOC attendees manned both the truck commander position and the machine gun, allowed to fire blank rounds at enemy threats.

Many of the JCOC participants said they were amazed at the heat, particularly with the heavy gear they wore.

Krestine Corbin, president and CEO of the Nevada-based Sierra Machinery, Inc., said, "It was a new experience. It really makes you appreciate what Soldiers do out here, with the heavy equipment and the hot weather."

The final event of Oct. 19 was the



Photo by Sgt. Carlos M. Burger II

Judge Alex Ferrer of the syndicated television show "Judge Alex" sends rounds downrange in the small arms training event of the JCOC.

weapons training, where attendees trained on the M-4 rifle and several heavy weapons, including the M-249 squad automatic weapon. Both Marines and Soldiers contributed to training the JCOC attendees, then provided safety tips as the attendees fired the weapons at the ranges.

“I’ve been incredibly impressed by everyone from every service. Just high quality troops, very impressive,” said Stack, a former Marine and Vietnam veteran.

Stack found out about JCOC through a friend he knew while in the Marine Corps, who is now the supreme allied commander of Europe – Gen. James Jones.

“We are friends, and he asked me if I’d like to check out what our troops are doing, and I said, ‘yes,’” said Stack.

The weapons firing concluded an experience unlike what some participants may ever see again – a chance to spend time with deployed servicemembers and bring those experiences back to the U.S.

“I’m very much behind our armed forces,” said Corbin, “and I very much believe that if we want to remain free, we have got to earn it. I get agitated by people saying we’ve got to cut and run, because I know if we leave, the mission will fail.”

Corbin said she learned a lot about the character of U.S. servicemembers, and is looking forward to “bragging” about the military to friends back home.

“Talking to troops, seeing how diverse and interesting they are, it just makes you proud,” she said. “They’re a real tribute to our country.”

(Top right) Kathryn Taylor, mayor of Tulsa, Okla., receives weapons training from 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers at Udari ranges.

(Bottom right) A U.S. Soldier helps JCOC participant Dick Stevens, a telecommunication business owner, strap on his helmet before heading to the firing range at Camp Buehring.



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

Serving more than just America

Chaplain assistants help Soldiers, protect Chaplains

Story and Photo by

Spc. Debrah Robertson
Desert Voice Staff Writer

In Kuwait, Third Army/ U.S. Army Central servicemembers have left their families and friends in order to serve the greater cause and protect their nation's freedoms, but even the toughest man or woman may need someone to lean on in order to get through a deployment.

Fortunately, chaplain assistants are there for those who are in need of a confidant, and they are there to protect and assist their chaplains so they can further help their fellow servicemember through trying times.

"Being there for the Soldiers" is an important part of the job, said Sgt. James Schafer, a chaplain's assistant with the 377th Theater Support Command. "While being deployed, servicemembers often need someone to confide in and sometimes they want to talk, but don't feel comfortable talking to an officer."

They may be experiencing "marriage problems, money problems, family [issues], the loss of a loved one or they could just be taking the deployment pretty hard," Schafer continued.

"We have an open door policy" to handle these problems, said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Judge, a Third Army/ U.S. Army Central chaplain's assistant. "You can go through your chain of command, but if there is a problem with your chain of command, you can go directly to [your chaplain or chaplain's assistant]."

If the person feels more comfortable with the chaplain's assistant, they may decide to speak to them instead of their chaplain. Fully trained and experienced to offer guidance to their fellow servicemembers, these troops offer to listen to Soldier's problems.

They are here as a "religious and moral" guide, said Schafer, but a concern does not have to be related to religion in order for an assistant to offer their help and guidance.

Listening to the fears and troubles of others can be quite a burden.

"It's hard to hear other people's problems," said Schafer. "My heart goes out to them."

"We are here to serve Soldiers," said Judge. "It's our job as chaplains' assistants. Sometimes they don't need someone to solve a problem. They just need someone to listen."

"We don't take [the chaplain's] place, but some things we can handle," Judge continued. Therefore, chaplains' assistants "facilitate chaplain doing their jobs, such as ministering or counseling."

