

DV

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

August 22, 2007



*All who wander
are not lost*

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On the cover

A Soldier from the 160th Signal Brigade participates in the land navigation portion of his brigade's Soldier of the Quarter competition. For the full story, turn to page 8.

Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer

Contact us

Comments, questions, suggestions story ideas? Call the Desert Voice editor at 430-6334 or e-mail at desertvoice@arifjan.arcent.army.mil.

Taking opportunities to train equals combat readiness

Can they fight?

That's one of the most important questions a leader must ask himself about the members of his unit. It doesn't matter if that unit is an infantry outfit at a forward operations base or if it's stationed at Third U.S. Army headquarters. It has to be able to



**Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe
Third Army Command Sergeant Major**

destroy the enemy on the battlefield. Through consistent training on warrior tasks and battle drills, troops can condition themselves to be more effective individually and collectively.

All Soldiers need to be qualified in what I call the "big four." Those are physical fitness, weapons marksmanship, first aid and battle drills. In my opinion, these four areas are the absolute foundation of every troop in the U.S. military. These skills are the heart and soul of being a warrior and a rifleman first.

In addition to those skills, Soldiers should maintain proficiency in their military occupational specialty. Regardless of what your job is, you need to take every opportunity you can to make yourself better in that area. Continuously seek improvement in your specialty. Through practice, proficiency and improvement in any skill set can be achieved.

Every time you train, think about the possibility that it could be the last time you'll have the chance to practice that skill before you have to use it in combat.

Though some of us are serving in Kuwait supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, we're still in a combat zone. We have to be qualified on our individual readiness and unit training prior to deploying, but these skills are all perishable.

The training we conduct at the mobilization site, the combat readiness center or at home station needs to be reinforced

as often as possible. This pre-deployment training is no good if you don't stay current on it.

If your everyday mission doesn't involve handling your assigned weapon, you should draw it and review your loading, firing and stoppage-reduction drills on a regular basis. These procedures should

be practiced not only on individual weapons but crew-served weapons also.

Being deployed, troops live and work in an environment that has few training distractions. We're all responsible for maintaining our readiness as individuals. Make yourself a better Soldier and warfighter and increase your chances of success on the battlefield.

It's absolutely critical that you train on other weapons to make yourself competent enough to operate them properly and clear any malfunctions that may occur. You've got to have the ability to make it work in combat. If you have the chance to learn about the maintenance of the weapon, that will make you even better. But, at a minimum, you have to be able to use the weapon to engage and destroy the enemy. Let's say you're in a convoy and the machine gunner gets wounded during an attack. Someone has to be able to step in and take over to prevent others from getting wounded or killed.

The next time you're sitting in your respective work area, take a moment to think about what you would do if your situation changed. What if your post was attacked?

What would you do if the commander in chief decided that we need to go elsewhere to conduct operations? Don't be caught short. It's too late when you or your buddy get hurt or killed because you didn't know what to do.

—THIRD ... ALWAYS FIRST.

DV
Desert Voice
Magazine

Volume 29, Issue 12

The Desert Voice is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of the Desert Voice are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Third Army Public Affairs Office. This newspaper is published by Al-Qabandi United, a private firm, which is not affiliated with Third U.S. Army. All copy will be edited. The Desert Voice is produced weekly by the 50th Public Affairs Detachment. Find us online at www.arcent.army.mil.

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Third Army makes strides against PTSD

Story by
Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer

As long as wars have been fought, post traumatic stress disorder has prey on the weak and strong-minded alike.

There have been many names for the disorder over the years. Names like Soldier's heart, nostalgia, operational exhaustion, battle fatigue and shell shock just to name a few. But make no mistake about it, post combat stress can have a devastating effect on the military if it is not treated properly.

Here at Camp Arifjan, steps have been put in place to educate Soldiers of the potential hazards of post combat stress. Soldiers are required to complete the Mild Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Combat Stress Awareness and Response Program by Oct. 18.

