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

January 30, 2008



**Exclusive interview with
U.S. Army Central
Commander
Lt. Gen. Jim Lovelace**

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Hitchin' a ride

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On the cover

Two-by-two, Marines with the Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, take to the skies over Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 13. For the full story, turn to page 6.

Photo by Marine Cpl. Scott M. Biscuiti

Contact us

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

Q&A with the commander

The U.S. Army Central Commanding General Lt. Gen. Jim Lovelace answers questions about USARCENT's mission now and in the future.

Q: *As the commander of USARCENT what do you see as our role and mission in U.S. Central Command area of responsibility?*

A: We have a great command. We have great leaders. We have a great mission and what an opportunity to serve at this time. This is a dynamic region and this command is the Army's service component command for Central Command.

Our role is to do three things. First, we're to provide a command and control headquarters that's able to handle a full spectrum of operations. We're also to be able to handle theater engagements and theater security cooperation events, where we are able to build partnerships and relationships with people in this region. And lastly, we provide the sustainment for the warfighting force in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places in the CENTCOM area of operation. That's a heavy-duty mission statement.

Q: *Based on our current mission, what is your vision for the future of USARCENT?*

A: Basically, we provide a command and control headquarters that can, in the event that something else



**Lt. Gen. Jim Lovelace
USARCENT Commander**

happens in this theater, provide a combined forces land component headquarters, a joint task force headquarters for this theater and to be able to do it in a high intensity environment or in a counter insurgency. We're going to do the mission, but we're going to protect the force. And in protecting the force, the critical task is

to take care of Families.

Q: *There's been a lot of talk about USARCENT offering full spectrum operations capability, can you share with me what that means and why its important to us?*

A: The Army, as a whole, was focused on just being high intensity. The leadership has built the capability of a command and control headquarters that's not only able to do high intensity but is able to do a fight no different than what you see in Iraq and Afghanistan. So it has a full spectrum within which it can conduct defense, offense and stability operations.

The Army has put USARCENT on this course of transformation. We're the first numbered Army to go through this so were out in front transforming. We're breaking trail for others to follow.

Editor's Note: *This is part one of a two-part interview conducted with Lt. Gen. Lovelace. In part two, the commander talks about transformation, leadership and military families.*

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The best eats in town – Qatar dining facility is best in Army

Story and photos by
Dustin Senger
ASG-QA Public Affairs

CAMP AS SAYLIYAH, Qatar – The best large garrison dining facility in the U.S. Army is at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar, officials declared.

Dining officials awarded Area Support Group-Qatar the Phillip A. Connelly Award, Dec. 20.

ASG-Qatar provides the U.S. Central Command rest and recuperation pass program at Camp As Sayliyah with a premier Army food service operation.

The commander for ASG-Qatar, Col. David G. Cotter, supported the dining facility staff in efforts to reorganize, construct and provide major renovations in 2007. After displaying their progress during a command inspection, they were later established as the best dining facility in U.S. Army Central, an expeditionary warfighting headquarters. This recognition qualified the dining facility to compete for the Department of the Army Connelly Award in the large garrison category – troop feeding facilities with daily a head count over 300 patrons.

On Dec. 6, Connelly inspectors finished their evaluation of the facility in Qatar.

According to Sgt. Maj. L'Tanya



James Riddle, International Food Service Executives Association representative, and Sgt. Maj. L'Tanya Williams, Phillip A. Connelly program manager, sample some of the vast dessert options at the Camp As Sayliyah dining facility in Qatar, Dec. 6. The dining facility was inspected as one of eight finalists for the Department of the Army Phillip A. Connelly Award.

Williams, the Connelly Award project manager, Camp As Sayliyah is the first feeding facility evaluated in Southwest Asia. ASG-QA further strengthened their dedication to food service excellence by taking the required steps to earn the prestigious Army-wide award.

“Anytime you apply hard work, teamwork and dedication, it always equals

success,” said Chief Warrant Officer Verona Williams, installation food service officer, from Columbus, Ga. “Colonel Cotter was our greatest supporter. He knew the impact this award would bring. We have demonstrated that ASG-Qatar is providing the Army’s best food services for the U.S. Central Command Rest and Recuperation Pass Program war fighters.”

