

IRAQI DESTINY

Volume 1, Issue 50

November 27, 2003

Healthcare: Army style

*Division medics square off
in best team competition*

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Eagle 6 wishes troops happy Thanksgiving

To: 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Coalition Forces, Northern Iraq

Command Sgt. Maj. Hill and I extend heartfelt Thanksgiving greetings to all the great soldiers serving in Northern Iraq. You are part of an incredible endeavor and you are doing a wonderful job. We hope that you have a chance to enjoy this meal today with your fellow soldiers. You have more than earned it.

Some 6,000 miles from here, our families will gather today with loved ones, giving thanks for all the blessings of life in our great nation. In some 19,000 homes, however, there will be an empty place – a seat that should be filled by you. While we may not be where most of us would like to be today, we still have much for which to be thankful. Although we are not with our families, we are surrounded by friends and comrades-in-arms – fellow soldiers with whom we have shared the “brotherhood of a close fight.” We are also fortunate to serve in the Army of a country full of

promise and prosperity – country that guarantees freedom for all of its people. And we can be thankful for – and proud of – the great progress made in rebuilding this long-oppressed country and in helping its people get back on their feet.

On this day of giving thanks, Command Sgt. Maj. Hill and I offer our heartfelt thanks to all of you for continuing the great traditions of the Screaming Eagles. You are truly making history, and all back home are proud of you. You have provided the people of Iraq the greatest gift of all – their freedom – and for that, we say “Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, and well done!” God bless you all and Air Assault!

Sincerely,

David H. Petraeus
Major General, U.S. Army
Commanding



photos by Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler

(Above) Nick Wells, dining facility manager, poses before a Thanksgiving centerpiece at the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) division main dining facility. The facility served two full capacity Thanksgiving meals, featuring shrimp cocktail and steamship round in addition to more traditional fare. (Left) Sgt 1st Class Richard Griffith, D. Co., 3-327 Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) shares his Thanksgiving dinner with a portrait of his wife and six children at the Division Main dining facility in Mosul, Iraq Nov. 27, 2003.



Iraqi Destiny Staff

Commanding General
Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus

Div. PAO
Maj. Hugh (Trey) Cate

NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Mark Swart

Editor
Spc. Joshua M. Risner

Journalists
Pfc. Thomas Day
Pfc. Chris Jones
Spc. Blake Kent
Spc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

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On the front: The team from Company E, 801st Main Support Battalion slogs their way into the trench portion of the combat medic challenge Nov. 21 at the Mosul Airfield. (photo by Spc. Joshua M. Risner)

101st grieves loss of 502nd CSM, driver

by Pfc. Chris Jones
40th PAD

MOSUL, Iraq -- The recent deaths of Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry Wilson, command sergeant major of the 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and his driver, Spc. Rel Ravago, brought groups of anguished soldiers to a memorial ceremony at a gymnasium on a 502nd compound in Mosul Nov. 26.

Wilson and Ravago were killed in an ambush Saturday in Mosul.

Wilson's 27-year Army career began as an infantryman with the 172nd Infantry Brigade at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. After positions as squad leader and drill sergeant at Fort Benning, Ga., ranger instructor and platoon sergeant at Fort Dahlonga, Ga., he landed at Fort Kobbe, Panama in 1986. It was here where he met Capt. Joseph

Anderson.

Wilson and Anderson, now the colonel in command of the 502nd, would later lead thousands of soldiers throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, from the invasion of Baghdad to the ongoing rebuilding and peacekeeping mission in Mosul, Northern Iraq's largest city.

Anderson opened the ceremony by recalling the memories he had made in his 17-year friendship with Wilson, adding, "I had never thought I would be giving a eulogy for my air assault buddy."

"His only aspiration in life was to be with and lead soldiers," Anderson said. "We do indeed already miss him."

Wilson's career as a 101st "Screaming Eagle" was relatively short. According to Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, command sergeant major of the 101st, Wilson was somewhat anxious in his transition to the division in the winter of 2001.

