

# DV *The Desert Voice*

United States Army Central  
"Transforming to Full-Spectrum Operations" 

February 27, 2008



***Rockin' Djibouti***

# Table of Contents

## Page 3

Wrongfully using dietary supplements could prove harmful – even fatal.

## Page 4

100th fixed Stryker rolls through repair facility at Camp As Sayliyah.

## Page 8

El Salvadoran troops fires up HEAT training at Camp Buehring.

## Page 12

1st TSC Soldier loses big and comes up on top during “Break the Weight in ‘08.”

## On the cover

Marines from Battery A, 3rd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, attempt to move a boulder while constructing a new well cover for villagers in Chebellier, Djibouti, earlier this month. For the full story turn to page 6.

*Photo by Marine Sgt. Alec Kleinsmith*

### Contact us

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

# Chief of staff addresses imperatives

Today, we are locked in a war against a global extremist threat that is fixed on defeating the United States and destroying our way of life.

This foe will not go away nor will it give up easily. At stake is the power of our values and our civilization – exemplified by the promise of America – to confront and defeat the menace of extremist terrorists.

At stake is whether the authority of those who treasure the rights of free individuals will stand firm against the ruthless and pitiless men who wantonly slay the defenseless. At stake is whether the future will be framed by the individual freedoms we hold so dear or be dominated by demented forms of extremism.

At stake is whether we will continue to expand freedom, opportunity, and decency for those who thirst for it, or let fall the darkness of extremism and terror.

Faced with such a long and difficult struggle, we must remind ourselves that this Army exists to field forces for victory. We are at war, fighting for our freedom, our security, and our future as a Nation. We have made hard sacrifices, and there will be more.



**Gen. George W. Casey**  
**Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army**

We have lost more than 2,400 Soldiers to hostile fire and had over 20,000 Wounded – nearly a quarter of those from the Reserve components. We have also awarded a Medal of Honor, nine Distinguished Service Cross Medals, 440 Silver Stars and more than 6,700 other awards for valor.

Our Soldiers, Families and civilians are the strength of our Army and they make the Army the Strength of the Nation. Their sacrifices are what builds a better future for others, and preserves our way of life.

They will lead our Nation to victory over our enemies. They will preserve the peace for us and for our allies. Our Warrior Ethos has it right – I will always place the mission first, I will never quit, I will never accept defeat, and I will never leave a fallen comrade.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren and I are greatly encouraged by the recent actions of the Congress, President George W. Bush, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, which reflect clear recognition of our challenges following six years of war. We look forward to working with you to maintain our Army – still the best in the world at what we do.



Volume 29, Issue 39  
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# Buyer beware: misuse of dietary supplements can be fatal

Story by  
Lt. Col. Stephen Hadley  
1st TSC Safety Office

Dietary supplements can cause adverse health effects and affect performance.

“Dietary supplements” is a general term for a variety of products: vitamins, minerals, amino acids, proteins, botanicals (including herbal preparations), glandular extracts (e.g. pituitary, hypothalamus, testes) and other animal products.

Often there are no written claims on the product label but the name implies a certain effect. Many supplements provide none of the implied benefits or only a very slight benefit. Servicemembers must realize that these items are unregulated and no one is required to provide proof of effectiveness or safety to the Food and Drug Administration prior to marketing.

Several reports of side effects associated with dietary supplements have surfaced in military communities, including reports of abnormal heart

rhythms and mental status changes. Unfortunately, it is difficult to predict who is most likely to suffer adverse health effects from a dietary supplement.

Some dietary supplements marketed for performance enhancement and weight loss and some over-the-counter products can be harmful when ingredients are combined.

Caffeine-containing substances include guarana, coffee, cocoa, green tea, black tea, oolong tea, cola nut, and mate. Ephedrine-like substances include many cold remedies (pseudoephedrine), bitter orange/citrus aurantium (synephrine), country mallow, heartleaf and Ma Huang.

The sale of ephedrine containing supplements were completely band by the FDA in April 2004; however, a federal judge over turned the ban to allow for low-dose (10 mg or less) ephedrine containing supplements with the ban for higher doses remaining in effect.

Ephedrine still remains a dangerous substance and should be avoided.

These products are banned from sale on military installations, but still are available internationally and illegally in the United States. Reading the labels of all purchased dietary supplements and cold remedies is critical.

Servicemembers should tell their health care provider about any dietary supplements they are taking – this is important information, along with other prescription and non-prescription medication.