The program is to be dispersed to every Soldier no matter where they are located, said Lt. Col. Karl Wilson, Deputy Surgeon Forward, Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

"This (the slide show) is a big thing. The Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army sent out an 'All Activities' message to the Army worldwide," Wilson said. "They want (the chain of command) teaching this all the way down – leaders, NCOs, Soldiers – down to the last private wherever they are."

Wilson said when the message first came out to complete the training, the general view was "Here is an e-mail. View it and then you're done."

He said this is wrong.

"That is against the Chief of Staff of the Army's intent. It's not online training," Wilson said.

Leaders should instead utilize the presentation to discuss the disorder with their subordinates. Even Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army/U.S. Army Central

commanding general, went over the training with his commanders, Wilson said.

PTSD is a clinical diagnosis made by a qualified psychiatrist or a licensed clinical psychologist. PTSD can be long term thing and require years of management to overcome, Wilson said.

A study conducted in 2004 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center showed that 18 percent of the Soldiers returning from Iraq and 11 percent of Soldiers coming back from Afghanistan were at risk from post combat stress. The study suggested that as the war on terror continues, the numbers of post combat stress cases will grow.

Lt. Col. Kevin Stevenson, chief of the Department of Social Work at Moncrief Army Community Hospital on Fort Jackson, S.C., said he's not surprised by those numbers.

"PTSD can surface while the Soldier is still in that stressful environment, or it can manifest itself years later," Stevenson said.

The Post Combat Stress program was created by PTSD experts from the Surgeon General's staff and the Army Medical Department. The briefing is designed to give Soldiers the tools needed to identify PTSD and the steps necessary to help fight it.

"They are trying to get across what it is, how do you recognize it and what do you do about it," Wilson said. "They want to give everybody the basic game plan."

When the program was developed, Soldiers in deployed areas could not get access because of system limitations, Wilson said.

Wilson said he, along with Lt. Col. Rob Hoss, G-6, and the

Surgeon General's Staff, produced a smaller file that would meet the needs of the program outline and be easier to run on computers.

Wilson said the new program still stresses the two points that were intended to get to the Soldiers.

"Get them the help they need and bring them back up to full capacity."

*Lt. Col. Karl Wilson
Deputy Surgeon Forward
Third Army/U.S. Army Central*


"Number One, no one needs to go it alone. It's the buddy team concept. Don't leave anybody behind," Wilson said. "Some of these guys are just as wounded as somebody who got shot. They've got something wrong with them that happened in combat. They're having a hard time managing it. Get them some help and they'll be ok."

Wilson said the second point is the same as a force sustainment issue. He said there is no reason to lose Soldiers because of PTSD.

"Get them the help they need and bring them back up to full capacity," Wilson said. "There's no need to let someone suffer from post combat stress and watch them spiral downward. The idea is to get them help and get them better."

The Walter Reed study also concluded that 60 percent of Soldiers returning from OIF and OEF were unlikely to seek help out of fear their commanders and fellow Soldiers would treat them differently.

Simply because a servicemember has sought help from mental health experts does not necessarily mean they have been diagnosed with any type of disorder, Wilson said.

"That's part of the message we're trying to get out," Wilson said. "Just because you're trying to get help does not mean there's anything permanently wrong with you." 

Soldiers and Sailors supporting ships

Terminal transportation group moves equipment in safe, timely manner

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Anishka J. Fulton
1st TSC Public Affairs

One by one the vehicles rolled off the ship, all under the watchful eyes of the 598th Terminal Transportation Group, based out of Rotterdam, Netherlands. Their job is to ensure each piece of equipment gets off the ship safely and is transported to the troops serving at bases in and around Iraq.

The 598th TTG supports Third Army/U.S. Army Central in its logistical mission to support Operations Iraq and Enduring Freedom.