Having previously held Wilson's position

with the 502nd, Hill was full of support for Wilson.

At the ceremony, Hill mentioned that just two days before the ambush, he took the time to congratulate Wilson on his adjustment to "the Air Assault lifestyle." During a meeting at the Division Main compound in Mosul involving all battalion and brigade sergeants major in the 101st and newly appointed sergeant major of the Army, Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Preston, Hill praised Wilson's evolution as a Screaming Eagle.

"Sergeants major tend to not tell each other how proud we are and how we feel about each other," Hill said. "But I did that day, and I'm glad I did. So often there are things we wish to say to one another, but never do. Well, I'm glad I told Sergeant Major Wilson that day."

Wilson is survived by his mother, Daisy,

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Pfc. Chris Jones

(Above) Sgt. Maj. William Plemmons (foreground), operations sergeant major for the 502nd Inf. Regt., 101 Airborne Division is comforted by Col. Joseph Anderson, commander of the 101st's 502nd Inf. Regt at the memorial service of Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry Wilson, command sergeant major of the 502nd, and Wilson's driver, Spc. Rel Ravago. Wilson and Ravago were killed in an ambush Nov. 23. (Inset) The helmets and weapons serve as a silent memory of the soldiers lost, illustrated by the photographs, medals and coins.

Army medics prove their worth

by Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

Teams representing eight different units in the Northern Iraq area of operations squared off at Mosul Airfield Friday to compete against one another in the Combat Medic Challenge.

The contest is the first division-sponsored competition in Iraq, according to Capt. Jennifer DeBruin, 526th Forward Support Battalion. "It's nice to be able to forget about the seriousness, the anxiety and the death for a little while and be able to work together and have some fun," she said.

The competition gave Army medics the chance to display skills that are normally only seen on the battlefield, when someone's life is threatened.

Each four-person team had to go through a grueling set of challenges before reaching the finish line and tallying up their scores.

The idea for the competition was hatched back in July, according to DeBruin. "We noticed that our soldiers were getting worn out; we decided that they needed something fun. It's a win-win situation all around," she said.

Eight teams stepped up to the challenge, putting their best foot forward to come out on top.

The competition was based on the Expert Field Medical Badge exam, which is a weeklong course. "A lot of the guys compared this to a week-long EFMB in one day," DeBruin said.

The teams lined up at the starting line in full battle gear, not to mention rucksacks weighing approximately 65 pounds. They left the starting line in staggered times, so no team would have to stand in line for a station.

"It's great to get out there and have some fun," said Sgt. Jason Straub, Co. B, 21st Combat Support Hospital. "It's good training for us. We could almost pretend we were back in the states, taking the EFMB test."

Upon crossing the starting line, they trekked across the Mosul airfield for a 7.5-mile course, with six stations assessing their knowledge, determination and physical fitness.



photos by Spc. Joshua M. Risner

(Above) The team from 3rd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment loads a simulated casualty onto a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during the evacuation station at the combat medic challenge. (Below) The team representing Company B, 21st Combat Support Hospital, moves their casualty over a short wall. The soldiers had to keep a low profile while going over the wall to avoid making themselves a target to hostile fire.



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(Above) Soldiers of Company E, 801st Main Support Battalion don their protective masks during a simulated chemical attack during the combat medic challenge. After masking up, they had to move a casualty through the mud and under a wire obstacle. (Left) Soldiers with Co. B, 21st Combat Support Hospital team move a simulated casualty under a wire obstacle at the combat medic challenge.

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Some teams had their own entourage, members of their unit who showed up to watch the competition and be moral support for their buddies.

The first challenge for the teams was a written exam, testing their knowledge of basic medical tasks.

The second station was CPR. The teams were given a casualty who had stopped breathing and had to resuscitate him.