Also, tell your health care provider if you suspect that any dietary supplement caused an adverse event. Serious adverse events (fatal, life-threatening, permanently/significantly disabling, or requiring intervention to prevent permanent impairment or damage) should be reported to the FDA.

Servicemembers should avoid dietary supplements and other self care products containing combinations of ephedrine-like compounds, caffeine-containing substances and aspirin. Individuals taking these substances should maintain hydration by drinking adequate fluids. **A**



# Stryker repairs reach century mark

Story and photos by  
Charles Sprague  
401st AFSB Public Affairs

**CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar** — A ceremony marking the 100th Stryker Combat Vehicle to roll out of the Stryker Battle Damage Repair Facility was held recently, where the Stryker Program manager praised workers for Soldier support.

Col. Robert W. Schumitz, program manager for the Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Warren, Mich., spoke to the 90-member workforce, part of the 1st Battalion, 401st Army Field Support Brigade, Army Sustainment Command and other invited guests.

Schumitz summarized the historical accomplishments and hard work of dedicated, skilled workers under contract with General Dynamics Land Systems, Sterling Heights, Mich., represented by Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicle 513.

He said ICV 513 represents damaged vehicles that were initially identified as being total losses and were the first vehicles repaired at the site in the spring of 2005.

“It (ICV 513) represents battle damage repair capability and the five vehicles that have been through here twice.



**Gary Roberts, General Dynamics Land Systems' contractor, steps off the 100th repaired Stryker, infantry combat vehicle 513, at Camp As Sayliyah during a recognition ceremony in Qatar on Jan. 12. The eight-wheeled light armored vehicle moves infantry troops into battle. The unit was restored after major combat damage in Iraq. After acceptance, the 1st Battalion, 401st Army Field Support Brigade will return the vehicle to securing infantry troops in Southwest Asia.**

What a significant accomplishment ... it represents a proven capability that is now being replicated in the United States, two years after this capability was established. Normally, it's the other way around. I applaud your efforts and congratulate each of you for your hard work, your work ethic, 'can do' attitude

and pride in workmanship. Every vehicle is delivered to the Army looking like a newly manufactured vehicle,” said Schumitz.

The commander of the 1st Bn., 401st AFSB, Lt. Col. Maxine Girard, also praised the workers and support personnel, “ICV 513 represents lives saved, it represents the indomitable spirit of the American Soldier as well as your hard work ... you truly epitomize our Battalion motto of ‘Strength Through Readiness,’ she said.

The Battle Damage Repair Facility reduced the repair process from 200 days per vehicle in 2005 to 60 days per vehicle by the end of 2007 by moving the structural and repair assessment process forward to Iraq. Other improved supply parts processes were implemented, as every battle damage repair is unique — new procedures had to be implemented to expedite virtually all parts. Currently, 12 battle damaged Stryker Combat Vehicles are repaired and returned to combat in Iraq every month from the Qatar and Anniston Army Depot facility, at Anniston, Ala. **A**



**The 100th Stryker infantry combat vehicle is showcased after its final repairs at Camp As Sayliyah in Qatar. After receiving major combat damage in Iraq, the eight-wheeled light armored vehicle was transferred to the U.S. military base in Qatar.**

# Incorporating multiculturalism in Black History Month celebration

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Anishka Calder  
1st TSC Public Affairs

Servicemembers and civilians came out in large numbers to celebrate the accomplishments of African Americans and highlight the contributions they made to the American society.

The Area Support Group – Kuwait Equal Opportunity office hosted the event Feb. 20 at Camp Arifjan. The event's theme, "Carter G. Woodson and the origins of multiculturalism," focused on Woodson's efforts in shaping an intellectual movement that educated Americans on African American history and the black tradition. It also highlighted the importance of democracy and cultural diversity.

Woodson established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915, and he, like other known scholars such as Randolph Bourne and W. E. B. Du Bois, believed that accepting other people's differences was an essential element in democracy.

"Dr. Woodson was convinced that the role of his own people in American history and in the history of other cultures was being ignored or misrepresented among scholars," said Col. George R. Fields Jr., the assistant chief of staff G-2 for the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), and the speaker for the event.

"Woodson realized the need for special research in the neglected past of the Negro."

The celebration came in the form of spoken word, songs, a hearty meal and various trivia that tested the event participants' knowledge of African American culture.



