

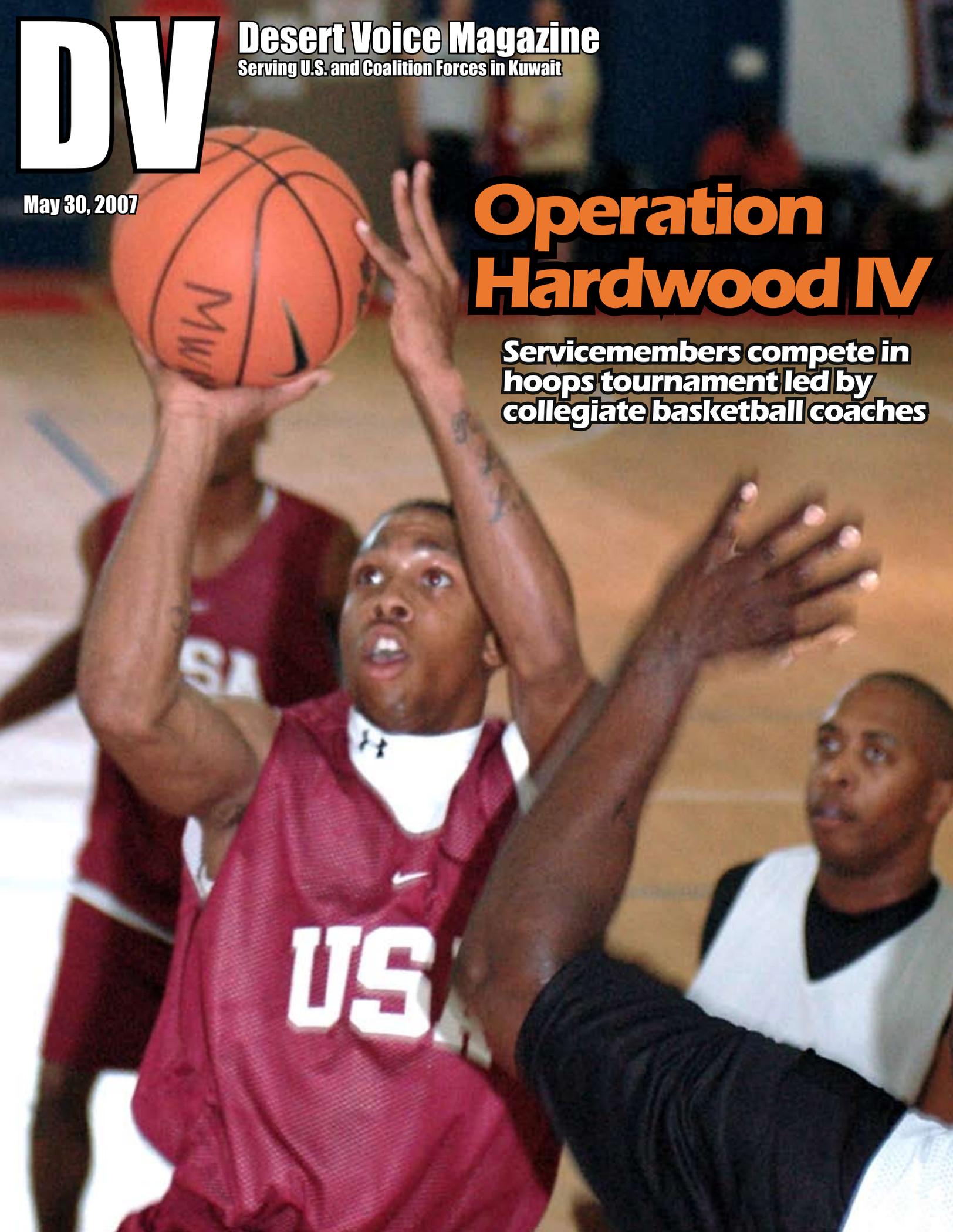
# DV

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

May 30, 2007

## **Operation Hardwood IV**

**Servicemembers compete in  
hoops tournament led by  
collegiate basketball coaches**



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**Spc. Rondell White takes a shot for Camp Arifjan Team 3 at the Zone 1 Gym on Camp Arifjan, during the Operation Hardball IV tournament, May 24**

*Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day*

# From the Top

## Be thankful for our quality of life

Soldiers in Kevlar helmets and body armor want to just wear their Army Combat Uniforms. Soldiers in Army Combat Uniforms want to wear their physical training uniforms. Soldiers in their PTs want to wear civilian clothes.

