



(Photo by Sgt. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Holiday Happenings in Kuwait

Rangeley, Maine, native Pfc. Rob LaPointe, a fire support specialist for the 1st Air Cavalry "Warrior" Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, places an angel ornament on top of a real Christmas tree at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, Dec. 12. The live tree was donated by a company from Ohio with hopes to raise morale during what can be a difficult time of the year for Soldiers deployed away from family.

Troops Help Bring Computer Literacy to Baghdad

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs

ASSIRIYAH, Iraq – Thanks to recent improvements in security, local leaders here with a little help from Soldiers in Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division are bringing civic improvement projects to residents throughout this village of more than 2,600 people.

The Troop D troopers lent a hand in

one such project by donating computers for a recently started computer literacy class that began at the Assiriyah community center last week.

"It's a phenomenal thing that it's so safe now that we can dedicate combat power to doing this," said Capt. Martin Wohlgemuth, Troop D commander and a native of Anchorage, Alaska. "There's so much more safety in our entire area that now our Soldiers will go out and do civic improvement projects and that's their

patrol for the day."

"Today, we just came out here to make sure everything is running smoothly for the class," added Wohlgemuth during a Dec. 6 visit to one of the community center's classrooms. "We had talked previously with the director general of the community center to give people in the village an education in basic computer literacy skills. So

See Literacy Page 3

Iraqi Volunteers Turn Over Weapons Cache

**By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Iraqi Security Volunteers working in the Albu Obaed area west of Baghdad turned over a large weapons cache to Multi-National Division-Baghdad troops Dec. 9.

While patrolling the Albu Obaed streets, the volunteers received a tip from a local concerned citizen about a nearby cache site. After receiving a location, the volunteers verified the information by traveling to the area to examine the find.

The volunteers then notified Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division

about the cache.

Upon their arrival, the 2-5 Cav. Soldiers discovered 175 mortar rounds of various sizes, which were later turned over to ordnance disposal personnel.

"This event shows that the Iraqi Security Volunteers have been doing a tremendous job in finding weapons and securing their neighborhoods," said Maj. Randall Baucom, a spokesman for the 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. "They have definitely been disrupting the insurgents' abilities to perform operations against the Iraqi people, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition troops."

Iraqi Security Forces are currently investigating to find those responsible for hiding the weapons



(U.S. Army photo)

Based off a tip from a concerned citizen, Iraqi security volunteers uncovered a weapons cache (pictured above) in Albu Obaed, Iraq Dec. 9

Baghdad in Brief



Several Suspected Insurgents Captured

2-2 Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – Soldiers with the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division captured 17 suspected insurgents during operations Dec. 11 in the New Baghdad District of the Iraqi capital.

All 17 suspects are being held for further questioning.

The operation, carried out by Soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, was part of the continuous effort by Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces to sweep out insurgent strongholds.

Arabic Word of the Day
Marhaban
Defined: Welcome!

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report

	Today	Tomorrow	Sunday
High: 69	High: 69	High: 69	
Low: 53	Low: 53	Low: 51	

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Local Iraqi Leaders, Soldiers Team Up to Spread Computer Knowledge to Assiriyah

Literacy From Page 1

we provided eight computers to help get them started.”

Local government and tribal leaders have been ensuring instructors are available for the classes which meet three times a week for men (ages 11 and up) and three times a week for women (also ages 11 and up) in separate, segregated blocks of instruction.

The classes cover everything from basic word processing to internet usage, as well as saving and opening files among many other applications.

“Many of them already know the parts of the computer, but now they’re getting the basics such as how to turn the computer on, how it works and what it does. This means everything to them, and in my mind we’re bringing them into a new age and placing them on par with other computer users in the world,” said Wohlgemuth.

According to the director general of the community center, who wished not to be named due to security concerns, the class is part of an Iraqi Ministry of Education program.

“We use the Ministry of Education’s teaching curriculum for basic skills, and through the program we test the students and provide them with certificates when they graduate from the course,” said the community center director general. “This program is good because a lot of people here are very poor and don’t have access to computers. It was very kind of the Coalition Forces to give us computers to help us with the program.”

Although the classes are intended for ages 11 to adult, the bulk of the participants for the first week of the classes were children and teens.

