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Desert Voice Magazine
Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

February 14, 2007

Train to Lead

**Tajik NCOs learn new responsibilities
in training mission with U.S. troops**

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Tajik Sgt. Jasour Latipov engages a target during a tactical drill at the NCOPTD field training exercise, Jan 30

Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea

From the Top

Four pillars of NCO Corps

We talk about the values of a Soldier, of an NCO, all the time. But NCOs need reminding of the four pillars of the NCO Corps: courage, candor, competence and commitment.

These are the traits junior Soldiers and officers seek in their NCOs.

There are two types of courage – moral courage and physical courage.

NCOs put themselves in harm's way by leading Soldiers from the front in

training and combat operations. That type of physical courage instills respect from their junior Soldiers and prepares them to handle dangers inherent in combat.

But moral courage is a lot harder for NCOs to live up to. It's also the unpopular thing in many cases.

It's tougher to enforce standards when others are against you. Regardless of what people think about the situation or your rank, it's imperative that NCOs choose the hard right over the easy wrong.

NCOs must have both moral courage and physical courage to be good NCOs.

As a leader of Soldiers, you must also have candor – the ability to say things the way you see it without

worrying about what people want to hear. I challenge you to tell the truth even if you think somebody's not going to like it.

If you tell the truth, you can't get in trouble.

I always ask the NCOs to tell me what's really going on because they will always tell it like it is – and that's what candor's all about.

But to do that, NCOs must have the competence to know what they're talking about.

Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe When people look at you, they

know what's right no matter what you're doing. NCOs set the standard.

You can't have candor and you can't have courage without competence.

And all three of those qualities can't happen without commitment. An NCO must give 100 percent all the time because people are counting on you and you can't let them down.

Soldiers can always tell if NCOs are living up to these four pillars. If you can embody these traits, you're a good NCO – that's what everybody expects.

And most NCOs do possess these traits. Why else would all the NCOs stay in the military and achieve success?

Do your best to live up to these four pillars and keep setting the standard. "Third ... Always First."



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160th Signal keeps 'eyes on' Kuwait

**Carlotta Maneice,
160th Signal Brigade PAO**

It's the little things that make a big difference. Many of us do not realize how much work goes on behind the scenes to ensure the network systems required to access the Internet, telephone or Eagle cash card kiosks are properly working.

The Soldiers, civilians and contractors of the 160th Signal Brigade are the people who make a significant impact to the Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom mission by taking care of everyday network needs.

"I look at the 160th Signal Brigade as a large telephone company," said Lt. Col. Keith June, 54th Signal Battalion commander. "Not only do we provide Internet and telephone services, but we do it in the desert during wartime and to a much larger customer base."

On Sept. 3, 2003, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, the "Finest of the First" was



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stuart Stahl

called to duty for the fourth time to provide voice and data communications support to the Multi-National Force—Iraq, the Combined Forces Command—Afghanistan, the Third Army/U.S. Army Central and to the area support groups for Kuwait and Qatar.

"160th Signal Brigade is the most

dispersed command in theater, having over 2,400 Soldiers and civilians throughout the Central Command area of responsibility," said Col. John Schleifer, 160th Signal Bde. commander. "We provide the essential communication capabilities necessary for our warfighters to complete their

mission."

Serving as part of the 335th Theater Signal Command, the brigade supports tens of thousands of customers engaged in locations throughout Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Qatar, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan.

Just into its fourth year of activation, the 160th Signal Bde. has achieved remarkable progress and success in fulfilling its wartime mission.

"In my humble observation, the brigade does a tremendous job of enabling battle command and providing logistical services to warfighters. Quite honestly, I haven't seen a more functional Soldier/civilian team more capable or more dedicated toward providing quality operational communications services to the force in all my years of service," said Command Sgt. Maj. David Fleming, 160th Signal Bde. command sergeant major.

Today, the brigade's Soldiers and civilians are part of the historical transition from postwar realities to modern-day possibilities due to their expertise, hard work and dedication.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stuart Stahl

(Above) Civilian contractors with the 160th Signal Brigade insert panels to a radome on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, in November.