The first Soldiers who came into Kuwait lived out in the elements and slept on top of their vehicles or on the ground.

They didn't have showers. They drank lukewarm water and they ate MREs. The troops who set up and manned these outposts were pioneers. They laid the foundation for what we have today by setting up their own tents, living in the desert while they did it, not knowing if or when they were going to have to cross into Iraq.

Soldiers who feel like their living conditions are inadequate or the quality of life here isn't as good as it should be should think about the Soldiers who came before them.

Before you gripe about the way things are, you should consider how the very first Soldiers who came here slept on the ground with no tents and maintained security long enough for the next group of Soldiers to come through and set up tents with dirt floors and slept on cots. They maintained security long enough for Soldiers to come in and set up better tents with wooden floors, beds and air conditioning.

The next time you feel like you're being slighted because you're living in a 58-man temporary building that has electricity, heat and air conditioning beside an indoor shower and a toilet that flushes, keep in mind that things could be worse. When you live within a few meters of a pizza restaurant, a donut shop, a coffee shop, a Post Exchange, a gymnasium and a mess hall that serves food four times a day, things could be a lot worse.

The next time you're sitting in a mess hall cutting your steak, and you get upset because



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

you have to do it with a plastic knife and fork, stop for a minute and put life back into perspective. Maybe you should drown your sorrows by going down to the community center, where you can watch movies, play pool or talk to your buddies in a comfortable environment.

Soldiers who have lived in harsh circumstances tend to appreciate quality-of-life improvements more than Soldiers

who haven't. Having said that, anyone with common sense and a limited imagination can understand that no matter where they are or what's going on, it could be worse.

We can't just build whatever we want here, Kuwait is a sovereign nation. We are not allowed to build permanent structures without Kuwaiti approval. We also don't have an unlimited amount of money. We have to be good stewards with what we do have and use it in the most effective and efficient possible way. Our base camps are temporary situations, even if we occupy them for several years.

Everyone who wears the United States military uniform has the right to be proud of their service and they need to know that their leaders and the American people are proud of them and the leadership has gone to extraordinary lengths to ensure that people have a good quality of life over here.

We owe it to our country to be here under any conditions. You need to conduct yourself with honor so that when you go home you can look back and say "Hey, I did the best I could with what I had and I didn't worry about what I didn't have."

I'm always grateful to everyone for their service to our country. Remember to be grateful to our country for what it's done for us. Continue to take care of each other, be safe.

**Third... Always First!**

**DV**  
**Desert Voice**  
**Magazine**

Volume 28, Issue 48  
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 40th Public Affairs Detachment. Find us online at [www.arcent.army.mil](http://www.arcent.army.mil).

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Photo illustration by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea

Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army/U.S. Army Central commanding general, briefs Gen. George W. Casey Jr., Army Chief of Staff, during a visit to the unit's headquarters, May 15. Casey was briefed on the logistical and operational support that Third Army/USARCENT provides in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. "I never had a worry about anything coming out of Third Army," said Casey. The photo has been altered for security reasons.

# A Visit From The Top

**Staff Sgt. Alex Licea and  
Sgt. Carlos M. Burger II**

**Third Army/U.S. Army Central Public Affairs Office**

Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., Army Chief of Staff, praised Third Army/U.S. Army Central's support to the ongoing war in Iraq and Afghanistan during a visit May 15. Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, the USARCENT commanding general, received the senior army leader at the Third Army headquarters.

Whitcomb's focus during the hour-long visit was to update Casey on USARCENT's current operations in support of the Global War on Terrorism. He highlighted that USARCENT's mission is much greater than providing logistical support to Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. The command also builds and fosters relationships with foreign militaries through a Theater Security Cooperation program.

"It [TSC] has become one of my main priorities. These engagements are essential to the stability of the region," Whitcomb said.

