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Army redeploying units from Camp Victory, Kuwait

By Staff Sgt. Nate Orme
CAMP VICTORY, Kuwait
 (Jan. 9, 2004)-After laying down roads, building wash racks, and putting up instruction signs-among other things-the Army recently began redeploying units back to home station from this camp again.

Operations began Jan. 8, and are scheduled to hit full tempo by the end of January, said Maj. Rick Martin, deputy mayor at the mayor's cell and part of the 31st Rear Operations Center, the National Guard unit from Jackson, Miss., which set up the redeployment operation.

Prior to a redeploying unit's arrival, an officer with the unit acting as a liaison would have already planned his unit's arrival with the camp mayor's cell. This officer would meet his unit upon arrival and walk it through, having become familiar with the procedures and where everything is located, said Martin.

Units first go to the ammunition holding area and turn in their supplies, said Martin. Next stop is the "Four Corners" area where different classes of supplies are downloaded. Then, units



Making final preparations before operations begin at the redeployment center at Camp Victory, Kuwait.

drop off soldiers' personal effects at billeting. Then the process of cleaning unit and personal equipment begins, which can stretch to several days. In addition, soldiers are shuttled through a series of briefings meant to ease the process of getting them home administratively and mentally readjusted. Briefings are given by the legal, chaplaincy, medical, and financial sections.

The camp operation can redeploy about 10,000 soldiers every two weeks, Martin said, which is also the amount of time the process generally takes.

The 31st ROC is scheduled to turn over operations soon to the incoming unit, the 356th Supply and Services, a

Reserve unit from Laurel, Miss.

This camp had been used before to redeploy soldiers when it redeployed elements of the 3rd Infantry Division in June-July last year. Although the camp shares the same name with the Camp Victory in Iraq and the two have been confused in the past, they are separate camps.

New Army PAX air terminal at Ali Al Salem AFB in Kuwait

By Staff Sgt. Nate Orme
ALI AL SALEM AIR FORCE BASE, Kuwait (January 9, 2004)-The Army just began operations at a new air passenger terminal here, with the goal of transporting hundreds of soldiers daily to destinations within the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater.

"Soldiers will be traveling by intra-theater airplane into and out of Iraq, said Maj. Vivian Gaz officer-in-charge of the 319th Movement Control Team, an Army Reserve unit from Dover, Del. The unit that is responsible for operations at the terminal, called a "node" in transportation operations parlance.

The terminal is composed of several tents being used as passenger holding areas and a parking lot and turnaround area for buses dropping off and picking up passengers.

"The plan is for soldiers to only be here about three hours, tops," said Gaz. "We will have MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) and water here. Soldiers should have their last hot meal at their departing camps."

To keep the operation as efficient as possible, plans are to use only one type of tactical aircraft each configured the same to carry the same number of passengers and two baggage pallets, said Gaz.

The operation eases some of the congestion at the military APOD (airport point of debarkation) in Kuwait. Most trav-

el though the new terminal will be work related, meaning rest and recuperation travel would not (*see PAX, p. 3*)



Maj. Vivian Gaz discusses her unit's operations with the 377th commander, Brig. Gen. Michael Diamond, at Ali Al Salem AFB.



Spotlight

How to redirect your mail before you redeploy

By Staff Sgt. Nate Orme, 3rd PERSCOM

Your unit is redeploying in a few weeks. Great, you can't wait, right? But have you thought about redirecting your mail for a smooth, timely transition to your home-bound address?

Well, the 3rd Personnel Command has. The command unit manages postal operations in theater. It has issued mail guidance procedures to be followed by Soldiers, mail clerks and commanders to ensure that mail is properly channeled.

"It is only common sense to notify families, friends and correspondents prior to your redeployment to cease sending mail to you," said Lt. Col. Robert Howard, 3rd PERSCOM's postal operations director, explaining, "The military mail system will be taxed heavily during this redeployment period. On an average, each soldier redeploying will be mailing out 2-3 personal packages home. The reduction in redirected mail will only benefit the overall military mail system."