(Left) A civilian contractor with the 160th Signal Brigade adds panels to a newly erected radome to protect the satellite antenna from the elements at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Camp Arifjan

Tajik NCOs learn new responsib



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex

Sgt. 1st Class Roger Krause, 1st Battalion, 183rd Regimental Training Institute, Virginia National Guard, shows a group of Tajik soldiers how to use a hand and arm signal in order to form a wedge formation during the U.S.-Tajikistan NCOPD field training exercise, Jan 30, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Staff Sgt. Alex Licea Third Army PAO

The saying “old habits never die” could be a good way to describe the current Tajikistan Soviet-style military. From its troop-leading procedures to its training methods, it’s a trend they’re slowly continuing to improve.

As part of that process, 30 soldiers representing four departments of the Tajikistan National Army gathered in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, recently, to hone their skills and learn new levels of leadership as part of a Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development information exchange with U.S.

Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 183rd Regimental Training Institute, Virginia National Guard.

The two-week program, which concluded today with a field training exercise, is facilitated by Third Army/ U.S. Army Central Civil-Military Affairs section. Third Army/US ARCENT works with nations from the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia to organize military training exchanges through its Theater Security Cooperation Program.

For this military exchange, the Virginia-based troops give young Tajik NCOs and cadets a first-hand look about the responsibilities of the U.S. Army NCO system. The NCO Corps depends on its senior enlisted personnel

training their subordinates on day-to-day operations as well as the overall military picture.

Currently, the Tajik Army holds officers responsible for training its soldiers on all aspects of the Army.

With help from translators, Tajik soldiers are taught a number of NCO duties such as leadership, responsibilities, individual movement techniques, team movement drills and reacting to enemy forces.

According to Virginia National Guardsman Maj. Neal Edmonds, the establishment of an NCO Corps to the Tajik Army is a slow process that will take time.

“It will take them [Tajik soldiers] a period to adjust to this type of

ilities during U.S.-led exchange

structure,” he said. “I think we have a good partnership, and the Tajik leadership is dedicated to making this system work for them.”

For the past three years, Edmonds has been the coordinator for the Virginia National Guard-Tajikistan state partnership for peace program. He works with Tajik officials to synchronize training events and other exchanges between the two countries.

For Virginia National Guardsman Staff Sgt. Todd Payne, this is his third NCOPD. He said it presents the chance to teach and influence a foreign military in something he cherishes.

“It would be a thrill for me if they would one day developed the NCO system,” said the native of Amagrst, Va. “To think I was part of helping them build an NCO Corps would be an honor.”

For Tajik junior Sgt. Bobur Mahmador, assigned to the Tajik National Guard, the chance to work with American NCOs was an experience to remember.

(Bottom left) Tajik Sgt. Mehrojiddin Miraliev, Tajik National Guard, provides security with an AK-47 rifle during a tactical movement exercise at the NCOPD field training exercise, Jan. 30. Soldiers from the Tajikistan Army participated in the exchange with U.S. Soldiers.

(Bottom Right) Staff Sgt. Todd Payne, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 183rd Regimental Training Institute, Virginia National Guard, shares a smile with Tajik Sgt. Jasour Latipov, assigned to the Tajik National Guard, during the NCOPD field training exercise, Jan 30.

(Right) Sgt. 1st Class Roger Krause, 1st Battalion, 183rd Regimental Training Institute, Virginia National Guard, instructs Tajik Junior Sgt. Bobur Mahmador, Tajik National Guard, to look at his surroundings during the U.S.-Tajikistan NCOPD field training exercise, Jan 30.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea

“They have been teaching us new and useful information that I want to pass down to my soldiers,” said Mahmador. “Because of this training, I have already started my own training program to take back to my unit.”

The information exchange between the two nations will continue until 2012, and in the eyes of Edmonds the

future is only getting brighter.

“I really see them building an NCO Corps,” he said. “It is just a matter of time and precedence.”