Casey concluded his visit by telling of his appreciation to USARCENT for its continued efforts to support Operations Iraqi

and Enduring Freedom.

"Thank you for two and a half years of magnificent support," said Casey referencing USARCENT's support during his time as the top military commander in Iraq. "I never had to worry about anything coming out of Third Army."

USARCENT, known as "Patton's Own," is the Army Service Component Command of U.S. Central Command. Currently, USARCENT provides the lifeline of logistical support to Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. In addition to supporting the warfighters, the command also engages foreign militaries to strengthen enduring relationships across the CENTCOM area of responsibility, which spans from the Horn of Africa through Southwest Asia to Central Asia.

Casey recently left Iraq, where he was the commander of Multi-National Force – Iraq, to become the 36th Chief of Staff of the Army on April 10, assuming the position from Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker. Prior to deploying to Iraq in 2003, he served as Schoomaker's vice chief of staff. MNF-I is a coalition of more than 20 countries that serves as the U.S. military's commanding headquarters in Iraq.

# Crossing the border

## At Camp Buehring, Soldiers pray

**Sgt. Sarah Scully**  
Desert Voice Staff Writer

Adjusting weapons on their uniformed shoulders, dozens of troops filed into the Camp Buehring Chapel for Sunday morning services, recently.

Back home, they would never think of taking a gun into a church. But it's a necessity out in the desert of Kuwait, miles from the Iraq border.

With stained-glass windows painted onto the walls of the warehouse-turned-church, this is the last chapel the troops have for religious services before heading across the border into Iraq.

"I give thanks that through all this craziness and war, we still have a place to worship," said Spc. Timothy Klibbe, a Soldier with 130th Infantry Battalion, out of Fort Stewart, Ga.

With his M16 lying beneath a pew, he offered up his prayer to Chaplain (1st Lt.) Richard Williams.

"They've got a lot on their mind, and they're looking for something that can give them hope in the midst of this trial that they're going through," said Williams, a Southern Baptist preacher from Enid, Okla., stationed at Camp Buehring with the Aviation Task Force.

Other servicemembers asked to pray for all the Soldiers traveling up north, for safe training, for all the families back home and for troops to make the right choices.

Some of the troops said they felt closer to their families when they went to church.

"It means a lot that even though we're thousands of miles away from our families to come worship God, we know our families are back home in church as well," said Staff Sgt. Nathan Hunt, from Omaha, Neb., currently serving with



3rd/7th Cavalry Squadron.

"It gives us a bit of comfort."

Troops of all military branches, ages, ranks and backgrounds find their way to the chapel for services offered throughout the week.

With Camp Buehring as a training ground and transitory place for servicemembers going to Iraq, the number of individuals who need guidance can vary from a few dozen to a few hundred.

"It's either feast or famine," said Williams. "There's always a lot of issues or there's nothing – but when you're needed, you're needed."

"I think they're looking for strength for the trials that come ahead."



Photos by Sgt. Sarah Scully

# Pray with God

## Pray before heading into Iraq



**(Far left)** An officer closes his eyes as he sings with the congregation to the music of the "Any Given Sunday" band at the Camp Buehring Chapel - a re-modeled warehouse - in Kuwait.

**(Top left)** A Third Army Soldier reads the Bible along with the pastor's sermon with her fellow servicemembers during the Sunday morning contemporary service at Camp Buehring.

**(Above)** Chaplain (1st Lt.) Richard Williams, a Southern Baptist preacher from Enid, Okla., stands in front of his congregation as they sing gospel songs. The number of worshippers fluctuates depending on the rotation of troops.

# Operation Hardwood

## Servicemembers compete in hoops tournament with college coaches guiding the way

**Spc. Wes Landrum**  
*Desert Voice Staff Writer*

The guard brings the ball up the court.

“Set up the play!” Wake Forest head coach Skip Prosser yells.

As the play develops, an open shot is attempted and missed. The players fight for the rebound and take control of the basketball.

“Get the rebound! Get the rebound,” an animated Prosser says.

This game was not an opening-round game of the NCAA Tournament but the opening game

of Operation Hardwood IV: Hoops With The Troops at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The event pairs up servicemember basketball teams from the Third Army/U.S. Army Central Area of Operations with college coaches to compete in a four-day tournament.