After finishing this test, they moved on another mile or so down the road to the third station: medical evacuation. Soldiers were given four casualties and an ambulance and had to figure out in which order to load them. "The first casualty that goes in is the last one to come out, so you load the man with the most life-threatening injuries last," said Sgt. Maj. John R. Graben, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Division Support Command. Soldiers were tested using a light medium tactical vehicle, Humvee and a UH-60 Black Hawk medical evacuation helicopter to get their patients to safety.

Another two miles up the road was the litter carry/obstacle course. This station was considered by most of the soldiers to be the most physically demanding portion of the competition.

Soldiers were given a litter, loaded down with sandbags

See MEDICS, page 10



Soldiers with Co. B, 21st Combat Support Hospital team carry a sand-bagged litter through a trench at the combat medic challenge. The cold, waist-deep water didn't deter the soldiers from pushing on and completing the station.

Future Sgt. Maj. of the Army visits 101st

by Master Sgt. Kelly A. Tyler
101st Abn. Div. (AAst.) PAO

Less than a week after his selection as the 13th Sergeant Major of the Army, Combined Joint Task Force-7 and V Corps Command Sergeant Major Kenneth O. Preston visited senior noncommissioned officers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq.

"I'm very, very proud of all of the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division," Preston said. "You've got great leaders, and great soldiers. You have all taken part in an historical mission during this operation. I'd like to think that in ten or twenty years, when they are interviewing soldiers on the History Channel for their accomplishments during this conflict, that those who served will remain proud of their contributions to this operation and the Iraqi people," he added.

"His visit couldn't have come at a better time," said 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Command Sergeant Major Marvin Hill. "His visit was scheduled prior to his selection as the Army's top soldiers and he insisted that it remain on his schedule."

Preston, who served as the CJTF-7 command sergeant major since the war began, is expected to arrive at his new position before January. However, his departure from the theater of operations doesn't mean the soldiers here will be forgotten.

"This operation right now is the most important thing going on in the Army,"

Preston said. "Having been here through the ground combat and the

post-war reconstruction and operations, I have an understanding of what the soldiers have been through. I know where we had shortfalls and problems with this deployment," Preston said.

His experience will lend him more power and credibility when he testifies before Congress and talks to senior leadership state-side about the mission here, he added. "I can continue to get the dollars we need to continue this fight, and still accomplish the transformation mission."

Preston's experience in the theater of operations is not just beneficial to his credibility with congress, Hill said.

"They say 'Don't talk about a man unless you've walked a mile in his shoes.' CSM Preston has done just that. He visited Screaming Eagles from late February when we joined the V Corps team, through November," Hill said. "Our soldiers recognize him on the battlefield. That lends great credibility to him and his position to soldiers in the foxhole."

Being deployed is not a bad thing, Preston said, adding that those soldiers who have been deployed since the events of Sept. 11, 2001, have the most to gain, and also have the most to offer.

"The soldiers who are deployed right now are a great asset. There is no substitution for real world experience," he said. "Mid-grade NCOs are the future sergeants major of the Army, they are the future division command sergeants major. They are the ones who have the experience. First line leaders are where the rubber meets the road; they are continuing to grow the Army of the future."

Preston does not believe the chance of continued deployments will sway soldiers in their decision to continue serving in the Army.

"There is some concern that mid-career NCO will leave, but I think many will choose to stay. There will be those who opt out for the 9-to-5 type jobs, but that is not the Army. We are not a 9-to-5 organization," he said. "Those that stay, who stick it through will have a great reward, and will have unbeatable experience as NCOs and leaders."

The sense of pride that comes with a job well done does a great deal to support retention, Preston believes. "There is a feeling of self-

satisfaction that soldiers who are deployed get," Preston added. "It is a sense of belonging to something bigger than yourself, of belonging to an organization that has a purpose."

Preston's visit to the 101st was also significant for all of the soldiers of the 101st, said Hill.

"Soldiers in the foxhole need to know they have a sergeant major of the Army who has soldiered with them, fought with them, laughed with them and cried with them," Hill said. "He has heard their concerns. I am confident he will voice their concerns with the same passion as he received them."



Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler

Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth O. Preston, Combined Joint Task Force-7 and V Corps Command Sgt. Maj., will take the place of Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley as the senior non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army.

Laying the smack down!

101st raids net weapons, suspects in Central Iraq



Pfc. Chris Jones

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) confiscated weapons ranging from handguns to rocket-propelled grenades on a raid in Central Iraq.

by Pfc. Chris Jones
40th PAD

QAYARRAH, Iraq -- Thousands of soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) piloted a massive raid last week on several objectives believed to be hideaways for numerous smugglers and terrorist facilitators in Central Iraq, leading to the capture of 86 suspects, many equipped with rifles, shotguns, rocket-propelled grenades and other explosive devices.

The 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st, led the mission, scouring each objective for suspicious items such as cell phones, passports and former regime memorabilia,

while 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st, set up traffic control points along the nearby roads to obstruct the path of any criminals hoping to escape. Helicopters from 3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment flew overhead to provide additional security and to offer potential rapid medical evacuations.

"We caught some bad guys and took away their guns," said 327th commander Col. Ben Hodges.

The operation lasted from sunrise to sunset, and soldiers came away with truckloads of weapons and ammunition. According to an after-action report formed by the 327th, hundreds of unlicensed rifles, pistols, shotguns and machine guns were found, in conjunction with more than 100,000 rounds

of ammunition. Six rocket-propelled launchers, one grenade launcher and more than 200 improvised explosive detonation devices and were also seized in the raid.

While infantrymen of the 327th were searching homes and buildings, troops from 2nd Bn., 320th played a vital role in the mission, manning blocking points along two major roads where nearly 60 suspects were detained for questioning.

The operation was designed after division intelligence spotted cell phone hits to eight countries harboring terrorism or weapons smuggling into Iraq, including Syria and Saudi Arabia. Further intelligence revealed a route through Central Iraq used by smugglers to get weapons to extremists to harm Coalition forces.

OIF troops to get full Thanksgiving feast

by Sgt. Maj. Larry Stevens
Army News Service



Sgt. Maj. Larry Stevens

Spc. Julio Miranda and Pfc. Eleny Guerrero unload a few of the thousands of pounds of turkey that have been shipped to troops in Iraq and Kuwait.

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- About 145,000 pounds of turkey, 71,000 pounds of smoked hams, 71,000 pounds of prime rib, 38,000 pounds of shrimp and 576,000 servings of stuffing were shipped earlier this week to troops in Iraq and Kuwait.

The Thanksgiving Day dinner for deployed troops also included 270,000 servings of corn on the cob, 150,000 servings of cranberry jelly, 41,000 pies - apple, pumpkin, cherry, pecan and sweet potato. And don't forget the decorations, eggnog, candies, nuts, ice cream and sparkling non-alcoholic wine.

When the Coalition Forces Land Component Command goes grocery shopping for Thanksgiving supper for its family, it does it big time. And it starts its shopping early.

The CFLCC Food Service section placed its order back in mid-July and started receiving it in October to ensure its soldiers in Iraq and Kuwait get a taste of home this Thanksgiving when they are so far from home fighting for their country.

"It took a lot of work and a lot of long hours to make sure the plan was executed right, but I'm proud to say every one of our soldiers will receive their Thanksgiving meal," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Raymond M. Beu, the CFLCC Theater Food Service chief.

Timing, coordination and constant monitoring helped make the effort a success. For example, with 95 percent of the food coming through the congested Kuwaiti ports, synchronizing freed-up space for offloading was critical, Beu said. Other challenges included ensuring proper refrigeration of the food, meeting shipping timelines and arranging transportation security for deliveries in Iraq.

To make things easier for the field locations and expedite delivery, Beu requested each division provide him with the total number of sites they had for feeding troops. He then had separate shipments built in Kuwait for each site. That saved the forward units the trouble of having to break out packages from several huge shipments.