Since the program’s inception in 2004, ASG-Qatar has recharged over 150,000 participants. Troops frequently come from contingency areas directly supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

“The inspectors got a real picture of what we do everyday,” Williams said. “The whole camp community was genuine with their praises and concerns.” During the inspection, several patrons voluntarily approached inspectors to explain their appreciation for the wide variety of foods, quality of service and consistency.

“We are still working to further achieve excellence,” Williams said. “The Connelly inspectors took a lot of everyday procedures from us to apply across the Army, to implement and streamline food service operations.” 



Tyrone Jones, a U.S. contractor from Fayetteville, N.C., answers questions from Chief Warrant Officer Michael Gillis, U.S. Army Special Operations Command food advisor, during a review of the administration and training programs at the Camp As Sayliyah dining facility, Dec. 6.

10 miles, no sweat, 100 miles better yet

Story and photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Paul Tuttle
1st TSC Public Affairs

The temperature was 45 degrees at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, when Sgt. Maj. Ruben “Ben” Cavazos took off his warm-up suit shortly before 6 a.m., Jan. 19. The temperature in Hawaii was 79 degrees; it was 5 p.m., Friday, and the Hawaiian Ultra Running Team 100-mile endurance race wouldn’t start for another 11 hours.

But the Honolulu native was about to start the HURT 100 here. Eighteen hours, 59 minutes, 49 seconds later, he finished.

Cavazos completed his seventh 100-miler with permission of race officials because he is deployed to Kuwait with the 8th Human Resources Sustainment Center, supporting Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

He chose the Wounded Warrior Project as a beneficiary of his efforts. He said servicemembers fighting the war on terror have far better armor and protection than previous conflicts, but many are surviving wounds that may have killed them in the past.

“I was in Somalia. I lost friends in Somalia,” he said. “We didn’t have any of the protection we have now ... We had sandbags to put in our Humvees and deuce-and-a-halves (two and one-half ton trucks).”

Cavazos said today’s warfighters get medical care on the battlefield faster, are evacuated quicker and lives are saved because of that. The Wounded Warrior Project helps take care of them.

“We cannot afford to forget about them or their Families, and assume that because they will get a medical retirement, life is going to be okay,” he said. “They have given much, so it is, in my book, our responsibility to do what we need to do to help them.”

Cavazos is no stranger to injuries. While he attended the Sergeant’s

Major Academy. He fell down a cliff during a time trial of down-hill biking competition in December 1998, and shattered his left kneecap.

“That was probably the most painful day in my life,” he said.

The doctors wired the pieces together, but he went back to running, and participated in a marathon the following year.

“I broke my knee a second time, but this time it was playing soccer with my Soldiers,” he said.

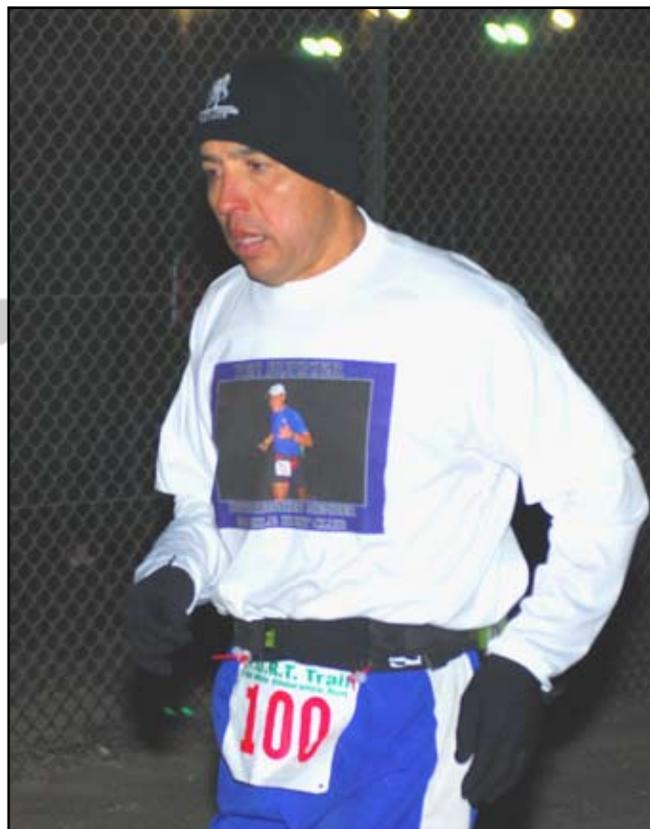
He was kicked in that same knee, but it broke into two pieces. Because the pieces were big enough, he said, doctors were able to fix it with only two screws. Then he ran his first 100-miler.