An advanced NCOPD is scheduled in May. The class will have returning graduates of prior NCOPD classes, and will stress the roles of an NCO in a force.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea

Licea
of
eld

Music to soothe soul: Gospel music brings



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

(Above) Sgt. Arica Bryant, a material management noncommissioned officer with the 377th Theater Support Command, performs a rendition of a classical gospel song during the Gospel Fest.

(Below) Petty Officer 1st Class Marko King, a guard commander for Theater Field Confinement Facility, brings the crowd to their feet during the Gospel Fest on Feb. 3.

Spc. Debrah A. Robertson
Desert Voice Assistant Editor

Joyous voices fill the night air with music and laughter. The cool desert air is warmed with the community spirit and a sense of family and belonging.

Servicemembers from multiple military branches, as well as “Soldiers in Slacks,” joined together in a show of community spirit Feb. 3.

Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, hosted a Kuwait-wide Gospel Fest, bringing together choirs and musicians from many of the camps in Kuwait.

Lt. Col. Don German, a chaplain with Third Army/ U.S. Army Central, added enthusiasm and joy to the event with uplifting commentary and a sense of humor.

Petty Officer 1st Class Marko King, a guard

commander for Theater Field Confinement Facility, hosted the ceremony, dancing and singing throughout the event, bringing the audience to their feet, clapping and laughing.

“[Music] is important to the human spirit,” said Sgt. 1st Class Ewing, a contracting officer representative with ASG-Kuwait, who organized the event and worked with multiple committees to bring it all together.

The performers used musical performance to link today’s gospel music with the gospel music of the past.

“The timing of the event was a great introduction to Black History Month,” said Maj. Terrie Baisley, chief of financial operations and quality assurance with the Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 13th Finance Group.

“Gospel music is so deeply rooted and intertwined in African American history that you cannot study one without the other,” said Baisley, who volunteers as the Arifjan Gospel Service Choir director. “It has served to inspire

and instill faith in countless generations of African American people.”

“It is, however, not strictly African American music, continued Baisley “[It] transcends racial and ethnic boundaries, which was evidenced by the variety of people who attended and participated in the event.”

“Not only does this build a sense of community spirit and a sense of family but it expresses the hope, faith, love, joy, peace...and kindness the Christian family has,” said Ewing, a



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

Kuwait camps together in community spirit

Dupont, Wash., native.

“We originally planned to have 250 personnel attend the Gospel Fest,” said Baisley, a Harker Heights, Texas, native. “We exceeded that amount by at least 100.”

With so many people gathered together, many of them taking the stage to sing and dance, the night provided a constant roar of entertainment.

Each of the groups that performed spent hours each week practicing for the Gospel Fest, said Baisley.

And all of the practice paid off, according to Baisley.

“We received nothing but positive feedback from the event,” she said.

Although the Gospel Fest was supposed to last until 9 p.m., the audience and performers were having so much fun, the event continued on the night, and plans for future events such as the Gospel Fest are underway.



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

(Above) Spc. Matthew Rankin, an award specialist with 3rd Personnel Command, practices some of the notes he will be playing prior to the start of the Gospel Fest performances on Feb. 3. All the musicians who performed at the Gospel Fest practiced weeks in advanced and performed throughout the entire event.

(Below) Arifjan Gospel Service Praise Dancers not only sang during the Gospel Fest, they danced as well. Their soulful performance brought the audience to their feet several times. The praise dancers meet twice a week to perfect their performance.



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

Camp Arifjan

American at Last!

Deployed servicemembers gain citizenship

**Sgt. Chris Jones,
Desert Voice Editor**

When he deployed to Kuwait, Spc. Julius Ndugu represented the United States. Every time he put on his army combat uniform, his right shoulder was decorated with the American flag, and on his chest the uniform read U.S. Army.

But the Kenya native finally became an American Feb. 8, at a naturalization ceremony on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Ndugu has been in the Army Reserve for nearly three years, and he has resided in Georgia for four years.