Thanks to Beu and his team, more than 100 separate locations in Iraq and Kuwait -- ranging from permanent dining facilities to containerized kitchens and mobile kitchen trailers -- have all the food and fixings needed for a proper Thanksgiving feast.

"I think of each soldier out there as one of my soldiers, and each deserves nothing less than the best service and a full traditional dinner at this special time of year for all of us," said Beu.

(Editor's note: Sgt. Maj. Larry Stevens is a member of CFLCC Public Affairs.)



Rudi Williams

Cherii Robison, right, dances in the American Indian Intertribal Cultural Organization Second Annual Veterans Powwow celebration, held recently at Central Middle School in Edgewater, Md. She said she travels around dancing in powwows to keep her culture alive.

by Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Cherii Robison dresses up in American Indian regalia and travels around dancing in powwows to keep her culture alive.

The Cherokee descendant said in the past it wasn't acceptable for Indians to be themselves. Consequently, many didn't pass on their culture to younger generations.

"But you wake up one day and find out that you're multi-cultured and have to find where you fit in," said Robison, an artist who owns an art studio in Cumberland, Md. "I dance in every powwow I can, because that's when I can be myself. I'm at home when I'm in regalia dancing. I'm at home when I'm in the arena with my own people doing the

things that our tribes did many, many years ago.

It's difficult to explain how Indians feel when they're dancing in the "sacred ring" of powwows, she said. "Those of us who stay in the ring want to pass the culture," Robison noted. "We want to teach the young. We learned from the culture how to be ourselves and how to be good to other people. We learned how to be the best we could be for the creator."

Robison noted that nine years ago she had to use a walker and oxygen tank, but said she was "healed in the sacred dancing ring."

"I know the creator heals in that sacred ring," Robison said. "It's a sacred ring -- not a game. And we don't dress up like Halloween like we're accused of. It's real. It's people being themselves. They're doing it because they want to pass their culture -- share it with others."

Robison said she's a member of the

American Metis Aboriginal Association. Metis are mostly people of mixed blood -- mixed tribes or mixed white or black blood, she noted.

"Metis are also people who have Native American hearts, but most of us have mixed blood," she said. "But we're not fully recognized by other tribes. I'm recognized by the Cherokee now because I've been on the powwow circuit for about nine years."

Robison said her father, who died last April, was of Cherokee descent, but he didn't fully understand the culture. "But he respected our culture," she noted.

"My father was a veteran of World War II and the Korean War and he had two Purple Hearts," Robison noted. "We have to be thankful for the veterans because they keep our land free. ... We probably respect veterans more than anybody -- they're our warriors!"

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for weight and a rubber facemask to identify the casualty's head. The had to carry the litter through five obstacles, keeping in mind the safety and well being of the injured person.

The first two obstacles were walls that the team had to scale along with the litter. The soldiers had to keep a low profile over the wall, to avoid making themselves a target. The litter also had to come across and stay in a horizontal position.

The second leg of the course had the soldiers getting their hands dirty, literally. A water truck was set up to spray the ground periodically, giving the next obstacle a coating of thick mud. Upon reaching this obstacle, soldiers were given the warning of "gas, gas, gas," informing them to don their protective masks. After doing so, they carried the litter through a wire obstacle set up a few feet above the ground. The teams low-crawled through the muck in their pro-masks, struggling to bring the patient with them.

After the wire, the team carried the casualty through a water-filled trench. The depth of the water forced the teams to hoist the litter over their heads to avoid submerging it. The water did a little to wash off the mud, but the temperature was enough to make this obstacle one of the more challenging ones in the course.

After successfully negotiating the trench, the team had to carry the litter across a narrow platform and a few meters later, over the finish line. One factor that made this obstacle a challenge was fatigue.

After finishing the obstacle course, the teams took a few minutes to catch their breath and drink some water to re-hydrate their tired bodies. Then they were off again, ruck-marching to the next station.

