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

February 21, 2007

16 years later

Gulf War veterans at Camp Patriot reflect on past events, focus on current mission

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Spc. Preston Fitts, a Gulf War veteran, performs a functions check on a vehicle-mounted M240B machine gun on Camp Patriot, recently.

Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

Tips to speed up Metabolism

Information provided by

Camp Arifjan Troop Medical Clinic

To help reduce illnesses during deployment and at home, the Troop Medical Clinic at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, encourages troops to practice healthy eating habits and exercise often. Here are some tips from the pros:

- ⇒ Quit starving yourself and focus on exercising. Running a few extra laps or hitting the gym after work is an excellent way to boost your overall health. Even a short jog during lunch is beneficial.
- ⇒ Eat breakfast and you will eat less and burn more calories throughout the day. It is a convenient way to curb early morning snacking on unhealthy foods. It is also an easy way to increase your fruit, calcium and whole grains intake.
- ⇒ Individuals who want to lose weight should employ a balanced approach that includes exercise, education and nutrition. Using all the necessary tools to improve your health is always the best route to a healthier lifestyle.
- ⇒ Eat six small meals a day to boost your metabolism, and eat less fat. Grabbing an apple to eat between meals reduces snacking on chips and candy.
- ⇒ Exercise longer periods of time and vary your workout to increase the benefits of your workout. Try to incorporate both strength training and cardio into your routine and vary how you get each. If you normally run for cardio, try biking too.
- ⇒ Boost your metabolism the natural way, with strength training. Muscle is metabolically active, and requires more calories to sustain itself than body fat. That means by simply being more fit, you burn more calories!
- ⇒ By drinking one extra can of soda each day, expect to gain 18 pounds in a year!

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.

Break in Service!

AUSA hosts barbecue for troops on Camp Navistar

Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.
Third Army/U.S. ARCENT PAO

For the courageous men and women here involved in the ceaseless mission of fighting the Global War on Terrorism, a break in the action can be as reinvigorating as an oasis in the desert.

In a focused effort to “show the Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen a good time with good food and music,” retired Brig. Gen. Samuel S. Thompson III, president, Kuwait Chapter of the Association of the United States Army, and his team of selfless AUSA volunteers provided the warriors residing at Camp Navistar, supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central, just that Feb. 8.

“The AUSA wanted to do something different for the Soldiers,” said Thompson, a native of Bozeman, Mont. “Because it is situated way out in such a desolate location, we picked [Navistar] to have our barbecue.”

“Since the troops can’t leave the post and go out into the community to enjoy themselves, we decided to bring the community to them,” added his wife, Beam Thompson, vice president and public relations representative for the Kuwait chapter of the AUSA.

The Honolulu native also mentioned that the abundant quantities of burgers, hot dogs, drinks and other refreshments were made possible in part by generous donations from appreciative local Kuwaiti corporations, in addition to the musical entertainment provided by Australian military band “Dog.”

Judging from the positive reactions from

those in attendance, the recipe of plentiful barbecue, fair weather and live music proved to be a winning combination.

“This event really gives us a sense of normalcy,” remarked Sgt. Tim Barget of the 310th Military Police Battalion. “It’s just like being at a friend’s house for a barbecue.”

“We got to relax today, which is a welcome distraction because we don’t normally get a change of pace like this,” continued Barget, a native of Remsenburg, N.Y.

Not surprisingly, profound feelings of gratitude were shared by both those who orchestrated the barbecue and the recipients of their generosity.

“It’s a pleasure for us to get on stage and perform for the service members who turned out today,” said Australian Army Cpl. Clint Beattie, signaler, Force Level Logistics Asset Unit, and “Dog” lead singer. “It’s good to give the troops a chance to see something different, so in a way this [event] is good for them and us.”

Beattie’s thoughts were echoed by Spc. Robert Jackson, a truck commander with 1st Bn., 185th Infantry, 16th Brigade, from Buena Park, Calif., who was preparing to

depart the base for duty in Iraq.

“Things like today’s barbecue mean everything to us while we’re out here,” admitted the 43-year-old former Marine. “It’s always a good thing to wind down and think about other things besides war. We know nothing in war is promised to us, so the Soldiers really appreciate it when someone takes the time to show us they care.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.

(Above) Australian Army Cpl. Clint Beattie, signaler, Force Level Logistics Asset Unit, chats with a Soldier with the 25th Infantry Division in Kuwait Feb. 8 during a barbecue hosted by the Kuwait chapter of the Association of the United States Army.

(Top) Members of the band “Dog”, consisting of soldiers from the Australian Army, perform a tune during a barbecue, Feb. 8.