Howard also said that the same standards apply to deploying Soldiers entering the OIF theater.

Redeploying Soldiers need to complete and return two change of address cards (DA Form 3955), which are supplied by unit mail clerks or their S1 shop. One card stays with or goes to the servicing mail clerk, and one goes to the servicing Army Post Office (APO).

Soldiers should also notify all correspondents—family, friends, financial institutions, periodical mailers etc.—to stop sending mail into theater at least 15 days—preferably 30 days—before their projected move date when units move from base camp to their redeployment sites. Soldiers will not be able to receive mail at the sites; however, postal services will be available to send mail.

Unit commanders should inform rear home station mail rooms to stop forwarding mail to the theater APO for redeploying Soldiers and instead hold mail until the Soldier arrives home. Unit mail clerks in theater will provide the supporting theater APO with the unit's forwarding home address. If mail clerks receive mail for Soldiers already redeployed, they will forward it to the address on the Soldier's change of address card.

Mail will be forwarded for 60 days by either the APO or a forward mail clerk. Ideally, that would be 30 days before a Soldier's redeployment date and 30 days after. After 60 days, mail is either returned to sender or disposed of in accordance with the DoD Postal Manual.

If mailing items from APO AE to APO AE addresses before redeploying, mark parcels/letters "MPS" for free delivery of non-valuable items. There is no reimbursement for lost or damaged items marked "MPS." For items of value, insure them or use registered mail.

As always, Soldiers need to follow restricted mail guidelines when mailing specific items. Items such as expended/unexpended explosives, certain war souvenirs, ammunition are "non-mailable" items. Mailing military equipment such as rucksacks and duffel bags are also prohibited.

The maximum size and weight for mailing is 70 pounds and 138 inches combined length and girth. When mailing to an APO address, DO NOT include the country name, such as Germany or Italy.

For questions on mail policy contact any of the following:

1. Your unit mail clerk
2. Your servicing APO
3. The 3rd PERSCOM, Postal Operations Directorate, DSN: 318-825-1208



Soldiers at work recently at the Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Army Post Office.

Soldier Talk

*New, old, same or no job
when you return home?*



Go back to being a clinical primary therapist at the Children's Hospital in Helena, Mont.

Spc. Kelly Pearson
155th AG Postal



Go back to school for computer engineering at Utah St. Univ. in Logan.

Spc. Eric Nielson
155th AG Postal



I'm active duty, so hopefully just getting a house, getting in school and being with family.

Spc. Luis Merced
3rd Army CFLCC



I will continue my job at Lockheed Martin and finish my computer certifications.

Sgt. Felicia Wallace
461st PSB



I'm going to start college at U. of Ga. at Athens in computer science.

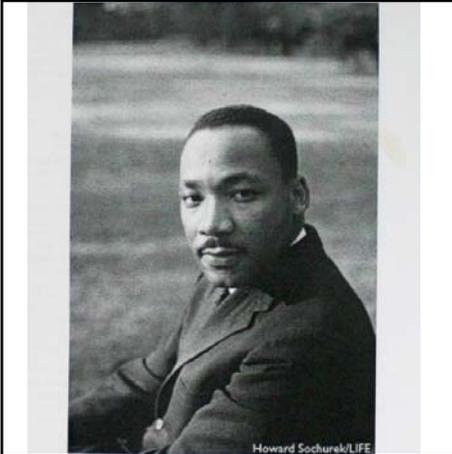
Sgt. Kendall Connell
342nd AG Postal



Return to my job at CIGNA Health Care and to school in computer science.

Spc. William Robinson
342nd AG Postal

News Briefs



Martin Luther King Candlelight March Camp Arifjan Jan. 19, 2004 at 1830

(PAX, from p. 1) be processed here. Four airfields in Iraq will be serviced-Baghdad International Airport, Balad, Mosul and Al Asad.