“We expect a great future for these kids and with the progress we are having with security I can see these children grow-



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

A computer instructor (left) teaches boys ages 11 to early teens how to use a computer at the community center in Assiriyah, Iraq Dec. 6.

ing up to be doctors, engineers or anything else they wish to be—god willing,” the community center director said.

Soldiers who have worked with many of the projects in Assiriyah and other towns in which Troop D patrols said they enjoy getting to meet the people and seeing them

“I’m all for helping people with getting some type of education,” said Sgt. Joel Roderick, a medic with Troop D, who calls both Cadillac, Mich. and Fort Hood, Texas home. “It’s good to see that the people in the village have constructive ways to pass their time, doing things that make them happy and give them a feeling of normalcy.”

The children who participated in the class said they felt it was worthwhile.

Mustafa Ali, 11-years-old, who wants to be the owner and manager of an Internet shop said, “This is really sweet, learning how to use the internet is what I wanted to

do most and I like this very much.”

“It made me very happy to be able to learn this and I’m learning a lot,” said Samer Hikmat, who is also 11-years-old and who wants to be a doctor some day.

Besides computer classes, the community center also has a very large sewing room in which there are several sewing stations with sewing machines and large rolls of fabric. Women in the village use the sewing machines, creating clothes, blankets and other items which they in turn can sell for extra income.

“The director general was very aggressive in getting a lot of the projects here off the ground to include the women’s sewing center in the back,” said Wohlgemuth.

A future project will include Troop D working with the community center personnel and local officials to bring an adult literacy class for Arabic reading and writing to the people of Assiriyah.

Jack Frost Nipping for Santa's Job

Can you imagine the stress of being Santa during the holiday season? He has to get all those toys to all those expectant children. Now, add in a wife who is nine months pregnant, visiting in-laws, another fairy tale figure trying to steal the Christmas glory, broken machines and trying to pretend that the North Pole is Canada... and we thought we had it hard.

At least there is no one shooting at him, but there is someone shooting for his job in the Disney film "The Santa Clause III: The Escape Clause."

Before we get started on number three let me recap the first two to get everyone up to speed.

The first flick was all about how Scott Calvin (played by Tim Allen) came to be St. Nick. He spotted an intruder on his roof and when he yelled Santa fell. Scott put on the coat and over the next few weeks grew (literally) into the jolly old figure that we know and love today.

The next flick was few years later, when Santa discovered that there was a clause in the Santa contract that states that he has to get married. While he goes off to find a wife, the shop is left in the hands of Curtis, the head elf (played by Spencer Breslin) and a crazy replica Santa who believes everyone should be on the naughty list. Scott does manage to finagle a Mrs. Claus, though.

This brings us to this third installment. Santa is stressed out. It's tough to make millions of toys and check the lists. He doesn't want to disappoint the children, but sadly he is getting all caught up in work and isn't spending enough time with his wife.

Carol (played by

Elizabeth Mitchell) is hugely pregnant and hormonal in the emotional sense. She is lonely. It is hard to find good company when the whole North Pole is in a frenzy trying to finish all the toys. She misses her

Random Reviews

Sgt. Nicole Kojetin



"tall" family.

In a loving gesture, Santa decides to bring up the in-laws (who think he is just a toy maker) to make the wife happy. This requires a town makeover to try and pass the Christmas paradise as a Canadian retreat. Apparently, Canadians are all really short. His father-in-law is more than critical and Carol is getting more and more upset by the minute.

He is also having problems with fellow legendary figure, Jack Frost. Christmas needs Jack Frost or there wouldn't be a need for fireplaces and white Christmases would be non-existent. What fun is that? I am a Montana girl. I like my snow. It makes everything look so clean and makes the world seem so quiet and peaceful.

But even though Jack Frost (played by Martin Short) can create icy paradises, he is actually a greedy blue-haired punk. He is tired of being the sidekick and thinks he has what it takes to be the man in the red suit. He is trying to ruin Christmas in the process, and, of course, Santa has to try to save the day.

This is a wonderful family film (even with a little flatulent joke from one of the freakishly robotic reindeer, which I am normally completely against.) It reminds us of what is really important during the holiday season. It isn't about shopping or getting presents, but family.

Whether you are sitting around the TV with your family or sitting around a laptop with your military family, this is a great film that will remind you of Christmas traditions and home.

Merry Christmas!
(Four out of five stars!)