So when Ndugu approached the microphone in front of hundreds of his peers, and 26 other naturalization

candidates, then marched over to receive his citizenship certificate from U.S. citizenship and immigration officer Lori Pietropaoli, "It was a dream come true," he said.

"I had so much sweating in my hands, and goosebumps," said Ndugu of receiving the certificate. "After getting my certificate, it felt so much like I was born again in America."

The emotions Ndugu felt at the ceremony were the culmination of several sleepless nights.

"I got no sleep the last few nights, waiting for this to happen," said Ndugu after the ceremony.

Although Ndugu lists becoming an American citizen as one of the top

accomplishments in his life, he said becoming an American Soldier was also a "dream come true." When he was a child in Kenya, he would watch with admiration the soldiers of the Kenyan Army during physical training. This passion for the military only grew deeper after immigrating to the U.S. and seeing his new country's Army.

"I wanted so much to be in the Army since I was a little kid," said Ndugu. "It was a dream come true to the join the Army, and I am proud to be in the U.S. military."

Ndugu is now a member of the 3d Medical Command, based out of Fort Gillem, Ga. His wife also resides in Georgia, and he is planning to assist her



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

Spc. Robert Suteu, a native of Romania, shows off his U.S. citizenship certificate to members of his unit, during a citizenship ceremony for deployed servicemembers on Camp Arifjan, Feb. 8.

Citizenship in ceremony on Camp Arifjan

in attaining her citizenship when he returns from Kuwait.

Twenty-seven U.S. servicemembers gained their citizenship at the ceremony. The 27 new citizens were natives to 17 different countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, Central America and South America.

“Some of us are American citizens because we were born in the right place,” said Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army/U.S. Army Central commanding general. “But the young men and women here are ones who made a decision and worked to become Americans, and that’s significant.”



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

(Above) Spc. Sun Hale, a South Korea native, announces her name and native country, before receiving her U.S. citizenship certificate at a ceremony on Camp Arifjan, Feb. 8.
(Right) Spc. Julius Ndugu, a Kenya native who has been in the U.S. Army Reserve for nearly three years, receives his U.S. citizenship certificate at a citizenship ceremony for deployed servicemembers on Camp Arifjan.
(Below) U.S. servicemembers give their Oath of Allegiance during a citizenship ceremony on Camp Arifjan, Feb. 8.



Photo by Spc. Sarah B. Smith



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

Camp Arifjan

Best prepare for worst

Soldiers reflect on helicopter crashes in Iraq

Spc. Debrah A. Robertson
Desert Voice Assistant Editor

Working 24-hour shifts and ready in a moment's notice, the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, save lives, despite all the dangers of flying over Iraqi soil.

Combining flight medics, pilots and crew chiefs from the Florida and Arkansas National Guard, the 111th's Aviation Air Ambulance has bonded to create a team of highly skilled lifesavers, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Tom Mix, a pilot with the 111th.

The 111th, a Blackhawk ambulatory service, transports patients from Tallil Air Base, Iraq, to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, where the patients are then transported to another air ambulance and brought to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to receive lifesaving treatment at the United States Military Hospital- Kuwait, supported by the Expeditionary Medical Clinic- Kuwait and Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

The 111th also works as a medical evacuation unit for troops on the ground during firefights and improvised explosive device

attacks. Arriving at the scene within 10 minutes of the first notification is the standard, said Sgt. Jeff Dixon, a flight medic with the 111th.

Quick responses are the difference between life and death, said Dixon, a San Antonio native.

Working as an air ambulatory service is a necessary, but very dangerous job, according to the Blackhawk crew. With the number of crashes in the past several weeks in Iraq reaching a half-dozen, the crew of the 111th must remain alert.

"Helicopters get shot down," said Mix, a Mount Vernon, Ark, native. "We're going to have to learn from it and we may have to challenge some [tactics, techniques and procedures]. Once the investigation is complete, we'll incorporate it into training. "It's shocking, but it's war," he said. "Although we don't want a tragic event to happen, it's something we come to expect and fight to prevent."

