



November 30, 2003

Vol. 1 No.9



## Miss America sings and dines with troops in Arifjan

by Sgt. Maj. Ron Castine

Giving her best shot at shouting out the Army chant, HOOAH! Miss America 2004 Ericka Dunlap delighted soldiers during her visit to Camp Arifjan Wednesday.

Apologizing that she could not properly "HOOAH" due to her being slightly hoarse, the audience applauded her effort. The Orlando, FL resident granted a request and sang an impromptu rendition of "God Bless America".

The 21-year-old Dunlap entertained the crowd while grabbing some good old Army chow at the Zone I Dining Facility. "I haven't had an MRE yet", referring to the Army's infamous Meals-Ready-to-Eat. "I don't know why I signed up



*HOOAH! Miss America Style*

for one," she joked.

Before her DFAC appearance, Miss America held a photo session at the Recreation Center's Club Mirage. There, she was greeted by many admirers who were vying for a photo opportunity with the winner of one of world's most popular beauty pageants. The scores of people who waited in line were not disappointed as she posed with everyone who wanted their picture taken with the beauty queen.

Dunlap, a student at the University of Central Florida, was an MWR featured celebrity during a three-day tour of Kuwait. From November 25 to November 27 she visited twelve units at seven separate military installations.

## 3rd PERSCOM soldiers design personnel software for OIF

by Staff Sgt. Nate Orme

With today's databases, so-called "stovepipe" software that is unable to interface with other programs is being phased out, and information can now flow from one program to another much more easily.

The 3rd Personnel Command, a Jackson, Miss., personnel unit deployed to Kuwait with subordinate units throughout the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater, has created such a versatile database.

Called the Joint Theater Personnel Roster (JTPR), it's a personnel database that was completely overhauled beginning in January by the 3rd PERSCOM's Sgt. 1st Class Vince Marroquin and Sgt. Jason Greene. The JTPR tracks virtually all military and civilian personnel in the OIF theater using various criteria. For example, using a social security number, it can show when an individual arrived and at what base his unit is located.

There is a website portion of the program that gives anyone with a secure connection access to the database, said Spc. Brian Bitner, a personnel specialist with 3rd PERSCOM and a computer engineering student at Pennsylvania State University.

The JTPR designers have returned stateside, leaving Bitner to maintain it.

"They did a good job setting things up," Bitner said. "Every now and then we have to tweak it."

To receive information, the JTPR is interfaced to the Tactical Personnel System (TPS), a program developed by the Department of the Army, which is

part of an ID barcode scanning system that records each person arriving by plane or ship into theater. Continuing the linkage, another database, developed the PERSCOM's Sgt. Brian Farneth, connects to the JTPR.

"I was tasked with creating a database for redeployment," said Farneth. "It was in development for four weeks, and now it is in operation."

The database contains a checklist of stations each soldier must pass before leaving theater. Legal, chaplain, medical, financial, and civilian employer support briefings are all on the checklist.



*Staff Sgt. Tyhir Rahiem Ali (green camo), Sgt. Caroline Zaversnik, and Spc. Brian Bitner work on the JTPR system.*



## Spotlight

# On redeployment: A firsthand look

By Staff Sgt. Ward Gros

(Part 3 of a 3-part series)

*Everyone's demobilization experience will be different--different from what the soldiers next to you will experience and different from what you thought you would experience. I can only give you my observations from Fort Stewart from when I outprocessed from active duty and transitioned to my reservist and civilian life.*

*Leaving the desert was the easy part. Showing up to the APOE early enough to catch a flight back to the United States was easy enough, as was the customs processing where everyone pushed their footlockers – duffle bags – and carryon's through for inspection. More than a few soldiers were asked to give up items – mostly knives that they bought on military installations in Kuwait and one hooka, a bong-type pipe which was also bought on a U.S. military installation.*

*From Kuwait, I flew to Sigonella Air Base in Sicily, where I had enough time to stretch my legs, walk across lush green grass and get a bite of a hot ham and cheese sandwich which I washed down with a beer without NA plastered across the label.*

*After Sigonella we landed at Dover Airport in Ireland where I enjoyed a strong Irish Whiskey, and from there we landed at Fort Dix?? where it was about 35 degrees, which was a significant drop in temperature from the desert's infernal furnace. Pack your polypro and gortex with your carryon. At that point, I drew linen, showered, changed into civilian clothes and took a nap. The next day I caught a bus to Philadelphia Airport and flew to Savannah, Ga., with a final destination of Fort Stewart, Ga.*

*Drivers from the Mobilization Operations Center's (MOC) staff duty desk picked our group up from the airport and brought us to Fort Stewart on a Friday night.*

*Those of you who mobilized at other locations and are slated to demobilize at Fort Stewart may be in for a shock as the other soldiers from the 143rd Transportation Command that I was traveling with could not believe just how austere the National Guard and Reserve training barracks are. Imagine a cinder block long house with twenty-year old mattresses and a pine rafter roof. The weather at Fort Stewart doesn't change much – expect rain on top of drizzle followed by hard rain. The best word to describe it is bleak.*

*We spent the weekend with our friends and families; when we returned to the MOC there was no record of our arrival. The first stop at Fort Stewart is the Soldier Readiness Center (SRC). Whether the SRC is handling mobilization or demobilization will affect just how quickly the outprocessing goes. At the SRC you can start outprocessing Medical, Dental, Employee Support of the Guard and Reserve, Army Community Services, and Judge Advocate General. From there you can also outprocess Army Career Awareness Program (ACAP), TRICARE, Veterans Affairs, and Clothing Issue Facility. Those transitioning from active duty to reserve status will probably want to have a physical done to determine any change in health that may have occurred during the deployment. If you pass the physical without any major health issues then you can clear finance/travel, receive your DD214, and turn in your active duty identification card.*