Third Army after D

Chronicle the efforts of "Patton's Own"

Sgt. Thomas L. Day
Desert Voice Staff Writer

After the final chapter of the first Gulf War, the buildup to Operation Iraqi Freedom began for Third Army/U.S. Army Central. For 16 years and counting, Third Army/USARCENT has kept one foot planted at their Atlanta headquarters and another stretched to the sands of Kuwait.

It has been an eventful time for the decedents of General George S. Patton.

Operation Vigilant Warrior/ Operation Vigilant Sentinel

The first collision between President Bill Clinton and Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein came on Oct. 14, 1994, with the launch of Operation Vigilant Warrior. The operation came in response to a sudden Iraqi military posture along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. U.S. intelligence believed Saddam might have been considering a replay of his August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Lt. Gen. John Jumper [later the Air Force Chief of Staff under President George W. Bush] commanded the Air Force's response – an operation facilitated by Third Army/USARCENT troops in Kuwait.

Jumper quickly mobilized 170 U.S. Central Command Air Force [USCENTAF] aircraft and 6,500

personnel. Saddam retreated, but Clinton decided to retain most of the assets in Kuwait in case Hussein moved again.

In August 1995, Saddam moved again, posturing a similar force along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border and

Squadron, a powerful surveillance asset, into Kuwait. 3,500 American ground troops would follow, again facilitated by Third Army/USARCENT. Again, Saddam called retreat.



Photo provided by American Forces Press Service

Gen. Tommy Franks, commanding general of U.S. Central Command and Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army/U.S. Army Central commanding general tour Baghdad in April 2003

eliciting a similar response from Clinton. "Vigilant Sentinel," also known as "Operation Vigilant Warrior II," delivered the 74th Air Control

Operation Desert Strike

In August of 1996, Saddam moved 40,000 troops against the Kurdish-controlled territories in northern Iraq. He struck the Kurdish militias in the city of Irbil. Concurrently, Saddam attacked U.S. aircrafts patrolling the southern and northern no-fly zones.

Next came the hardest American response to Saddam's actions since the Gulf War. On September 3, Clinton launched a surgical cruise missile attack on Saddam's air defense and command and control infrastructure. Seventeen Tomahawk missiles followed two days later, decimating Saddam's military capability with minimal collateral damage and without American casualties.

The aftermath for Saddam would get no

better. The no-fly zone, established at the 32nd parallel to protect Iraq's predominately Shi'ia South, was extended to the 33rd parallel, cutting

Desert Storm:

since Kuwait's liberation 16 years ago

just south of Baghdad. The Kurdish-controlled northern region was also protected. Saddam's air assets were prohibited from flying above more than half of his country.

Operation Desert Thunder

With Saddam's continued recalcitrance toward United Nations inspections of his weapons of mass destruction capability, U.S. Central Command commander Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni established a permanent Coalition/Joint Task Force (CJTF) at Camp Doha, Kuwait. They would keep their eyes on Saddam, and they would be commanded by a man who would come to know Saddam well – Lt. Gen. Tommy Franks, then Third Army/U.S. Army Central's commanding general.

The force would be 35,000 troops strong, combining assets from every branch of the U.S. military and troops from ten coalition partners. A brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division moved to Kuwait at a moment's notice.

In the end, the force Franks had under his command was the largest assembled in Southwest Asia since the end of the Gulf War. That was enough to momentarily force Saddam back into agreement with the U.N. weapons inspections.

His compliance was fleeting, however, and the military buildup resumed. United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan flew to Baghdad



Graphic as of 1996

in response to Saddam's continued defiance. Annan's diplomacy begat a new pledge from Saddam to resume the inspections.

Operation Desert Fox

Iraqi air assets began challenging the no-fly zones again in December 1998. Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair responded with a joint U.S. and U.K. air onslaught, hitting Saddam's communications infrastructure in four days of air strikes.

Franks again mobilized forces to Kuwait, including the 31st Marine

Expeditionary Unit. Operation Desert Fox ended on Dec. 20, the first day of Muslim holy month of Ramadan, a signal of compassion to the Iraqi people. Its military objectives had been achieved anyway.

In July of 2000, Franks left Third Army/USARCENT to take command of Central Command, receiving his fourth star with the command.

Five months later, George W. Bush won the U.S. presidency. And on March 19, 2003, Bush would order Franks to engage Saddam one final time.

Road masters:

Taking a look at Army motor transport

Sgt. Sarah Scully
Desert Voice Staff Writer

She always calls home and tells her mom and 5-year-old daughter not to watch the news. They know she's about to do something dangerous, and they don't want to hear bad news on television.