Spc. David Bankston, an aircraft structural repairman with the 111th, said of the helicopter crashes, "The enemy is coming up with new ideas."

Working an ambulatory service means there is no time for doubt and hesitation. The Soldiers of 111th must do their jobs no matter what has happened to their fellow flight units.

"We have to trust the individuals we depend on every day," Bankston, a Colorado Springs, Colo., native, said of the bond the Soldiers of the 111th have forged in Iraq.

The Soldiers have grown as a team through the tragedy they see on a daily basis and the dangers they face on the ground during firefights and now in the air with the elevated dangers of flying over Iraq.

"You get emotional about it. Then you get angry," said Mix on discovering that he had lost some of his fellow servicemembers in the downed helicopters. "You wonder if it was all worth it and hope it was."

"If even one person gets to go home to see their family because of us, it was worth it," said Dixon.



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

(Above) A Soldier with the 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, packs the unit's ambulatory helicopter at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, for the team's flight back to Tallil Air Base, Iraq.

(Below) Awaiting for a sand storm to recede, the crew, pilots and medics of the 111th take a moment to pose in front of their "bird."



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

A unit in numbers

**377th Theater Support Command....
supporting Third Army/U.S. Army
Central and beyond**

More than **800,000**
bottles of water sent to camps

Nearly **223,000,000**
gallons of bulk fuel managed

More than **45,000** short tons of
ammunition managed....totaling more than
\$1.5 billion

More than **4,000,000**
convoy miles

More than **31,000** troops
transported to training camps

Just One Question...

Would you rather never watch your favorite sport again or never eat your favorite food?



"I would rather never watch my favorite sport again, because food is in my top two--right after sleep."

Sgt. Claudia Benson
Pharmacy NCOIC
HHC ASG-Ku
Frankfurt, Germany



"I would rather never watch my favorite sport, soccer, again, and I'd rather eat my favorite food, which is Chinese. I love it."

Pfc. Thelma Cabrera
DCS/R&R Briefings
38th PSB, B Detachment
Houston, Texas



"Never watch my favorite sport again. You never said anything about playing it. I'm a big fan of playing sports instead of watching them."

Spc. Carl George
Communication signal radio repair
385th Signal Company
New York City, N.Y.



"I don't watch sports. I like Spanish food. I just love to eat."

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Edgardo Martinez
Human resource technician
38th PSB, B Detachment
Yauco, Puerto Rico



"I love sports, so giving up favorite food is an easy answer."

Master Sgt. Kaye Rivera
Third Army/U.S. Army Central-Surgeon
Surgeon battle captain
Midlothian, Va.

Hometown Hero

Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Flucker, a master gunner with ASG-Kuwait

Flucker schedules all the training events for troops coming through Buehring on their way north, and he oversees the safety of the events.

Flucker talks about what he misses about his hometown of Seattle.

"The waterfalls at Mount Rainier, the mountain ranges and Mount St. Helens. I miss fresh salmon fishing."



Former NFL players visit troops deployed to Kuwait, Iraq

(Right) Former NFL cornerback Steve Preece poses for a picture with Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Daniel Rainwater, while Rainwater holds up an Oregon State Beavers t-shirt, at Camp Arifjan, Feb. 3. Preece played at Oregon State prior to his NFL career, and Rainwater bought the t-shirt to have it signed for his grandfather, a lifetime Beavers fan.

(Far right) Petty Officer 1st Class Russ Tafuri signs posters for the celebrities of the U.S. Army Super Sunday Tour on post, Feb. 7. Kuwait was the last stop for the seven-day tour that traveled throughout various forward operating bases in Iraq.

(Top right) Randy Gradishar, a former linebacker for the Denver Broncos, signs autographs for troops on Camp Arifjan, Feb. 3, as part of a "meet and greet" for deployed servicemembers, while three other former NFL players sit beside him and chat with troops.

(Below) Chief Petty Officer Scott Young shakes former NFL star Lamar Lathon's hand during the U.S. Army Super Sunday Tour on Camp Arifjan.