Runners in the HURT 100 in Hawaii have 36 hours to complete the race – five 20-mile laps. Cavazos, who logged more than 1,200 training miles, mapped out a five-mile course around Camp Arifjan, and planned on doing 20 circuits to finish his 100. He said his goal was to finish in less than 24 hours.

“Running is a lonely sport,” Cavazos said, but he didn’t run alone this race. More than two dozen Soldiers logged well over 300 miles running beside him, including two generals.

U.S. Navy Lt. Cdr. Paul Allen, from Clarksburg, Md., ran 100 miles with him.

“Everyone thinks things like this are impossible,” said Allen, a dietician with the Expeditionary Medical Facility – Kuwait. “Never



Sgt. Maj. Ruben “Ben” Cavazos from Honolulu, 8th Human Resources Sustainment Center sergeant major, runs the last leg of the Hawaiian Ultra Running Team 100 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Jan. 20.

underestimate the power of the human body and what it can do.”

When Cavazos crossed the finish line at 1 a.m., Saturday, he was greeted by many well-wishers. Among them was a noncommissioned officer from the 595th Transportation Terminal Group, stationed at Camp Spearhead, Kuwait. U.S. Army Master Sgt. Marvin Bonner handed Cavazos a check for \$1,000.

“I was so inspired by what the sergeant major was doing, that I talked to my family,” said the Memphis, Tenn., native. “I have 14 brothers and sisters. They asked what I wanted to do, so I told them I wanted to donate \$10 a mile. There was no discussion. They said, ‘do it.’”

The temperature was the same, 45 degrees, when Cavazos crossed the finish line, 18 hours, 59 minutes, 49 seconds after he started, and the Wounded Warrior Project was more than \$10,000 richer. **A**

The best of the best

Four inducted into prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Club

Story by Lt. Col. Michele Satak
USARCENT Public Affairs
and Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer

Staff Sgt. Carolyn Chadwick, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 160th Signal Brigade, walked calmly to the center of the stage and spoke to the crowd.

“Audie Leon Murphy was a legend in his own time – war hero, movie actor, writer of country and western songs and a poet,” she began. “His biography reads more like fiction rather than fact. He lived only 46 years, but he made a lasting imprint on American history.”

Chadwick, along with three other noncommissioned officers were welcomed into the esteemed Sergeant Audie Murphy Club during an induction ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Thursday.

“As a leader, it’s important because when you come on line with your Soldiers, and they know you’re a member of this club, they already know you are one of the best,” said Chadwick, a native of Cairo, Ga.

Murphy became a legend in his own time by making a name for himself as a war hero on the battlefield during World War II. He earned every medal for valor including the military’s highest award, the Medal of Honor.

Attendees at the induction ceremony included Lt. Gen. Jim Lovelace,

commanding general of U.S. Army Central, and Command Sgt. Maj. Luis Lopez, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) sergeant major. USARCENT is an expeditionary warfighting headquarters.

Command Sgt. Maj. Sultan Muhammad, 507th Corps Support Group command sergeant major, was the guest speaker for the event.

“It is truly an honor to stand here and help you recognize the top one percent of our U.S. Army’s noncommissioned officers and leaders,” Muhammad said.