"I just wanted to get through (the obstacle course)," said Spc. Rosemary Benedietto, Co. E, 526th FSB. "I don't know what near-death is like, but I think I just came close."

The fourth stop in the challenge involved communication. The team had to assemble a tactical radio, load the encryption code, and send out a nine-line medical evacuation request.

The last challenge was the EMT station. The team was given four casualties and had to treat each one individually. The members of the team drew numbers from a hat to see which injury they would have to treat. The casualties to choose from were a suspected leg fracture, a heat casualty, an amputated leg and a sucking chest wound. The soldiers treated their respective patients in a battlefield environment. Indirect fire dropped around them, forcing them to take cover and cover the injured simultaneously.

After completing the last station, the finish line loomed just another mile down the road. The soldiers were muddy, cold, wet and tired, but they had enough determination left in them to push on through to the end. They seemed greatly relieved to cross the finish line, but many still had enough energy to celebrate their completion.

Completing the course also meant the chance to finally get some chow, but the soldiers had other priorities in mind. "It feels good to be done, food is on the way, but cleanliness is my primary objective for right now," said Spc. Jarod Herniak, Co. B, 3rd Bn., 502nd Infantry Regiment.

After the last team finished, their scores were totaled. The scoring system was based on the overall time and scoring in each of the six stations. Once they were all tallied up, it was the team from 1st Bn., 377th Field Artillery Regiment who came out on the top of the pile. The top three teams, best male, best female and the best overall team received prizes from a variety of companies sponsoring the event.

"The support we received from the states was overwhelming,"

De Bruin said. "We received over \$10,000 in prizes." The prizes were donated by a number of companies such as Blackhawk, Glock and Gerber.

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) was on hand to announce the winners and congratulate all those who participated. "It's a great day to be a Screaming Eagle medic," he said. "I know what it's like to be on your back with a hole in your chest and have a Screaming Eagle medic looking you in the eyes and telling you that you're going to be okay. The spirit and intent of today's event was to enhance cohesion, morale and camaraderie of the medics in AO North."

Even in the midst of a hostile environment, surrounded on all sides by a dangerous and elusive enemy, this competition was proof that there is still time for training. These units were still able to set aside time to hone the skills that save lives every day.

"I think this competition was a great de-stressor for our medics," Graben said. "By a de-stressor, I mean it was a fun competition and if the soldiers did something wrong, they knew that no one was going to die because of it. I believe our soldier/medics had a great time."



The team from Company E, 526th Forward Support Battalion, makes its way across a narrow platform, the last obstacle of the litter-carry course. Most soldiers agreed that the obstacle course was the most physically demanding of the six stations.

Deadline nears to send packages to deployed soldiers

by Staff Sgt. Marcia Triggs
Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- Christmas is a month away, but individuals only have half that time to get their packages to deployed troops in time for the holidays. The deadline to get packages to the Central Command area in time for Christmas is Dec. 4 by First Class or Priority Mail, according to the United States Postal Service.

The key to getting packages to deployed troops on time is not only meeting the deadline, officials said, but also making sure everything is spelled correctly, to include the recipient's full name, unit and address.

The best packages to mail are smaller ones, the size of a large shoebox, that weigh one to 20 pounds, said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Brian Lomax, the chief of Plans

and Policy with the Military Postal Service Agency. Other rules to remember is that troops serving in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom cannot receive pork products, alcohol beverages, pornographic material or religious items against the Islamic faith, Lomax said.

Lt. Col. DeWayne Brewer, the 4th Inf. Div. Rear Detachment chaplain, heads Operation Peace and Joy, a program that gives the public an opportunity to show their kindness toward service members while still protecting the privacy of soldiers.

"I kept getting inquiries from people in the community on how they could send items to soldiers. So I e-mailed a two-page letter to a few people explaining that we are prohibited from giving out individual soldier names and addresses due to privacy reasons, but they could send donations to my office" said Brewer, a Kentucky native.