The terminal, dubbed "Area 51" after the locale in Nevada that UFO fantasists theorize is an extraterrestrial stonping ground, was only begun in December, said Gaz.

"We got the order on Dec. 15th," Gaz exclaimed, adding "I thank all the folks out here who put this together in short order- deputy node OIC Capt. Stephanie Turos and her unit the 94th MCT (Perrine, Fl., Army Reserve), the 319th MCT, the 211th Cargo Transportation Company and the contractors." (KBR Government Operations is the primary contractor.)

There will be a small permanent party of Army soldiers stationed at the terminal.

Japan sending troops to OIF

TOKYO, Jan. 12, 2004 - Japan's decision to send forces to Iraq is a "historic move," said Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers during a press conference here today.

Myers, here to meet with Japanese military leaders, said the Japanese decision to send about 1,000 members of the Ground Self-Defense Force to Iraq is welcomed by the international community.

5K Reenlistment Bonus was error, revoked

The Dept. of the Army has determined that the recent 5,000 bonus for soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait reenlisting for three years into the Selected Reserve was issued in error and has been revoked.

Soldiers who reenlisted under the authority of reference 1b in Memo DAAR-PAE, dated December 11, 2003, will be advised by their commanders that the bonus will not be honored and that the reenlistment must be voided. Soldiers are still eligible for a \$5,000 bonus with a six year reenlistment, or a \$2,500 bonus for a three year reenlistment. Soldiers and local retention NCOs should contact their Command Retention NCO for further information. Policy questions may be referred to Mr. Rost at jonathan.rost@ocar.army.pentagon.mil.

Army Offering Online IT Courses

By Lisa Horn, Stars and Stripes European Edition, Jan 7, 2004

The Army has introduced a computer-based training program aimed at teaching information technology to soldiers and other Defense Department employees.

The SkillSoft program - formerly known as MySmartForce - offers roughly 1,500 courses free of charge to active-duty soldiers, reservists, National Guardsmen, Department of the Army civilians and local nationals.

More than 60 of the courses can be completed for certification as a Microsoft certified systems engineer, or in such operating systems as Cisco or Oracle.

The certifications are the same as in the civilian job world, which may help a soldier pursue an information technology career once out of the Army. Users seeking certification must pay for the certification tests, but the Army may foot the bill in some cases.

"It's the same test that anyone would take," said Sgt. Maj. Daniel Hingtgen, U.S. Army Europe information technology program facilitator. "You're going to have to study, just like you would if you were in a classroom environment."

Training, without completing a full course, is also available for those who just want to brush up on programs such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Excel or Access.

Added bonuses, Hingtgen said, are that soldiers can earn college credits, and for every five hours of training they earn promotion points.

To register, users must have an Army Knowledge Online account, which can be obtained at https://www.us.army.mil/portal/portal_home.jhtml.

Once an AKO account is obtained, users can register for training at <https://www.atrs.army.mil/channels/eLearning/smartforce>.



Leave it to those wacky medical guys with Indiana Guard 205th ASMB Co. A to build a sun-deck/patio onto their tents, complete with handicapped parking for an "old" sergeant.



Camp Arifjan gets wet. Clockwise from left: A new walkway gets inundated; Hummers parked in a low spot spend the night in water; Soldiers manage to hop around water to get to the cyber cafe in Zone II.



Trucks wait near swampy Camp Navistar at the Kuwaiti border with Iraq. The area was flooded by water running off Safwan Hill.



Rain waters created some large puddles and flooded several buildings including part of the chow hall at Camp Udairi, Kuwait.

Who'da thunk?-- Back in August when midday temperatures hovered around 130 degrees, Kuwait seemed like the driest place on Earth to many soldiers. This week, sustained drizzle and moderate rains spelled mud and flood damage for camps around Kuwait.
 photos by Staff Sgt. Nate Orme

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