Being a chaplain's assistant takes a special kind of person. A good chaplain's assistant must be patient, even tempered and have a good sense of humor in order to get through all of the problems they encounter, said Staff Sgt. Va Linda Schnieders, a chaplain's assistant with the 377th.

"It takes a man or woman of integrity, a good listener and above all, [they

must be] loyal to the chaplain," said Judge. Not only do assistants have to support their fellow servicemembers through hardships, they must be Soldiers themselves.

Chaplains' assistants deploy with their units and train alongside other servicemembers. They face the same trials and tribulations and still manage to offer a line of comfort and support to others.

They also use their soldiering skills to protect their chaplains.

"We must be ready for anything," said Judge. Chaplains do not carry weapons, therefore their assistants must protect them.

"You're his bodyguard. You're his aid. You watch his back," said Judge. "You have confidence in him and he has confidence in your abilities."

"He must have faith in his assistant," he continued. Chaplains and their assistants go through training sessions together to build a working relationship. The chaplain must be able to take direction from his assistant in a combat situation.

The chaplains' assistants agreed on one thing - they must be willing to lay their lives on the line for the chaplain.



Sgt. James Schafer, a 377th Theater Support Command chaplain's assistant, prepares the Zone 1 Chapel at Camp Arifjan prior to Catholic services.

NATIONAL GUARD RE-UP PROCEDURES STREAMLINED DURING DEPLOYMENTS

Sgt. Thomas Day
Desert Voice Staff Writer

For Soldiers looking to reenlist in the National Guard, questions are being answered in Kuwait before they are even asked.

“When they hit Camp Buehring, we track down the company commander, the first sergeant and the retention [noncommissioned officer] and we give them a five-minute slide-show presentation,” said Sgt. Maj. John Edgeworth, the theater sergeant major for the Army National Guard.

With that presentation comes a follow-up question-and-answer session with all Soldiers who will fall within the “reenlistment window” during their tour.

Retention recruiters hold the question-and-answer sessions, “at least one unit a day, ranging from a detachment of 50 to a battalion of 400,” said Edgeworth.

The idea, according to

Edgeworth, is to train retention NCOs at the company level in processing reenlistments in theater and leave Soldiers with a clear idea of what re-enlistment options they have.

Better informed Soldiers and retention NCOs, as the thinking goes, means a streamlined reenlistment process while the units are deployed.

“The unit becomes self-sufficient because the unit retention NCO can handle all the needs for a Soldier who wants to reenlist,” Edgeworth said.

And, with a little guidance from the top National Guard reenlistment NCO in the theater, the retention NCOs in Iraq have indeed handled what has been thrown their direction.

“Once they get [the training], we rely on the retention NCOs,” said Master Sgt. Calvin Noble, a Michigan Guardsman.

For Soldiers currently in Kuwait, two Guard retention counselors are operating at Camp Buehring with two more at Camp Arifjan.

Hometown Hero

Staff Sgt. Dexter Roulhac
CFLCC Special Troops Battalion
S4 NCOIC

Roulhac helps servicemembers by equipping them with essential supplies so that they can complete their mission.

Talks about what he misses about his hometown, Cottondale, Fla.

“My family. They are the reason I am here and I feel very good to be able to be a part of protecting them. My hometown is a place where anyone would be welcome.”



Just One Question...

What does it mean to be a hero?



“Somebody who saves life, prevents injustice and helps other people who need help.”

Spc. Martha M. Townsend
Deployment Inbound Specialist
90th Personnel Service Battalion
Eagle Pass, Texas



“If you are able to take care of yourself, your family and the people around you, you are a hero every-day.”

Sgt. 1st Class Jean Jacob Jeudy
Senior Logistician
3-509th Infantry Regiment
Anchorage, Ala.



“A person who believes something and fights for his ideas without quitting.”

Sgt. Angel Lozano
Rest and Recreation Phase II
NCOIC
Task Force 90th Team Alpha
Naguabo, Puerto Rico



“Doing your best every day and fighting for your country, standing up for what is right.”

Staff Sgt. Dominic Bivens
CBRNE NCO
3-509th Infantry Regiment
Fernandina Beach, Fla.



“Every Soldier in Iraq is a hero to me.”

Mirela Bojic
AAFES Manager
AAFES
Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina



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