*If any health issues are identified as part of the physical, then soldiers have to continue the outprocessing with follow up medical appointments until the screening is complete and the soldier is released.*

## Soldier Talk

*If you were commander for a day, what would you change?*



**A mandatory nap time for everybody in respect for the local customs.**

**Capt. Tami Gibson**  
419th Trans. Bn.



**Share accurate information with soldiers.**

**Lt. Col. Robert Howard**  
3rd PERSCOM



**That the 478th could stay in Arlington instead of moving to Camden.**

**Spc. Victor Cisneros**  
478th Trans. Co.



**I would centrally locate showers so you don't have to walk so far.**

**Staff Sgt. Dean Hahne**  
1083rd Trans. Co.



**The food at the chow hall so we could have more variety.**

**Spc. Jacob Kunz**  
495th Trans. Bn.



**Probably fire everyone.**

**Sgt. Brandi Morgan**  
3rd PERSCOM

## News Briefs



### **Operation Desert Soccer...**

**Two Iraqi girls receive gifts of soccer balls, jerseys and candy from soldiers of the Montana National Guard 495th Transportation Battalion. The items were donated by people in Montana, North Carolina and Ohio after being contacted by the battalion commander Lt. Col. Matt Quinn who saw a chance to help locals and win their friendship. (photo by Maj. Robert Hart)**

### **Army Still Looking for Corporal Recruiters**

The U.S. Army Human Resources Command is still looking for volunteers for the Corporal Recruiting Program. The program began in 1999 on a trial basis and since has allowed privates first class and specialists to do one-year recruiting tours to tell the Army story. The volunteer corporal recruiting program is open to interested privates first class and specialists who meet recruiter qualifications as outlined in Army Regulation 601-1. To learn about the qualification criteria, see [http://www.USAPA.ARMY.MIL/PDF-FILES/R601\\_1.PDF](http://www.USAPA.ARMY.MIL/PDF-FILES/R601_1.PDF). Or to learn how to apply, see [http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/read.php?story\\_id\\_key=5418](http://www4.army.mil/ocpa/read.php?story_id_key=5418)

### **Military Deal of the Week: Pay Only Shipping and Handling on the Hottest PC War Games**

Choose from a wide selection of thrilling games and adventures brought to you by leading software publishers and pay only shipping and handling charges on hot games like Team Apache, Descent 3 and MDK2. Have you ever imagined flying World War II fighter planes or an Apache helicopter? How about

experiencing the unknown of exhilarating 3-D Sci-Fi action? Here, you'll find games for even the most unrivaled PC gamer. Best of all, order three items-pay only S&H- and choose the 4th title at no additional cost at all! Get the best software, delivered right to your door without paying \$29.99 or more in a retail store. Quantities are limited, so get started on your Holiday shopping today and pick up some free gifts for the whole family. [http://www.getfreesoftware.net/giftshop/Military/1413/25/1/?browse\\_locations=1](http://www.getfreesoftware.net/giftshop/Military/1413/25/1/?browse_locations=1)

### **CLEP Paper-Based Exams**

Starting in January of 2004 the popular CLEP (College Level Exam Program) tests will be temporarily unavailable in paper form. This is part of a planned phase out of the paper-based exams as they are replaced by an Electronic Computer Based Test (eCBT). However due to incompatibility and security issues, the military will not be using the new eCBT system and will be issued all new paper-based exams in April. This means that from January to April 2004 you will not be able to take CLEP exams at your base Educational Services Office. Servicemembers who wish to take the CLEP exams during that period of time will have to take an eCBT version at a National Testing Center. For more details on CLEP and other Credit-by-Exam tests, see

<http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,34045--1,00.html>



**The Camp Arifjan MWR stage was Paris for a night on Thanksgiving evening as soldiers turned models "vogued" clothes from Wadi Sakeef Trading Co. on a catwalk while vendors sold items nearby. (photos by Staff Sgt. Nate Orme)**

# Bon Temps



A tribute to American prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action was a poignant reminder of our thanks for a nation free from tyranny.

**Thanksgiving then and NOW--** In 1620, 102 Pilgrims arrived in New England, near Plymouth Rock. By the following year, half were dead from starvation and disease. Yet, with the help of Wampanoag Indians, they persevered, and gave thanks to God for sustaining them. In 1789, George Washington gave first official observance to the Pilgrim's providence. Abraham Lincoln again revived the festival in 1963 after Gettysburg, and it has been an American tradition ever since, becoming a national holiday in 1941.



Brig. Gen. Michael Diamond serves up tender slices of tasty turkey.



Lobster, I mean turkey anyone? Sgt. Maj. Donald McCrory helps out in the kitchen.



A wreath held a Powerpoint slide show.



The Army Materiel Command quartet serenaded soldiers on Thanksgiving at the Zone 1 dining facility.

## Bon Temps

Volume 1, Issue 9

Bon Temps is a weekly authorized publication of the Department of Defense. Contents contained herein are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government or Department of Defense. The editorial content is prepared, edited and produced by the 143rd Transportation Command Public Affairs Office in accordance with AR-360-1.

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