When she gets back, she'll call and let them know she survived another convoy into Iraq.

Spc. Eloisa Lucero, a 23-year-old truck driver from Phoenix, has ventured on six convoys since she arrived in Kuwait a few months ago.

And each time she gets ready to leave Camp Arifjan, she gets both nervous and excited.

"We're putting our lives on the line every time we cross that wire because we don't know what's going to happen," said Lucero, a

motor transport operator with 222nd Transportation Company, supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

"It gets exhausting, doing what we do."

She's just one of hundreds of truck drivers who routinely go on convoys and bring supplies to Soldiers in Kuwait and Iraq.

Climbing into huge flat-bed trucks carrying war essentials and semi-trailers transporting tanks, the Soldiers know all their training and teamwork are about to get tested.

Each time they cross into Iraq, they see the asphalt patches on the roads from where improvised explosive devices have detonated.

But they understand the Transportation Corps motto: "Nothing

happens until something moves."

They have to get the supplies through to the troops up north – how can those Soldiers function without water, food, ammunition or parts for their vehicles?

"Without these things, what would they do?" said Sgt. Antonio Perez, a 25-year-old truck driver from Brooklyn, N.Y., with 39th Transportation Battalion (Movement and Control) in Kuwait.

"All we do is help in this war," said Perez, who drove trucks on more than 200 convoys in Iraq on a previous deployment. "Because of what we do, it makes going to war a little easier."

And the Soldiers are always happy to see them – especially when they bring letters from home.

truck operators: the mission, the people

Photo by Staff Sgt. Patrick N. Moores

“People say, ‘thank God’ or ‘we’ve been waiting for this,’” said Perez. “It’s a good feeling when you bring people their mail.”

And the truck drivers give thanks when they cross back through the wire into safety. Most of them have been either shot at or come across IEDs while on convoys.

“Enough,” said Perez, when asked if he’d ever been attacked on a convoy. “Once is enough.”

So why do they do it?

For many of them, it’s a family tradition. For others, it’s something they did in the civilian world.

“My dad does it, so he gave me all the pointers and knowledge about it,” said Pfc. John Bridges, a 19-year-old truck driver from Wolverine

Lake, Mich., serving with 594th Transportation Company.

“I just like driving,” said Bridges, who has driven 23,000 miles through Kuwait and Iraq during the past six months.

Grouped together in lines headed into combat, the trucks are a source of protection and a source of danger.

“They take care of their trucks like they’re their babies,” said Spc. John Hug, a 42-year-old truck driver with 222nd Trans. Co. from Council Bluffs, Iowa, who worked as a bus driver in the civilian sector.

“Back home, you haul around people,” said Hug. “Here, you drive at night to stay away from people.”

The truck drivers have to stay together and bond as a family and as

a team in order to survive, which includes treating each other like siblings and handing out personal nicknames.

“The situation is high out there,” said Lucero, or “Lucy Liu.”

“Yeah, they’re a pain in the butt sometimes, but we’re a team – it’s nice to know they’re there watching your back.”

Before leaving on a convoy, she hears her daughter’s voice and connects with her family back home one last time. But then she has to do what all the other truck drivers do – go into focus mode.

“I worry about what I’ve got to do, what I’ve got to focus on – otherwise, people get emotional and they might get hurt,” said Lucero.

16 years later...

Veterans of the Gulf War serve in Kuwait 16 years after helping to liberate the war-torn nation



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

Spc. Preston Fitts, a Gulf War veteran and native of Farmington, Ark., does a functions check on a vehicle-mounted M240B machine gun at Camp Patriot, recently.

Sgt. Chris Jones Desert Voice Editor

On Feb. 27, it will have been 16 years since the artillerymen of 2nd Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery Regiment found out about Iraq's acceptance of a ceasefire agreement, ending the Gulf War.

On that day, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, of the Arkansas National Guard, were spread out along the deserts of southern Iraq and northern Kuwait. A few days later, the unit made their way into central

and southern Kuwait to find a demolished country.

Now, the unit is back in Kuwait, serving at Camp Patriot in support of Third Army/U.S. Army Central. It's a different scene than the one the Soldiers saw in 1991, when they rolled into Kuwait to the landscape of "blown up vehicles and buildings, a huge mess," said battalion communications NCO Master Sgt. Jerry Bray.

"You couldn't find a car that had four tires on it," said Sgt. Maj. Bobby Fletcher, the battalion operations sergeant major and native of Fort Smith, Ark., who was a fire directions chief during the Gulf War. "Everything was trashed."