This year’s ensemble of coaches consists of Prosser, Notre Dame Coach Mike Brey, University of Georgia Coach Dennis Felton, ESPN basketball analyst and former coach Fran Fraschilla, **Story continues on page 8**

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**(Above)** An Operation Hardwood IV game begins with the tip-off, May 24 at Camp Arifjan. Operation Hardwood IV, sponsored by Third Army/U.S. Army Central, combines the playing talents of deployed servicemembers with the teaching skills of collegiate coaches.

**(Left)** Participants of Operation Hardwood IV, a basketball tournament featuring deployed servicemembers led by college coaches from schools such as Wake Forest and the University of Georgia, discuss their gameplans during tournament play on Camp Arifjan.





Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day



Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

**(Above)** University of Georgia Men's Basketball Head Coach Dennis Felton talks to his team before an Operation Hardwood IV game at Camp Arifjan. Operation Hardwood IV brings deployed service-members together with college coaches in a four-day tournament.

**(Right)** Petty Officer 1st Class Rod Lewis leaps for a lay-up during Operation Hardwood IV action, May 24 on Camp Arifjan.



Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

Camp Arifjan



Wake Forest head coach Skip Prosser talks to his Camp Arifjan Team 1 players during a timeout. Camp Arifjan's Team 1 defeated Camp Virginia 38-27 to finish pool play 2-1. The games are part of a tournament pairing collegiate coaches with servicemembers deployed in support of Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

**Continued from page 6**

the U.S. Military Academy's Jim Crews, Ed Conroy from the Citadel, University of Vermont's Mike Lonergan, and Reggie Minton, Deputy Executive Director, the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

Wil Handy, organizer for this year's tournament, said the coach selection process is a long one.

"We get a lot of help from the USO," he said. "They send out feelers, and those that are

interested in coming over to coach respond, and we get the ball rolling to get them here."

Sgt. James Amott, 395th Finance Battalion, said it's great to have the coaches here. He said he hopes to learn as much as he can from each individual.

"Just to get a piece of their knowledge would be special," he said. "It's an honor to just be around them. I want to just sit down with them and learn the ins and outs of the game."

Brey said the honor was his and his fellow coaches.

"For years, you hear that 'the military has your back,'" he said. "Coming over here gives me and the other coaches a chance to say, 'today, we have your back.'" Fraschilla echoed Brey's sentiments.

"These men and women have given up so much to come over here and fight for us," the ESPN analyst said as he pointed to the court. "For me, personally, it gives me great pleasure to come here and hang out with the troops, talk to them and understand the things that they do on a daily



Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum



Photo by Sgt. Sarah Scully

**(Above)** A Camp Buehring player attempts an acrobatic shot during a game in the opening round of Operation Hardwood IV, May 22.

**(Right)** Randy Jackson, a guard with team Life Support Area, drives through traffic for two tough points during an Operation Hardwood IV game, May 24.



Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum

basis.”

The games started May 23 with preliminary action commonly known as pool play. Each team played in a round-robin format meaning the teams play everyone. The double-elimination portion of the Operation Hardwood tournament took place May 25. Brey said the fun really begins at that point.

“Each team plays very hard out there,” the Fighting Irish Coach said. “If you don’t believe these teams want to win, come watch a game.” When asked to compare his team, the Life Support Area squad, to his Notre Dame team, Brey added his LSA team is young, fast and a lot of fun to watch on the court.

“They would give my Irish team a hard-fought game,” Brey said. “Who knows, they might even beat my college squad.”

*For their professionalism and dedication to duty in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the*

# 40th PAD Salutes...



**Capt. Kenneth Smith** -- Operations Officer, Kuwait Armed Forces Training Center, Third Army/U.S. Army Central

His continual support of media coverage of units and troops training before crossing the berm greatly enhanced our ability to publish stories highlighting the professionalism, hard work, preparation, sacrifices and relentless spirit of the American Soldier.



**2nd Lt. Sarah Thompson** -- Group Personnel Officer/Adjutant/Public Affairs Officer, 336th Transportation Group

Her efforts in finding Soldiers to conduct hometown interviews through the Digital Video Imagery Distribution System provided dozens of spots on local and national television, print and radio mediums. She always takes advantage of opportunities to inform the American public of the great work of 336th Soldiers supporting the U.S. Army Central mission.