The three Soldiers inducted along with Chadwick were Staff Sgt. Shawn Spencer, Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 160th Signal Brigade; Sgt. Danielle Spencer, 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery; and Staff Sgt. Arcelia Staggers-Vargas, 546 Transportation Company.

“This is a high honor for these Soldiers, but it is an acknowledgement and celebration as well of the positive leadership that has brought these sergeants to where they are today,” Lovelace said. “None of us can do it alone. Behind every outstanding Soldier is a caring chain of command ... that exacts standards ... expects excellence.”

Danielle Spencer first heard about the Audie Murphy club when she arrived in Kuwait as a specialist. After she was promoted to sergeant, she wanted to be a member of the prestigious club.

“I look at the people who taught me – Master Sergeant [Ruby] Murray [1st TSC] – she was a big influence on me trying to make it to where I am

right now,” said the native of Atlantic City, N.J. “It means that I can take everything that I had to learn and study and I can give it back to all my guys.



Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer

Staff Sgt. Carolyn Chadwick, HHC, 160th Signal Brigade, recites Sgt. Audie Murphy’s biography during a ceremony at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Jan. 24.

“Just from being in this club, they expect the best from you without a doubt,” Danielle said. “The Soldiers will accept your guidance, follow you, and listen to you because they know you’re one of the best.”

For five years, Shawn Spencer has wanted to be in the club. His first attempt was in the U.S. and his second was in Iraq. After his third attempt, here in Kuwait, Shawn was finally inducted.

“It gives me a drive to be able to lead, train and motivate my Soldiers,” said the native of Colorado Springs, Colo.

While Murphy lived and died before all of the inductees were born, his legacy lives on in the hearts and minds of NCOs that have gone on to become Sergeant Audie Murphy Club members, and become better NCOs in the process.

“You should be a leader no matter what,” Danielle said. “This club shouldn’t make you a leader. This club is just an attachment and personifies the fact that you are a great leader.” 

Marines

Story and photos by
Cpl. Scott Biscuiti
11th MEU Public Affairs



Cpl. Mark Heggen (left) fastens Sgt. Bo Irving's special purpose insertion/extraction harness at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 13.



Reconnaissance Marines signal to the waiting CH-46E Sea Knight helicopter that they are ready for a ride.

Dangling from a single rope attached to a helicopter flying at more than 250-feet above ground isn't how most people get around. But reconnaissance Marines aren't average, in fact for them, it's just another day at the office.

The Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, got to practice their aerial acrobatics at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, during a special purpose insertion/extraction refresher Jan. 13.

"SPIE rigging is an easy way to get in and out of a location if there is no way to land a helicopter or if there is an obstacle too high," said Sgt. Shawn Reynolds, a helicopter rope suspension training master and Reconnaissance Marine with Recon Platoon.

Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU are conducted sustainment training in Kuwait as part of their deployment to the Arabian Gulf. 



get 'SPIE' high



(Above and right) Soaring 250 feet above ground, Marines with the Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, get a bird's eye view of the surrounding area during a special purpose insertion/extraction refresher at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 13. The Marines and Sailors of the 11th MEU are conducting sustainment training in Kuwait as part of their six-month deployment throughout the Western Pacific Ocean and Arabian Gulf regions.

(Left and right) Marines with the Reconnaissance and Sniper Platoons of Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, land safely on the ground.



Georgia sends 'a few good men' to sar

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Michele Hammonds
1st TSC Public Affairs

More than 2,000 troops traveled from their homeland of the Republic of Georgia to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, to receive final military training before going north into Iraq to assume a security mission, Jan. 21

Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) Task Force Gator are working with MPRI, Incorporated, instructors to train the Georgian troops on the most up-to-date Soldier tactical skills for the battlefield. MPRI is a civilian company located in northern Virginia.

Out on the range, Georgians of the 1st Infantry Brigade received instruc-

tions from MPRI staff before taking turns handling their weapons. They could see nothing but desert as they looked out toward their targets before taking turns firing their weapons.

"This training will make us ready to go up north," said Georgian Staff Sergeant George Durqzali.