**Sgt. 1st Class Marlon B. Green, 34, a native of Marrero, La., holds the audience's attention during his performance at the Black History Month celebration at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Feb 20. The event highlighted the accomplishments of African Americans and the contributions they made to the American society.**

"It was a true honor to be at a beautiful event honoring the numerous contributions made by African Americans," said Lt. Col. Michael O. Logusz, the chief civil military affairs officer in the 1st TSC, and a native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. "From the birth of our Revolutionary War, until present, because of their efforts, we are a better nation."

Sgt. Lavar McDowell, 23, of Logistics Task Force 10, came out of the event with a renewed sense of appreciation for his culture through the words spoken by Fields in his speech to the audience.

"Colonel Fields' speech was very inspirational. I liked how he incorporated all ethnic groups with the multicultural theme," said McDowell, a native of Washington, D.C. "It was a beautiful thing seeing Black History Month being celebrated even while we are deployed."

Fields told each attendant that they must take a look at themselves and see what they represent as a community, and that they each owe a debt to those

who blazed a trail before them, to be a positive representative of their community.

"Each generation chooses its course and determines what they will add to their history," said Fields, 49, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. "But if we are to become that great melting pot now called multiculturalism, it is up to each of us to reflect the best in ourselves and our community."

For Master Sgt. Samuel L. Jones, the noncommissioned officer in charge of network operations for the 1st TSC, the program was at the top of his list as being the best Black History Month celebration that he has been to.

"I enjoyed the way the poems that were recited told a story about famous African Americans," said Jones, a native of Philadelphia. "They (the performers) had the audience's attention and it made me feel great to be an African American."

In his closing remarks, Fields thanked Dr. Woodson for this month of recognition and for passing the torch of multiculturalism to each person in attendance.

"Multiculturalism is not new, we are one community moving forward toward a tolerant, inclusive society," Fields said. "It's not a black people or white people, but all people." **A**

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*"Multiculturalism is not new, we are one community moving forward toward a tolerant, inclusive society."*

**Col. George R. Fields Jr.**  
1st Sustainment Command (Theater)

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# Digging de



Marine Staff Sgt. Donald Johnson, a Canton, S.D., native and platoon sergeant with Battery A, 3rd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion prepares to hammer nails into a wooden base for a well cover in Chebellier Feb.7.

## Marines visit Chebellier, construct new well cover

Story and photos by  
Sgt. Alec Kleinsmith  
3rd LAAD Bn. Public Affairs

**CAMP LEMONIER, Djibouti** – Leatherneck Marines with Battery A, 3rd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion used some old-fashioned elbow grease to construct a new well cover for the villagers of Chebellier during a civil affairs engagement earlier this month.

Sgt. Matthew O'Brian, section leader with Battery A, 3rd LAAD Bn., first noticed the well during a routine visit two months ago.

"While I was doing my tour of the village, I looked for anything we could possibly help them with," said O'Brian, from Nashville, Tenn.

"I made my way to the well and saw

that it was in need of a lot of work."

Originally created by the Djiboutian government, the well was certainly in a state of despair from years of neglect. Dust and small chunks of debris floated lifelessly in the algae-infested well, which resembled an oil slick more than potable drinking water.

A makeshift tarp previously built by the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit lay tattered atop the well, a casualty of the harsh Djiboutian climate.

O'Brian, who is in charge of coordinating with the village elders of Chebellier, knew something had to be done. He then worked with Staff Sgt. Donald Johnson, platoon sergeant with Battery A, 3rd LAAD Bn., for ideas on building a cover.

"We try to do the best with what we have, so we used excess supplies that

were left here by the previous unit," said O'Brian.

Using wooden beams and a black tarp, the Marines were able to construct a cover that protects the well from outside elements.

Though the engagement was a success, the Marines would like to make additional modifications to the cover in future visits.

"We've talked about possibly going back out to make a few changes," said Johnson, from Canton, S.D.