**Chuck Sprague** -- Public Affairs Officer, Army Field Support Brigade

Always a friend to Public Affairs Detachment journalists, he not only assisted in highlighting the contributions of civilians to the warfighting effort, but is always eager in demonstrating the enormous efforts and work involved in keeping our servicemembers in the fight with the best equipment available.



**Carlotta Maneice** -- Public Affairs Officer, 160th Signal Brigade

A true team-player, she is always willing to lend a helping hand. She not only contributes articles and photos highlighting the signal heroes in 160th, but also volunteers to assist in PA events and coverage, always adding a dose of positive attitude.



**Staff Sgt. Kevin Buckley** -- Media Relations Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Third Army/U.S. Army Central Public Affairs Office

Charging ahead at the speed of light, he always makes something happen. The man with the plan when you're not sure where to start, he assisted in getting photographs, collecting shout outs, interviews, and generally has exactly the person you need to talk to - on speed dial.



The Web sites listed below are dedicated to deployed servicemembers. You will find links to anything from free phone cards to care packages to airline discounts.

<http://www.operationhomelink.org> -- Free computers for spouses or parents of deployed soldier in ranks E1 - E5.

<https://www.operationuplink.org> -- Free phone cards.

<http://anysoldier.com/ForSoldiersOnly.cfm> -- To sign up for sponsoring soldier care packages for theater.

<http://www.operationshoebox.com> -- free shoebox care package.

<http://www.treatthetroops.org> -- free cookies.

<http://bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html> -- lowest airfare available.

<http://bluestarmoms.org/care.html> -- free care packages.

<http://www.heromiles.org> -- free air travel for Emergency Leave, and for the family members of injured soldiers to travel to Medical facility.

<http://www.bluestarmothers.org/airlinespecials.php> -- Airline discounts for R & R.

<http://www.booksforsoldiers.com/forum/index.php> -- free books, DVD's, CD's.

<http://www.militarymoms.net/sot.html> -- free care packages (your family member signs up to have sent to you).

<http://operationmilitarypride.org/smsignup.html> -- free care packages.

<https://www.treatfortroops.com/registration/index.php> -- free gifts and care packages.

## Just One Question...

**“What is your favorite part of participating in Operation Hardwood?”**



**“It gives us an opportunity to interact with the NCAA coaches.”**

Sgt. Devellus Butler  
Dotman, Ala.  
Cook  
186th Engineering Company



**“The troops.”**

Fran Fraschilla  
Dallas, Texas  
College Basketball Analyst  
ESPN Television Network



**“Gives us a chance to take our minds off our job.”**

Spc. Anthony Monroe  
Sacramento, Calif.  
Personnel Specialist  
40th Personnel Services Detachment



**“I like the conditioning we did to get ready for this tournament.”**

Airman 1st Class Carlos Verette  
Abbeville, La.  
Truck driver  
70th Medium Truck Detachment



**“Just the sponsorship, seeing the college coaches.”**

Petty Officer 1st Class Roderick Lewis  
Meridian, Miss.  
Corpsman  
Inshore Boat Unit



## Hometown Hero

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Donohue Jr.  
475th Quartermaster Group command sergeant major

Donohue's 475th provides all of petroleum for the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of operation. Donohue, a Vietnam veteran, recently presented Penn State football coach Joe Paterno with an American flag flown over Tallil, Iraq.

Donohue talks about why he misses his hometown of Williamsport, Pa.

**“The Little League World Series.”**

# Sinise visits troops in Kuwait



Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

Actor Gary Sinise, best known for portraying Lt. Dan Taylor in the 1994 film "Forrest Gump," meets a group of Sailors deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, May 19, at the Expeditionary Medical Facility-Kuwait. Sinise toured both Camp Buehring and Camp Arifjan during his visit, meeting troops at EMF-Kuwait, the Third Army/U.S. Army Central command cell, and the Camp Buehring dining facility.

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**Mandatory Coaches' Meeting Friday, 8 June at 1900 HRS at  
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