As soon as the last Georgian soldier finished up at the firing range, instructors moved them to the next block of instruction – entry control points, which included using the most recent techniques on searching vehicles.

Using the latest vehicle search tactics, instructors ensured the Georgians received hands-on training in preparation for them to help stop terrorism in Iraq. The Georgians do not have a desert environment in their country to train, but with the help of the instructors, they took full advantage of their surroundings (a makeshift entry control point/gate), while conducting vehicle searches on the training ranges.

"We provide the final opportunity in training, and we focus on those things they may not have done," said Simon Matthews, operations manager for MPRI. "Our role is important in that



A Georgian soldier performs a security search on a local woman who requested admittance onto a (makeshift) military compound at a training range at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Jan. 21. The Georgians, of 1st Infantry Brigade, took part in the entry control point training as part of a train-up on security procedures before going north to Iraq to assume a security mission.



Georgian Second Sergeant Kazbeg Michitashvili inspects a truck for possible explosives at a mock checkpoint gate while going through security training.



nds of Kuwait

we facilitate those Soldiers being used elsewhere for the greater good of the Army.”

The instructors demonstrated how to search victims and vehicles with the help of interpreters and then the Georgians took turns searching victims and vehicles for explosives, bombs and improvised explosive devices. The Georgians also learned gate-guarding procedures.

Whether they are in the classroom receiving medical training, or out on the ranges at Camp Buehring firing live rounds, the instructors are there making sure the Georgians receive the necessary training before they head for their mission in Iraq.

The Georgians will have a two-fold mission. They will participate in a United Nations mission in Iraq, and they will assist U.S. forces by providing security around Baghdad. Many of them will be at Forward Operating Base Al Kut in Iraq.

For now, the Georgians are focused on the tasks ahead, including an 11-day training package in which they engage in live-fire, entry control points, searching personnel for weapons and



Georgian Junior Sergeant George Porchkhidze checks his sight before firing his weapon during a live-fire training.

IEDs, checking identification cards, vehicle and person searches, live-fire and Humvee Egress Assistant Training.

Most Georgians troops going through military training at Camp Buehring do not speak English. They primarily speak Georgian and Russian, so instructors and members of the 1st TSC Task Force Gator have added extra time to the training schedule for all events in which the Georgian troops are involved. Interpreters are required to translate every block of instruc-

tion ranging from classroom training to being out on the ranges at Camp Buehring, said Lt. Col. Kenneth Bird, country officer for Georgia.

“We have a limited number of interpreters and it makes the training go a little slower. The Georgians are up at 4 a.m. for training. While it makes for a longer day, we complete the module lesson,” he said. “The Georgians are open-minded, willing to learn anything, and they have got their ears and eyes open.” 



100 Soldiers re-enlist in the Army Reserve during 100th anniversary

Story by
Master Sgt. Anthony Martinez
USARC Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – More than 100 mobilized Army Reserve Soldiers deployed in Iraq and Kuwait raised their right hand and recited the oath of enlistment in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Army Reserve Jan. 18.

“The enlistment was more than what I expected,” said Staff Sgt. Donald Rosenkrans, U.S. Army Central Provost Marshal’s Office. “The retention team did an outstanding planning job and went above what I thought it would be. It was a good feeling to be the 100-on-100 anniversary.”

Rosenkrans a native of McDonough, Ga., is deployed to USARCENT at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, an expeditionary war-fighting headquarters.

In the grand rotunda of the Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory, Gen. David Petraeus, Multi-National Force-Iraq commander, issued the oath of enlistment and remarked on the continued commitment Army Reserve Soldiers make in re-enlisting.

“In places like Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, the Philippines and Latin America, Army Reservists are bringing their Warrior skills and their civilian trades to the fight. As everyone here knows, that combination is particularly effective in the exceedingly complex



Photos by Master Sgt. Dennis Beebe

Gen. David Petraeus, Multi-National Force-Iraq commander, administers the oath of enlistment to more than 100 Army Reserve Soldiers at the Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory, Iraq, Jan. 18. The 100 Soldiers gathered for the ceremony in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Army Reserve.

environments we face today,” Petraeus said. “Environments that require our troopers to be not just Warriors but also diplomats, builders, trainers, advisors, intelligence gatherers, service providers, economic developers and mediators.