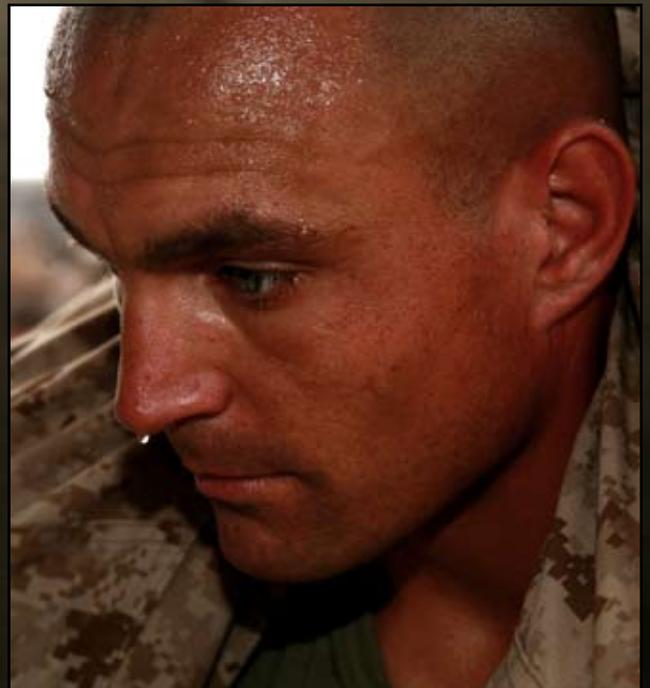
O'Brian's next focus will be on the schoolhouse, which has no electricity and is in dire need of school supplies and study materials.

"A lot of these kids have backpacks for school but nothing to put in them, so I want my next focus to be on the children," O'Brian said. [A](#)

# ep in Djibouti



*(Background) Two Marines from 3rd LAAD Bn. line up a beam to be used as a well cover in Chebellier, Djibouti.*



*Marine Staff Sgt. Donald Johnson, a Canton, S.D., native and platoon sergeant with Battery A, 3rd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion steadies a Marine on his shoulder while constructing a new well cover for villagers in Chebellier Feb. 7.*

Djibouti

# El Salvador

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

Soldiers from the El Salvador Army got the ride of their life while going through the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer course at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Feb. 13.

The 278 soldiers were taught how to avoid a rollover as crewmembers of a HMMWV, and in the event that a rollover does happen, the proper procedures to take when exiting the vehicle while it is in the inverted position, to avoid injuries or fatalities.

“HEAT training became mandatory October 1, 2007, for all U.S. Soldiers deploying to combat zones,” said Staff Sgt. David Singleton, the noncommis-



*Staff Sgt. David Singleton, a native of Charlotte, N.C. and the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer course, instructs an El Salvador army soldier on the proper way to use the three-point-seatbelt feature of the up-armored HMMWV. The El Salvador soldiers went through the HEAT course Feb. 13 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, as part of their training in preparation for their seven-month deployment rotation to Iraq.*



*A gunner from the El Salvador army braces himself during a simulated rollover at the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer course at Camp Buehring. The soldiers are assigned to the 9th Battalion of the El Salvador Army.*



Camp Buehring

# ian army fires up **HEAT** training

sioned officer in charge of the HEAT course at Camp Buehring. "This was due to the increasing number of rollover fatalities among Soldiers in theater. We also train DOD civilians and coalition forces, including the Turkish, the El Salvadorans, the Georgians and the British."

The El Salvadorian soldiers who participated in the training are members of the 9th Battalion and will deploy to Iraq on a seven-month rotation. However, this rotation is history-in-the-making for the El Salvador army. The female officers who went through the HEAT training are paving the way for other female soldiers in the El Salvador army.

"This is the first time female officers in the El Salvador army are going to Iraq," said 1st Lt. Heidy Marisol

Guandique, 27, of the El Salvador army. "We are part of a commission that will study the living conditions and environment to see if it is suitable to send more women officers. They will test us to see if we can do the same job as men."

"I feel very proud to represent the El Salvador army and my country," added Guandique, 27, of San Salvador. I think they (the El Salvadoran army) have broken the barriers that women can't serve with men and train together."

"We get the chance to coach, teach and mentor [these] soldiers on how to save their lives if they happen to rollover and to also build their confidence in the operation of the new up-armored HMMWV," added Singleton, 32, a native of Charlotte, N.C. "The

difference between the new HMMWV and the older version is an approximate 2,025 pounds weight difference, therefore making the vehicle top-heavy and more susceptible to rollover."

Each HEAT training class consists of no more than 40 personnel who must first go through an hour-long class that familiarize them with the up-armored HMMWV and teaches the duty description of each member of the five-man crew. According to Singleton, the primary job of the crewmembers in the event of a rollover is to take care of the gunner, who doesn't have a safety

restraint that prevents him from being ejected from the vehicle in a rollover.

"Before the implementation of the HEAT system, there was an 81 percent casualty rate for the vehicle gunner during a rollover," said Singleton. "Now, that percentage has been reduced to about 58 percent ... The training has been very successful."

After the classroom portion of the training, participants are taken to the HMMWV simulators where they are taught how to operate the combat locks on the vehicle while it is inverted, and how to operate the three-point-seatbelt feature of the vehicle. They are then instructed to enter the HMMWV and experience a simulated rollover, during which they have to apply all the techniques that they were taught during the classroom portion of the training.