"Now I'm overwhelmed with the gifts that I've received. We go through the contents as a safety precaution, and my office has turned into a mailroom," Brewer said. "I know that it frustrates some who can't directly mail packages to soldiers, but the military is providing wonderful support to take care of its own," Brewer said. "My idea wasn't original. I piggybacked off another chaplain who was doing something similar in his unit."

There are also several other programs to help people support and acknowledge service members and their families. Log on to the following Web sites to show support, to include virtual thank-you cards and calling card donations to help troops stay in contact with loved ones: http://www.defendamerica.mil/support_troops.html <http://www.usocares.org/home.htm> <http://www.army.mil/operations/iraq/faq.html>

The Judge Says...

Items of legal interest to soldiers

Q: Getting out of a contract isn't always possible.

A: Many clients come to Legal Assistance with contractual problems. If the other party has failed to deliver or perform as promised, then the client may have a legal remedy.

But what if it is simply a case of "buyer's regret," where the buyer reconsiders the deal and thinks it is unnecessary or too expensive. Can he or she "get out" of the contract on such grounds?

Contracts do not normally contain language that will give the buyer a way out of the agreement unless there was a "material breach." A material breach occurs if one of the parties fails to meet a major obligation in the contract, like if a book club seller fails to deliver the Pick-of-the-Month, but still sends a bill.

So, the buyer who changes his or her mind about a contract should not expect that the seller will simply tear up the contract. There are times when due to some hardship, some companies have refinanced or let buyers out of a contract early, but this is the exception and not the rule: most people are strictly held to the terms of their contracts.

Be sure you are willing to abide by the terms of any contract you sign.

Q: Do the math before signing a contract.

A: "7 CDs for 1 cent!" Sounds like a great deal, right?

It might not be a bargain if you have to buy 10 more CDs at \$20.00 a piece!

That is why consumers should always read the "fine print" as well as the headlines before signing a contract. If you take the time to do the math before you sign, you may find that what looked like a good deal really isn't.

Preventive law tip of the week:

A scam has surfaced which targets people who have placed lost pet ads in the newspaper. The scammer contacts the lost pet owner and claims that someone he knows has taken the pet and moved from the area, and gives a name and an "809" area code number for that person. "809" numbers are international calls however, and the scammer keeps the lost pet owner on the phone as long as possible to run up the charges. Do not call a phone number if you do not recognize the area code.

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and two sons, Sidney and Mantrell, all of Thomson, Geo.

A Glendale, Calif., native, Ravago's first and only duty station was at Fort Campbell, Ky., as an infantryman with Company B, 1st Bn., 502nd. He arrived at his unit March 2002, one year before deploying to Iraq. After the deployment, he was personally selected to be brigade command sergeant major's driver, according to Pfc. Brad Zais, a fellow infantryman who spoke at the ceremony.

"When Ravago found out that Command Sergeant Major Wilson wanted him to be his driver, he was so happy," Zais said. "The company was different after he left and became his driver. On the days he would return to the company, smiles would form all around him."

Zais remembered Ravago as a soldier who never let the deployment diminish his spirits.

"He always had a smile on his face," Zais said, "no matter what he was going through."

Ravago was 26 years old. He is survived by his mother and father, Mary-Anne and Rel Ravago, of Glendale.

Man on the Street

What are you thankful for this Thanksgiving?



“That I haven’t lost my cool.”

- Staff Sgt. David Ensing, 1438th Engineer Detachment, 507th Engineer Battalion



“I’m thankful for my health.”

- Cpl. Christopher Brown, 326th Eng. Bn.

“For having a job where I’m serving American and helping Iraqis.”

- Sadi Othman, linguist/cultural advisor



“My family.”

- Chief Warrant Officer Elmer Bayer, 6th Bn., 101st Aviation Regiment



“To still be alive while I’m here.”

- Spc. Kevin Murray, Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)



“Friends.”

- Pfc. Lee Cooley, 101st Military Police Company