“Our job is critical to the success of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. Without us, the members of our armed forces, and coalition forces, wouldn’t be able to get the necessary equipment needed for the completion of their mission,” said Master Sgt. Alfred L. Weeks, a port operations noncommissioned officer from the 332nd Transportation Command.

Weeks, a native of Brooksville, Fla.,

is a reserve component Soldier with the 332nd Transportation Command based out of Tampa, Fla. The 332nd TC is one of the five battalions that fall under the 598th TTG. His primary mission involves the day-to-day operations of several ports in Kuwait.

The 598th TTG uploads and discharges military equipment from the ships. Equipment going to and from Iraq and Kuwait goes through these ports, said Weeks.

“We basically deploy and redeploy equipment, both American and coalition,” he said.

The 598th TTG is a combined force of active duty Soldiers and reserve component servicemembers from other branches of the military. The unit’s success relies on the teamwork of the combined military forces and civilian support.

We work alongside Navy... and contractors, Weeks said. “We also have Air Force liaison officers working with us.”

“We support the 332nd TC by providing manpower needs,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Cyrus Khemalaap, a Palisades

Park, N.J., native. “These needs include the documentation of all cargo essential to the mission needs in Iraq and Kuwait. We also have Navy Seabees who are responsible for providing the ... resources needed to maintain material handling equipment.”

The drive to get the mission accomplished successfully is an integral part of why these men and women take pride in the job assigned to them. Each servicemember has a different reason why the job he does is of high importance.

“We try to do what we can to help fight the war against terror. This is my third deployment, and I volunteered to come over here,” said Master Sgt. Frank L. Robinson, a native of Baton Rouge, La., and the entry control post NCO. He is also assigned to the 598th TTG. “I enjoy helping Soldiers. We do whatever it takes to make sure that the equipment arrives to the right destination, and in good condition.”

“Knowing that I am helping other countries to get a better lifestyle, one as good as what we have in the U.S., is a motivator for me,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Kevin L. Neal, a reserve vessel team documenter for Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group, and a native of Monroe, La. “I am proud of the fact our mission enables the troops in Iraq to get the equipment needed to accomplish their mission. Our job is very fulfilling.”

For Khemalaap, the events of 9/11 had a profound impact on his desire to deploy in support of OEF and OIF.

“I waited for this deployment. I’ve been waiting to support the global war on terrorism since September 11 because I lost a close family friend when the Twin Towers were destroyed,” said Khemalaap.

The pain and anger that motivated Khemalaap to serve has since been eased by the realization that he is not alone in wanting to support the war on terror. He has made good on the lessons he learned from that memorable moment in his life.



A Humvee is driven off a ship Aug. 13 at a port in Kuwait. The 598th Terminal Transportation Group handles equipment deploying and redeploying out of the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of responsibility in Kuwait.




Petty Officers 2nd Class Kevin L. Neal and Cyrus Khemalaap document equipment rolling off the ramp of a ship Aug. 14 at a port in Kuwait. Neal, a native of Monroe, La., and Khemalaap, a native of Palisades Park, N.J. are assigned to the Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group, which provides support to the 598th Terminal Transportation Group out of Rotterdam, Netherlands.

His continued service is a reflection of his dedication to the support of the global war on terror.

“The anger has a lasting effect, but I don’t dwell on it anymore,” Khemalaap said. “I focus now on my mission at hand and how it impacts the lives of others.”

The push of equipment that comes through the ports that are assigned to the 598th TTG is an integral part of the success of the global war on terror at home and abroad. The unit provides round the clock support to the servicemembers and civilians who depend on the equipment to get their mission accomplished.

“I have no regrets whatsoever in serving and in working to get this mission accomplished. The Army has been good to me and my family. I think that every American should serve at least two years in our military,” said Weeks. “It makes you disciplined and it builds character. I think it’s our duty as Americans to serve.”

“This is a joint operation with a supportive role,” said Khemalaap. “The important thing is that we are here to support this war, and it’s a mission we cannot fail.” 



A Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle is driven off a ship Aug. 14, at a port in Kuwait.

A signal in the desert

160th Signal Brigade Soldiers traverse land na

Story and photos by
Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer
Desert Voice staff writer

Headed off in different directions with Pluggers in hand and points laid out, Soldiers of the 160th Signal Brigade wander the desert of Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug 13.

The 160th Signal Brigade handles communications operations for Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

From different companies

within the 160th Signal Brigade, the participants are demonstrating their Soldier skills and representing their companies by navigating to specific points with the assistance of compasses and Pluggers during a navigation course.

"I wanted to represent my company and myself, and show that we're the best," said Sgt. Steven D. Dawkins, a cable team chief with Alpha Company's 67th Signal Battalion.

This is but one part of the com-

petition for Soldier/ Non-Commissioned Officer of the quarter for the 160th Signal Brigade. The Soldiers are given five different points to find in a roughly three kilometer span of desert. Though the Soldiers are only required to find four of the five points, the challenge proves difficult due to high winds, high temperatures and very high stress levels among the competitors. The navigation course must be completed within two hours of first setting off from the start point.



A 160th Signal Brigade Soldier uses his compass to point the way to his first point during a navigation course at the training complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The 160th Signal Brigade held its Soldier/Non-Commissioned Officer of the quarter competition Aug 13 to 14.

Navigation course during quarterly competition

A camouflaged tent provided shade for the competitors as they were given a safety brief prior to beginning the course. Sergeant 1st Class Charles Pesnell, an engineer with Headquarters Company, 160th Signal Brigade, gave the safety brief to the Soldiers.

Earlier that day the Soldiers tested their skills with the M-16 at the range. They were to participate in various other competitions the next day including an Army Physical Fitness Test, a board and essay


writing. The essay was on a topic assigned to them by Command Sgt. Maj. Vernon Praymous, the CSM of 160th Signal Brigade.

Preparing them for the competition and mentoring them, the Soldiers' sponsors play a large role in their performance during the competition. The sponsors help guide the Soldier before and during the competition.

Along with the recognition for a job well done, competing in these competitions provide the Soldiers

with extra training, experience, and a chance to flex their skills.

"It keeps them keen on their Soldier skills and is crucial in developing Soldiers and NCOs," said Pesnell.

The barren landscape of Camp Buehring's training complex lent realism to the navigation course and the Soldiers wandering alone made it seem all the more serious. Competition keeps the Soldiers on their feet and prepared for a testing of their mettle in theater. 



Sgt. 1st Class Charles Pesnell gives the Soldiers a safety brief before they compete in a navigation course as part of the Soldier/Non-Commissioned Officer of the quarter competition Aug 13 to 14.

(Background) A 160th Signal Brigade Soldier navigates the desert of Udairi Range, Kuwait during a navigation course. The competitors used lensatic compasses and Pluggers during the course which was a part of the Soldier/Non-Commissioned Officer of the quarter competition Aug 13 to 14.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Porshoua Tchiang, a native of Valdese, N.C., assigned to 5th Squadron, Navy Coastal Warfare, looks through binoculars while on a patrol off the shores of Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

Guarding Patriot

Navy patrol boats keep Camp Patriot ports safe

*Story and photos by
Spc. Giancarlo Casem
Desert Voice editor*

October 12, 2000, 11:18 a.m. At the port of Aden, Yemen, the U.S.S. Cole was attacked by suicide bombers. The attack resulted in the deaths of 17 Sailors, injuring 39.

The attack on the U.S.S. Cole was a precursor to subsequent terrorist attacks by the al-Qaeda terrorist network.