Singleton, who is assigned to Task Force Gator of the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), has been deployed to Kuwait in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom for eight months, and has trained more than 64,000 personnel to date. He stressed the importance of the HEAT training for combat missions and added that the training is also beneficial when driving non-tactical vehicles.

The soldiers of the El Salvador army had high praises for the training they received, but one soldier was particularly grateful, due to the nature of his job.

"This training went very well. Especially for me, because I am a gunner," said Elmer Sanchez, 23, a special forces soldier from the 9th Battalion of the El Salvador army. "This is my first time doing such training and hopefully I will be able to use the lessons that I've learned here while doing my job in Iraq." **A**



**An El Salvador army HMMWV driver holds a firm grip on the gunner during a simulated rollover at the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer course at Camp Buehring. The soldiers are assigned to the 9th Battalion of the El Salvador army and went through the HEAT course as part of their training for a deployment to Iraq.**

# Reserve leaders 'wine and dine' during visit with troops

Story and photo by  
Spc. Wes Landrum  
Desert Voice staff writer

The Soldiers were sitting at the table eating the evening meal. The group of six sat there discussing the events of the day when another Soldier walked up to the group.

"Is this seat taken," Maj. Gen. Robert Pollmann, 88th Regional Readiness Command commanding officer, asked motioning toward the empty seat at the table.

The group immediately rose to their feet but Pollmann nodded for them to sit down and continue their meal. The general sat down, looked at his meal of steak and crab and began eating with his Soldiers.

"You guys eat better here than we do back in the States," the general joked with the Soldiers. "This looks really delicious."

Pollman and his command sergeant major, Command Sgt. Major John Vacho, were members of a party of Army Reserve leaders that traveled to the Middle East to talk with Soldiers about life in U.S. Army Central area of operations. Spc. Justin J. Mianeki, an ammunition transport specialist with the 395th Ordnance Company said the topics of conversation varied from topics here to back at home.

"We discussed the nature of our jobs, everyone in the unit, training that we did prior to or while we were here," the Green Bay, Wisc., native said. "We even talked about the Packers and how, as a Vikings fan, he was happy to see Green Bay do well this year."

After dinner and a conversation, Pollmann addressed the crowd of more



Maj. Gen. Robert Pollmann, 88th Regional Readiness Command commanding general, chats and dines with Army Reserve Soldiers at a Camp Arifjan dining facility Feb. 20.

than 75. During the speech, Pollmann told the crowd that he and Vacho were very proud of the job that the unit has performed. The general then tackled an issue facing the reserve members – transformation.

Pollmann continued saying transformation was necessary because it will set up operational functional commands, such as the Engineering Command and the Military Police Command. The units will be able to give more Soldiers time in their specialties.

"Often guys, you have a Soldier who will bounce between different units and not get to do his or her job," Pollmann said.

"Then that person gets deployed and is asked to go build a bridge and they can't because they have not had to do that job for 10 or 15 years.

"You will have a lot to offer any combatant commander in this theater," the general continued. "They'll know the people coming from the Army

Reserve are very skillfully trained and they've had a lot of practice time in their MOS."

Spc. David M. Hallmark, a mechanic with the 395th Ordnance Company, said eating dinner with the general and sergeant major was intimidating at first but he gradually became comfortable with the two leaders.

"It's because he's a pretty high rank and as a lower enlisted, it can seem a little overwhelming," he said. "You aren't really scared of him asking questions but you are like 'Please don't ask me that.'"

Pollmann concluded his talk by telling the unit that he was proud of the unit for the job they're doing in Kuwait. He said the unit's professionalism shows in everything they do and it did not matter if they were Reservist or not.

"You look at that patch over your heart and it says U.S. Army on it. That's because we're apart of a bigger team. A team that's doing a fantastic job for our country," the general told the Soldiers. "It does not matter if we're active component or Reserve component – we are all one team fighting one fight." **A**

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*"They'll know the people coming from the Army Reserve are very skillfully trained and they've had a lot of practice time in their MOS."*

**Maj. Gen. Robert Pollmann**  
88th Regional Readiness Command

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# Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas recognizes contributors

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Jacob A. McDonald  
Desert Voice staff writer

**M**ore than 50 U.S. Army Central personnel who assisted in raising more than \$310,000 for the Combined Federal Campaign received recognition for their efforts in a ceremony on Camp Arifjan Feb. 15.