Bray, of Lavaca, Ark., remembers a conversation he had with some of the Soldiers in his unit, a few years after returning from Desert Storm.

"During our reunion, we were thinking, 'boy, I'd like to see what [Kuwait] is like now.'"

And now, Bray and many of the veterans who are still with the 2nd Battalion get to witness first-hand the country's progression since the devastation that resulted from Iraq's invasion in 1991.

"Since the war, Kuwaitis have made a lot of progress," said Bray.

"Everything was destroyed. It's amazing to see the improvement here."

The 142nd deployed to Saudi Arabia Jan. 15, 1991, supporting the 1st Infantry Division during air attacks and the 1st United Kingdom Armoured Division during the ground campaign.

After the ceasefire, the unit moved into central and southern Kuwait. Despite the devastation brought upon the country, the locals were in a celebratory mood, and many of the veterans said they still remember the emotions they felt when so many Kuwaitis approached them to express their gratitude.

"Their country was in pieces, but they were happy," said Fletcher. "They were relieved to have the war over."

At Camp Patriot, the artillerymen of the 142nd have the unique opportunity to work alongside many Kuwaiti military personnel. Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Glenn, Sergeant of the Guard



A group of Gulf War veterans break from duty at Camp Patriot for protection missions in central Kuwait.

for the battalion's headquarters and headquarters battery, said some Kuwaitis still show their appreciation.

"The older ones, the ones who were there, they are still pretty grateful," said Glenn.

1st Sgt. Thomas Mize, the first sergeant for 2nd Battalion's headquarters and headquarters battery, added, "Some of the older ones, they'll come up to you and give you a hug. The younger ones just weren't around."

The battalion's current mission in Kuwait is to maintain security

operations in Southern Kuwait, but Fletcher is quick to point out that the battalion has another important mission – "maintaining an exceptional host nation relationship."

Although 16 years have passed since the end of the Gulf War, some of the veterans at Camp Patriot say they can still see some physical reminders of the war.

"There are still a lot of scars from what happened," said Sgt. 1st Class James Belue, area reaction force NCO in charge. "On certain buildings, you can see bulletholes,

mortar holes..."

But most of veterans agree that their current mission takes precedence in their minds. Although it's nice to look back and see the positive changes since 1991, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion are concentrated on 2007.

"You have a lot of experience [in this unit]," said Fletcher. "Sixteen years ago, we were proud of our service here. And we're proud of our service now. We didn't choose this mission, we were assigned it. And we're glad to be here again."



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

ans who are currently assigned to 2nd Battalion, 142nd Field Artillery Regiment chat about events past and present, during a Patriot, recently. Sixteen years after Desert Storm, the Arkansas National Guardsmen are back in Kuwait, tasked with force ntral and southern Kuwait.



(Left) Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, sergeant major of the Marine Corps, addresses a group of Marines during a "Warrior's Feast" Feb. 14.
(Above) Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada (right), sergeant major of the Marine Corps, shakes hands with Lt. Col. John J. Sharkey in Kuwait, Feb. 14.

Top enlisted Marine visits Camp Arifjan

Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.
Third Army/U.S. ARCENT PAO

Few images command more respect and admiration from Marines in garrison and abroad than the sight of their undisputed enlisted leader: the sergeant major of the Marine Corps.

Such was the case at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, when Sgt. Maj. John L. Estrada, the 15th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, ventured here to spend time with the Marines he has dedicated himself to "getting face-to-face" with. The excursion included a trip to work areas, as well as a unique "Warrior's Feast" with more than 30 Marines, in support of Third Army/U.S. Army Central, in attendance.

The evening meal allowed the captivated gathering to interact with Estrada in a way that many had never experienced before.

"Just having dinner with the sergeant major of the Marine Corps is something that's extremely motivating for me as a [noncommissioned officer] because it's more of a personal thing than

something business related," said Yonkers, N.Y., native Cpl. Philip Costa, Marine Air-Ground Task Force Plans NCO, Marine Coordination Element- Kuwait, Marine Central Command.

"It means a lot to us because our leader made the effort to come here and see us," remarked Staff Sgt. Antwan Riddic, supply chief, Marine Expeditionary Unit Augmentation Program. "He provided us with a lot of good information while he was here and we appreciate him checking to see how we are doing," added the Baltimore native.

The attention to detail paid by Estrada's tour of the area seemed especially satisfying given the relatively sparse number of Marines stationed on Camp Arifjan.

"There aren't a lot of Marines here, so it means a lot more when you can get away from the office and sit down and have a conversation with a Marine who has reached the peak of his career," said Costa.