Nearly seven years later, the ports of Camp Patriot are guarded by Navy patrol boats to prevent another possible attack. The port is used by

A Navy patrol boat prepares to return to port after a patrol mission at Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

Third Army/U.S. Army Central to help conduct its logistical mission in support of the Global War on Terrorism and Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

“Our mission is to provide harbor security to Camp Patriot and the harbor,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class Brett Likes, 5th Squadron, Navy Coastal Warfare. “It’s an important mission.”

Equipment is moved through the port. The Sailors of 5th Squadron, Navy Coastal Warfare are tasked with the responsibility of providing security to the port and the ships in it.

The San Diego-based unit employs patrol boats in its mission. These patrol boats are loaded with a variety of firearms. Each crewmember is trained and proficient on the





Petty Officer 3rd Class Brett Likes, a native of Idaho Falls, Idaho, assigned to 5th Squadron, Navy Coastal Warfare, loads rounds into a machine gun during a routine patrol mission around the port at Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

Patrols ensure Third Army/U.S. Army Central port operations are safe from possible attacks.

boat's weapons systems.

"We're all trained and qualified to fire these weapons," Likes, a native of Idaho Falls, Idaho, said. "If something happens we have to be able fire these weapons."

During their mission, these boats patrol the waters outside of Camp Patriot. They monitor civilian vessels that may encroach into Camp Patriot's waters. Besides performing

physical security for the port, they also provide escorts for ships, both U.S. and Kuwaiti.

"My job is to keep the log and keep look out," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Porshoua Tchiang, 5th Sqdn., NCW.

Tchiang said though their days may seem long and boring, she still has to stay vigilant.

"Normally, it's just the jet skis,

we see them everyday," Tchiang, a native of Valdese, N.C., said. "Usually on the weekends, there's a lot more of them. We have to pull security and make sure nothing comes in."

If a vessel does encroach on Camp Patriot waters, the patrol boat crews turn them back or warn them to move on.

"We will orient on them let them know we are here," Likes said. "We will turn on blue lights and maybe siren. We'll get their attention, we'll wave at them."

The crews' actions are reflexive of the response from the other vessel, Likes said.

"If the lights don't work, then we'll get on the loud speaker and let them know it's a security zone and they can't enter," Likes said. "If they still don't turn back, we'll get sterner. We'll use flares, fire warning shots in front of them."

With the threat of terrorist actions like the U.S.S. Cole attack looming everyday. The Sailors patrolling the waters of Camp Patriot keep a watchful eye and stay vigilant. The lives of other servicemembers are in their hands. **A**

Soldiers to receive extra pay if extended

Story by
Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer

Deployed Soldiers in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom can receive up to \$1,000 a month in benefits after 12 months.

The policy, known as the Assignment Incentive Pay program, applies to Soldiers who are extended past their scheduled 12-month deployment. The incentive is also payable to Soldiers who volunteer to extend beyond their year-long tour.

The AIP is not just an Army program either. The Navy, Air Force and Marines all have different forms of AIP.

“Effective June 15, 2007, all Soldiers, active duty, reserve component and Army National Guard that are involuntarily extended,

exceeding their 12 months boots on ground date, will receive \$1,000 for each month they are extended,” said Staff Sgt. Tamisha B. Patterson, 13th Finance Group. Assignment Incentive Military Pay is the military’s preferred way to compensate troops from all services, according to the web site www.militaryconnection.com.

The site says those servicemembers involuntarily extended in Iraq and Kuwait receive an additional \$200 in hardship duty pay and another \$800 in assignment incentive pay for a total of \$1,000.

Soldiers in certain skills who have served 12 months and volunteer to extend their tours receive this assignment incentive military pay as well.

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld authorized the tour extensions on April 15, 2004.

He said the extension period would be for up to three months in Iraq, plus, Soldiers would be in the Third Army/U.S. Army Central Area of Operations an extra month before going home.

“This is the Department of the Army’s way of providing for Soldiers in the identified units who were promised they were leaving at a certain time, but because of operational requirements, they were required to stay longer,” Barrett said earlier this year when the incentive-pay program actually began.