Due to the fundraising more, than 2,000 donors from USARCENT contributed to charitable organizations in this year's campaign.

"I am here to acknowledge [USARCENT's] accomplishments and recognize your overwhelming generosity to help those in need through the charities in this year's campaign," said Ed Willett, executive director, Combined Federal Campaign – Overseas. "When the final campaign tally is completed CFC – Overseas will have raised over \$16 million this year – a record."

Willet commented on the generosity of the servicemembers who participated in the world's largest charity campaign.

"I think an important statistic that is often overlooked is that overseas military and [Department of Defense] civilian workers, who make up about two percent of the federal workforce, give five percent of the total CFC dollars," Willet said. "I think it has to do with the deeper sense of community you have in the military. It is because of your selfless service. It's about integrity, you have a code of honor, you support one another, and you are able to think and care beyond yourselves. I want you to know that your generosity has not gone unnoticed and it is deeply appreciated."

Following his remarks, Willet and Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, deputy commanding general, USARCENT, presented 10 units and more than 50 individuals with plaques and certifi-

cates.

Hardy then spoke to the award recipients and participants in the program.

"Thanks for that sense of commitment, it is very much appreciated," Hardy said. "The charities and those on the receiving end will never know your name, they will never know your faces, they will never know potentially that it even came from the combined federal campaign and you are part of the federal work force, but I know out there somewhere you are making a difference."

CFC is the worlds largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign, with more than 300 CFC throughout the United States and internationally.

Pledges made by federal civilian, postal and military donors support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world. **A**



**Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, deputy commanding general of USARCENT, addresses civilians and personnel on Camp Arifjan, Feb. 15. He thanked the more than 50 USARCENT personnel who assisted in raising than \$310,000 for the CFC.**

# Break the Weight in '08 wraps up with loss

Story by  
Spc. Giancarlo Casem  
Desert Voice editor

**A**s the pounds came off, Maj. Thelma Brown felt a weight lifted off her shoulders and off her mind, 18 pounds to be exact.

Brown, from the 1st Sustainment Command's (Theater) G1, lost the weight during the "Break the Weight in '08" program ran by a fitness center on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Brown said the experience was a life-changing event for her.

"At age 39, I saw my hope and dreams for the future fading away. After three major surgeries in a year-and-a-half, I was out of shape, weak and mentally drained after having to face an illness, one that could only be cured by another surgery, according to the doctors," Brown said. "I had accepted the fact that I was condemned to a life filled with medical issues and pain."

Brown, from Alexandria, La., and serves as her section's strength manager, said her attitude towards life

changed after she deployed to Kuwait.

"I decided to begin a new journey, one that has drastically changed my life's direction. From that moment everything just started to fall into place," Brown said. "On the first of September my new doctor prescribed me medication to control my medical problems. On the first of November he allowed me to start exercising again. The next day I saw the poster for the 'Break the Weight in 2008.'"

The program was the product of Lt. Col. Paul Allen, the former dietician for Emergency Medical Facility – Kuwait. The out-going dietician was able to see his program to the finish a day before his redeployment.

"The military has a goal of having a culture of fitness and this was to help push that along," Allen said. "That culture of fitness is paramount in my job and we know that when we are healthy and fit force we live longer and have less chronic disease."

Like many, Brown committed herself to the program, but admitted that at times she needed some external motivation.

"I began 'the 12 days of fitness' program two weeks early, and followed the nutrition and exercise regimen [Allen] provided us to the letter," Brown said. "I arrived at the gym by 4:30 every morning so that I could wait the recommended hour before eating breakfast. I also told my co-worker what I was doing; he was always

there to keep me focused on my goal. On days that I didn't feel like exercising, he would knock on my door and drag me to the gym."

Allen and Brown both agreed that losing weight was a challenge on its own, however the holiday season yielded its own lumps of coal.

"The holiday season was the worst," Brown said. "Care packages, filled with sweets and snacks arrived daily to my office and [my co-worker]

would quickly remove them to avoid the temptation."

Out of the more than 110 people that signed up, only about 35 people finished – an attribute to the challenge of losing weight and adopting a different lifestyle, Allen said.

"Everyone is ready to lose weight or adopt that fitness lifestyle at any point," Allen said. "One of my discussions with the participants that came to me regularly was that it has to be one of the most important things in your life."

Allen added that he was proud of all the participants.

"To adopt a culture of fitness or lifestyle of fitness, these guys did that, they're happy with themselves," Allen said. "I can see the huge change from November to now, not just in their weight, but self esteem and overall outlook on life."