“Citizen-Soldiers perform these diverse roles expertly and in so doing they demonstrate the critical role members of the Army Reserve play in safeguarding freedom at home and defending it abroad. Indeed I cannot think of a better way to honor the Army Reserve’s first century of service than being part of a ceremony where so many

great Reservists raise their right hands and commit themselves to continue serving our nation.”

Also attending the ceremony was Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz and Command Sgt. Maj. Leon Caffie, commanding general and senior enlisted advisor for the U.S. Army Reserve Command. In his remarks Stultz

commented on the transformation of the Army Reserve over the past 100 years.

“The Army Reserve was founded in 1908 but I can tell you that the Army Reserve of 2008 is vastly different than the Army Reserve of 1908,” Stultz said. “The Army Reserve today really is an operational force, an integrated part of the Army . . . And there’s no better way for us to kick off our 100th anniversary year and to symbolize what the Army Reserve today really is than to be able to conduct a re-enlistment ceremony here – in Baghdad, in the palace, with a hundred of our Army Reserve Soldiers.”

For many of the Soldiers, the opportunity to participate was about more than just re-enlisting for themselves. It was a way to honor the service of those who came before them.

“I’m just one Soldier, just one average joe,” said Sgt. Jonathan Britt, a medic with the 535th Military Police Battalion.

“I’ve only been in for two years, so for 98 years there were people upholding these traditions, and that’s one of the reasons for me to re-enlist, to uphold the tradition, honor and integrity behind that,” said Britt, who hails from Fayetteville, N.C. “Not for my own personal sake but for those who served before me.” 



More than 100 Soldiers attended a special re-enlistment ceremony at the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Iraq.

Camp Arifjan Tax Center Now open!

LOCATION: Zone 6 next to the Post Office.

HOURS: January 28 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 Shilda 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 are you doing for the Super Bowl?"



"I will be watching the Super Bowl while spending time with my Family and friends in Newnan."

Capt. Joseph Smith
U.S. Army Central logistics
Petroleum officer
Newnan, Ga.



"I will be watching it hoping the Giants win."

Pfc. Brandon Brown
54th Quartermaster Company
Mortuary affairs
Greenville, Ohio



"Hopefully, I will be returning home on that day."

Petty Officer 1st Class Ronald Butler
Naval Mobile Construction Bn. 40
Information technician
Oklahoma City



"Eating pizza, watching the game with friends hoping for a Giants' upset."

Spc. Brian Logan
HHC, Area Support Group-Kuwait
Chemical NCO
Chicago



"I have no idea what I'll be doing."

Sgt. Richard Barnes
Joint Logistical Task Force 1144
Chaplain's assistant
Springfield, Ill.

Why I serve:

Sgt. Royetta Prew
HHD Logistical Task Force 10
Auto log operations specialist



The Nesmith, S.C., native explains why she joined the military.

"My father had just retired. I joined to continue the Family trend. It's a good experience. I've gotten a lot out of my service."

What's happening around Kuwait ...

Neal McCoy



Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum

Country performer Neal McCoy performs for servicemembers at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Saturday. McCoy sang his favorite songs to an appreciative crowd. After the performance, McCoy signed autographs and posed for photos.

Time to shine



Photo by Sgt. Samuel Kim

Two servicemembers pose for pictures with actress Scarlett Johansson at Camp Arifjan, Jan. 19. Johansson toured the Middle East as part of a USO tour to thank servicemembers for their hard work.



Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer

Run for the dream

Servicemembers braved frigid temperatures to run the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 5K Fun Run at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Jan. 21.

Lead singers Capt. Adrienne McDonald (left) and Chief Warrant Officer Samuel Stidwell III (right) lead the Gospel Choir of the Camp Arifjan Gospel Service as they perform during the Camp Virginia Gospel Festival on Jan. 19 at Camp Virginia, Kuwait.



Photo by Master Sgt. Michele Hammonds

Sing His glory