The Army first used Assignment Incentive Pay in Iraq

in February 2004 when more than 1,500 Soldiers from 12 units were required to stay in Iraq longer than their expected 12-month rotation. To compensate them, the Army offered the \$200 hardship duty pay and either the \$800 AIP or a guaranteed stabilized assignment once they redeployed. If they opted for the stabilized tour, Soldiers were guaranteed to spend at least the same amount of time at home station as they did in theater. Not one Soldier opted for the guaranteed stabilization.

In order to receive the \$800 AIP, Soldiers must sign a personnel action form recognizing that their extension was involuntary.

“Under new guidelines, the DA Form 4187 must be signed by the first field grade officer in the Soldiers’s chain of command,” Patterson said. “This will happen once the extended unit receives orders stating they have been extended.”

“The signature is necessary because, by law, AIP must be based on a written agreement between the secretary of the Army and the Soldier,” said Deborah Holman, a senior compensation analyst for the Army’s G-1.

The AIP will also not be prorated, Barrett said about the extra pay. He explained that Soldiers who serve one day of the extension period will receive the extra pay for the entire month.

The pay will be provided for time Soldiers spend in Kuwait after departing Iraq, Barrett said.

It will be paid as long as “boots are on the ground” in the Central Command theater, he said.

“When Soldiers are calculating their time on the ground, they should not subtract the time they spent away on emergency or R&R leave,” Holman said.

Servicemembers with questions regarding the AIP should contact their G-1 or S-1. **A**



No brass, no ammo!



Photos by Spc. Wesley Landrum

Sgt. 1st Class Ramil Las Dulce, a liaison officer with 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, clears 2nd Inf. Div. Soldiers off a rifle marksmanship range at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 15. LNOs serve as a guide for Soldiers in-transit to Iraq through Kuwait. For the full story on the LNO mission, read next week's issue of the Desert Voice.

Why I serve:

**G-1
Maj. Cynthia Rhodes
Third Army/U.S. Army Central**



The Ewa Beach, Hawaii, native explains why she chose to join the military.

“Because I love the military. There is no other job that will let me do my duty to my country, be a role model for my kids, see the world and serve with some great people.”

Just One Question...

“What aspect of Kuwaiti culture would you like to experience before your deployment ends?”



“I have seen most of Kuwait already.”

Airman 1st Class Kyle Peek
Blandon, Penn.
Vehicle operator
424th Medium Truck Detachment



“I want to see the Kuwait Towers.”

Senior Airman Anthony D. Arseo
Riverside, Calif.
Vehicle operator
70th Medium Truck Detachment



“Go to downtown Kuwait City and see the shops.”

Airman 1st Class Jacob Lankford
Wichita, Kan.
Combat Trucker
424th Medium Truck Detachment



“I want to get out into Kuwait City and see their culture first hand.”

Petty Officer 2nd Class Anthony Powell
Detroit, Mich.
Master-at-arms
142nd Security Detachment



“I would like to experience some of Kuwait's history and religious culture.”

Petty Officer 2nd Class Keith Hale
Atlanta, Ga.
Master-at-arms
142nd Security Detachment

What's happening around Kuwait ...



Servicemembers sit and enjoy a comedy show sponsored by the USO and MWR Aug. 12 on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Comedians bring the laughs



Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem
Comedian Robert Riggle delivers his stand-up comedy routine Aug. 12 on stage at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



Ouch!

Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Airman 1st Class Ashton Hughey, of Indianapolis, Ind., 424th Medium Truck Detachment, grimaces as she is injected with a needle during CLS refresher training, Aug. 10, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



Ready, set, spike!

Photo by Spc. Wesley Landrum

Team Awesome's Sgt. Jacob Morgan, number 44, B Det., 38th PSB, spikes the ball against members of the Area Support Group-Kuwait team during the Camp Arifjan Unit Volleyball League playoffs, June 18, at a fitness center on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.