Through all her hard work, Brown was rewarded with the total loss of 18 pounds and eight percent body fat.

"The challenge provided me with the motivation and power to improve my physical, spiritual and mental well-being. It has given me the strength and confidence to reach a little higher, push a little harder, and be successful in all that I set my mind to do," Brown said. "I can't stop smiling because I feel so good, both inside and out. I am now full of energy and have become a better mother and friend." **A**

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*"I decided to begin a new journey, one that has drastically changed my life's direction."*

**Maj. Thelma Brown**  
1st Sustainment Command (Theater)

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Photo by Master Sgt. Michele Hammonds

**Maj. Thelma Brown performs a dip at the Zone One Fitness Center. Brown lost 18 pounds and eight percent body fat in four months.**

# Army implements new program to reward deployed Soldiers

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Anishka Calder  
1st TSC Public Affairs

A program was established by the Secretary of Defense Jan. 19, 2007, to reward Soldiers who deploy without getting the recommended dwell time at home after a previous deployment.

Soldiers who get deployed to areas where they get hostile fire/imminent danger pay will be credited administrative leave dates under the Army Post Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence program.

"It's all based on dwell time," said Warrant Officer Shawn Hickey Sr., 36, the chief of essential personnel services for the G1 section of the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater). "For active component Soldiers, for each year that you are deployed, you are supposed to have two years of dwell time. Anytime that two-year dwell time was broken, there was no program in place to benefit the Soldiers, so the secretary of defense tasked each service to come up with their own program, and the Army came up with the PDMRA."

Active duty Soldiers who deploy to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait or other areas determined by the secretary of the Army will qualify for PDMRA. Reserve Soldiers qualify under involuntary mobilizations to those areas, but will not be credited for voluntary mobilizations unless the mobilization is in conjunction with deployment in Iraq, Afghanistan or Kuwait.

"After being deployed for 12 months, anything from 13 to 18 months gives the Soldier an extra leave day each month," said Hickey, a native of Chattanooga, Tenn. "Anything from 19 to 24 months, the Soldier gets two days a month. After 24 months, the Soldier gets four extra days a month."

"These days are administrative leave dates," added Hickey. "They



**Warrant Officer Shawn Hickey Sr., the chief of essential personnel services for the G1 section of the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), addresses a group of company commanders and senior leaders about the Army Post Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence program.**

have nothing to do with the regular 2.5 days that you get a month, and are not tax deductible."

Hickey said the PDMRA days can be taken in conjunction with leave dates. He recommends using these days before using regular leave days because the days cannot be transferred from one duty station to the next. He advised Soldiers who are doing a permanent change of station to use the PDMRA days for block leave instead of regular leave days.

Active duty Soldiers will be credited PDMRA days for deployment since Jan. 19, 2004, or 36 months before the Soldier's first deployment, whichever date come first. Reserve Soldiers will be credited PDMRA days for mobilizations since Oct. 7, 2001, or 72 months before the Soldier's initial mobilization, whichever date comes first.

Staff Sgt. Karee Roberts, a non-commissioned officer in charge of the strength management section for the 1st TSC, was excited to learn about the new program and its impact on Soldiers' Family life.

"I think that anything that benefits the Soldier is good," said Roberts, a native of Philadelphia. "PDMRA is designed to compensate Soldiers who are away from their Families for

extended periods of time in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Under the PDMRA program, Soldiers get to spend extra time with family members without using their leave dates, and in the military, taking care of the Family is paramount."

Reserve Soldiers will be extended up to two years on active duty after a deployment so that they can use up their PDMRA days. If the Reserve Soldier is a federal, state or local government employee, they have the option of being paid up to \$200 a day, but no more than \$3,000 a month for those days, said Hickey.

PDMRA days will be requested on a DA Form 31, Request and Authority for Leave and have no cash value. Soldiers are advised to keep documentation, including mobilization or deployment orders, and/or their DD Form 214, as proof of entitlement from previous deployments or mobilizations.

For additional information on the PDMRA program, Soldiers can logon to [www.armyg1.army.mil/soldiers.asp](http://www.armyg1.army.mil/soldiers.asp), and look under chapter 8, paragraph 8-5 (e) of the Personnel Policy Guidance, or logon to <https://minuteman.ngb.army.mil/AACalc/Auth/Auth.aspx> to access the PDMRA calculator. **A**

# 1st TSC takes home Volleyball Challenge '08 champion honors

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

The U.S. Army Central G6 section held a volleyball tournament Feb. 18, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

On a day set aside to recognize the past and present leaders of the United States, servicemembers at Camp Arifjan came together in friendly competition to vie for the title of champion at Volleyball Challenge '08. The tournament was organized with the intention of boosting morale and inter-section camaraderie.