"Sergeant Major Estrada, I want

to thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to come and visit with us," expressed Lt. Col. John J. Sharkey, operations officer, MCE-Kuwait, MARCENT, during the meal. "We are honored that you are here to break bread with us tonight and for giving us an excellent role model to emulate during your 34 years of service."

The daylong visit to the joint service base also allowed Estrada to reflect on the future of the Marine Corps in regards to working in unison with other services. "First of all, the Marine Corps fully embraces joint service," he stated.

"It's good for the nation and healthy for the Corps to work with all the other services. The important thing is that different services don't lose their cultures in the process and that each service is able to respect another service's culture," Estrada continued.

"Every service is unique and they all bring something unique to the battlefield. When we combine those, we are the most powerful force in the world."

Eagle Cash

What is Eagle Cash?

Eagle Cash is a cash management tool for overseas deployments. It allows the user to access money from their bank account 24-hours-a-day wherever a kiosk, the Eagle Cash version of an ATM, is available. It is a system used in theater to replace paper currency and works much like cash at all the Army and Air Force Exchange Services and their affiliated vendors, as well as many of the post offices.

Who can use Eagle Cash?

Anyone deployed with a U.S. bank account can use Eagle Cash, including all servicemembers and civilians.

What are the benefits of using Eagle Cash?

- Eagle Cash is a free service.
- Eagle Cash allows the user to view their last transactions right at the kiosk.
- The card is easily replaced if lost, unlike currency.
- Eagle Cash users don't receive POGs or rounding discrepancies at AAFES.
- There are no transaction fees when using Eagle Cash.
- The use of Eagle Cash reduces the circulation of cash in theater for black market purposes.
- The Eagle Cash system reduces the cost of transporting U.S. currency into theater.

How secure is Eagle Cash?

The Eagle Cash system requires the use of a pin to transfer money at a

kiosk. The cashier is also required to check the user's identification. Although there are several security measures in place, a cardholder should report a lost or stolen card immediately to the finance office so the appropriate actions can be taken.

How can someone get an Eagle Cash card?

To get an Eagle Cash card, the deployed individual should go to the finance office with his military or contractor's common access card. The finance office can set up his card to connect to the same account their pay is sent. If the user wants his Eagle Cash card to access a different account, he must also bring a voided check or a bank statement from that account. Military members extended in Theater should visit their local finance to have their card adjusted for the duration of their extension so it will not expire.

Members of the 13th Finance Group-Forward at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait in Zone 6, are currently planning to extend the Eagle Cash program to more camps in Iraq this March.

For more information on the benefits of Eagle Cash, see the finance office or visit the Eagle Cash website at <http://fms.treas.gov/EagleCash/index.html>.

Just One Question...

Which famous person do you look the most like?



"Puff Daddy. That's what people say."

Staff Sgt. Sherman Lee
Supply sergeant
HHC ASG-Kuwait
Canando, Texas



"People tell me Richard Gere."

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bielefeld
NCOIC of ammunition section
HHC ASG-Kuwait
Clarksville, Tenn.



"Robby Gould, Bears' kicker."

Spc. Stephen Goley
Unit supply specialist
68th Combat Sustainment Support
Covington, Ind.



"The white version of Will Smith."

Sgt. Michael Trapp
Chaplain's assistant
68th Combat Sustainment Support
Brigade
Saginaw, Mich.



"Bart Simpson."

Spc. Dustin Heckart
Maintenance helicopter technician
111th Air Ambulance Company
Long Beach, Calif.



Hometown Hero

Lance Cpl. Marco Soto

Coordination Chief
Marine Central Coordination Element-Kuwait

Soto works beyond his rank to ensure his fellow Marines are current on everything from their pay to travel arrangements

Soto talks about why he misses North Bergen, N.J.

"I miss the homemade ice cream from a store named "Mark's" and looking down the street and seeing Giants Stadium at the Meadowlands."

Avoid disaster: IED display reminds troops



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson



Photo by Spc. Debrah A. Robertson

Camp Buehring, Kuwait, displays some commonly seen improvised explosive devices and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices near the entrance of one of the dining facilities as a reminder of the dangers of IEDs and to show troops what to look for when traveling by convoy.

(Above) A prop IED is used to demonstrate one of the places a terrorist may hide an IED, behind a guardrail. Other exhibits in the display include IEDs hidden under rubble and inside cement blocks.

(Left) A large artillery round is seen inside a vehicle. VBIEDs are commonly seen in stalled, unattended vehicles.