The USARCENT G6 section planned and implemented the tournament from its beginning to its

conclusion. It took the USARCENT G6 section more than two months of planning to bring the event to fruition, said Sgt. Maj. Arthur J. Adkins, the G6 sergeant major and a native of Laurel, Miss.

Eligibility for the tournament encompassed any units or sections that fell under USARCENT command. More than 300 servicemembers participated in the tournament which began at 7 a.m. and lasted until 3 p.m.

Though the tournament was about inter-section relations a winner was determined through fierce competition. The teams were made up of predominately experienced players with varying backgrounds in volleyball.

In the end the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) team won the

tournament and solidified their place as the champions of Volleyball Challenge '08. After giving the 1st TSC a fight to remember the 2nd Headquarters, Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion took home second place.

"It was a good morale booster not just for the 1st TSC but for every one that participated in the tournament," said Sgt. Maj. Rupert Espinosa, G9 sergeant major and native of Stockton, Calif.

The tournament was a great chance for servicemembers to interact with peers, superiors and subordinates on a level playing field.

"Any time you have a tournament like this one you give the sections a chance to show team spirit and enjoy themselves recreationally," Adkins said. **A**



(Above and right) A player serves up the ball during Volleyball Challenge '08 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Feb. 18. The 1st TSC team beat out all other teams to take home the honors of being called champions.

**Serve it up!**

# Camp Arifjan Tax Center

## Come get your taxes done!

**LOCATION:** Zone 6 next to the Post Office.

**HOURS:** Now through April 20  
Monday–Saturday: 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Sunday: by appointment.

**CLIENTS:** Servicemembers and DA civilians. Retirees by appointment.

**SERVICES:** Federal and state income tax return preparation and e-filing.

**WHAT TO BRING WITH YOU:** ID card; W-2s; 1099s (if applicable); Social Security number and date of birth for filer and all dependents; last year's tax return (if possible); a voided check or deposit slip; and a POA from your spouse if "Married Filing Jointly," child care provider's identification number, amounts of other income. If you qualify to itemize, please bring all relevant documents.

**POCs:** Ms. Mary Kay Marlowe 430-5258  
NCOIC Sgt. 1st Class Shielda Groce 430-5258

**Note:** Servicemembers in a combat zone receive an automatic 180-day extension to file their federal income taxes from the time they leave the combat zone.

## Just One Question ...

### "What do you remember most about the Gulf War?"



"I remember mostly President [George H.W.] Bush and it was a pretty quick war. It was America handling business."

Spc. Mitchell Redd  
109th Transportation Company  
Motor transportation operator  
Martinsville, Va.



"I was actually here back then, it was a mess and real nasty."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard Pereira  
NAVELSG Forward  
NCO  
Brandon, Fla.



"I was in high school and my father was about to deploy."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Dave Diccio  
NAVELSG Forward  
transportation  
Natick, Mass.



"I was in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps in high school at the time."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Daimon Dixon  
Navy Customs Battalion Tango  
Escorts  
Durham, N.C.



"I was here doing convoy missions."

Staff Sgt. Anthony Allison  
1230th Transportation Company  
Vehicle Operator  
Whigham, Ga.

## Why I serve:

1st Lt. Esther Harvey  
640th STB

Special projects officer



The Statesboro, Ga., native explains why she decided to join the military.

"I just knew I was going to do it. My Family thought it was crazy, they had a hard time at first."

# What's happening around USARCENT...

## Muy caliente



Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Servicemembers learn the finer points of Salsa dancing at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Feb. 18.



Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

## Shine on

Pfc. Mario Capizzo, USARCENT Operational Intelligence, belts out Toby Keith's "American Soldier" during Karaoke Nights at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Feb. 18.

## Camels!



Photo by Marine Sgt. Sara Carter

## Change of command



Photo by Tech Sgt. Jeremy Lock

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines stand at parade rest during the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa change of command ceremony held at Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, Feb. 8. Rear Adm. Philip H. Green Jr. took over as the new commander of CJTF-HOA during the ceremony.

A servicemember enjoys a free camel ride Feb. 22 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Servicemembers and civilians waited in line for approximately an hour to participate in the first camel ride of the year.