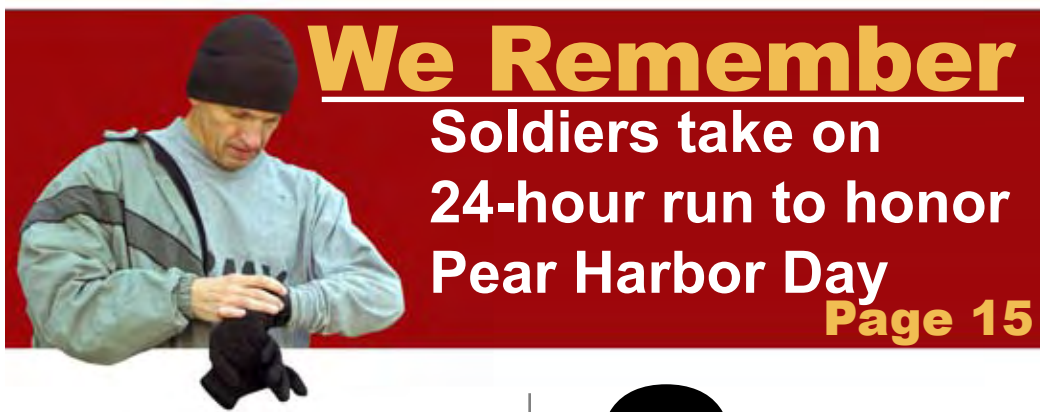


ANACONDA TIMES

DECEMBER 20, 2006

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA



We Remember

Soldiers take on
24-hour run to honor
Pear Harbor Day

Page 15

SING TO ME!

Air Force's musical
embassadors
entertain LSAA

Page 7



Vol. 3, Issue 51

Happy Holidays!

This is truly a special time of year with many religions and cultures celebrating according to the dictates of their own beliefs and conscience. Each of you is standing tall on the frontlines of this global struggle to ensure this basic freedom is not lost.

At the birth of our nation, Soldiers in our Army spent a bitterly cold holiday season in the fields of Valley Forge. At that moment, our young nation's prospects looked bleak. It would have been easy for the Soldiers of our young Army to fold up their tents and give up the dream of liberty. Those Soldiers did not quit—just as you will never quit.

I truly believe today's Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and our civilian partners stand as sentinels, fighting to guarantee the same foundation of fundamental beliefs upon which our nation was built. Life, liberty, equality, the pursuit of happiness are not just notes in a history book, they are the foundation of what we hold dear and what we fight to defend.

I could not be more proud of our Soldiers, our Army, our nation's military and the families back home who support us and enable us you to execute our mission. Please take the time to write, call or e-mail your families during this holiday season. Their sacrifice goes hand in hand with your own. We could not succeed without their support.

We are engaged in a great and noble struggle. Please take the time during this holiday season to ponder how fortunate we are to enjoy our nation's freedoms. I will—and while I reflect on this, I will also reflect on how lucky our nation is to have such remarkable men and women in its service. Thank you, and may God bless and protect you and your families this holiday season.

B.G. Michael J. Terry
13th SC(E) Commanding General

One last time

Former Secretary of Defense visits LSA Anaconda



Photo by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown
Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld laughs it up with Maj. Richard Gray, commander of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 135th Regiment, (General Support Aviation Battalion) a medical evacuation company assigned to Logistical Support Area Anaconda, during a Dec. 9 visit. Gray is a Guardsman from Lincoln, Neb.

“I serve the people of the United States.”

I am Sgt. 1st Class Erwin Orbe, from Houston

B Co., 449th Aviation Support Battalion >> Armament NCO





Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld talks with Airmen assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Balad Air Base in Iraq.



Sgt. James Nordman and 1st Lt. Lorna Bryan, both assigned to the air medical evacuation company on LSA Anaconda, talk with Rumsfeld during his final visit as U.S. Secretary of Defense.

Rumsfeld visits LSAA troops on farewell visit

story and photos by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq— The nation's 21st Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, thanked servicemembers for their service here Dec. 9 in a farewell tour of Iraq.

Rumsfeld stopped at the base for only a few hours visiting the Air Force Theatre Hospital, getting a tour of an F-16 Fighting Falcon, and the maintainers assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

He also spent time meeting with U.S. Army medical evacuation pilots and medics assigned to C Company, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, an Army National Guard unit from Lincoln, Neb.

"The reputation for this organization is sky-high," Rumsfeld said, addressing MEDEVAC Soldiers from the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade. "The appreciation people feel for speed, and the care and compassion that you all bring to your work is well known."

The second stop in his short tour, the Secretary of Defense came to Anaconda after visiting Al Asad earlier the same day and before flying to Baghdad.

"I think about the people I meet in the hospitals at Bethesda and Walter Reed and so many of them are deeply appreciative," he said. "They're young, and I don't know if they know it or not, but in any other conflict, they wouldn't have made it...they give a lot of credit to the care they are given in the very first hour."

Rumsfeld will be replaced as Secretary of Defense Dec. 18 by Bush's nominee Robert M. Gates.

"We all appreciate you and thank you," Rumsfeld said before leaving Anaconda. "God bless you."

LSAAnaconda is the central logistics operations base near Balad, Iraq. Currently the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), from Fort Hood, Texas, operates logistics missions throughout Iraq from LSA Anaconda.



Rumsfeld gets a personal tour of an F-16 by Staff Sgt. Rodoverino Hewitt, assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron on Balad Air Base.



Rumsfeld takes time out of his busy schedule for a photograph opportunity with Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment on LSA Anaconda.



Rumsfeld talks with a crew chief of an air ambulance during his visit with the Nebraska-based Guard unit.



Rumsfeld talks with Spc. LaTonya Curley during a visit with the medical evacuation team on LSA Anaconda.

ANACONDA TIMES

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36th Combat Aviation Brigade
402nd Army Field Support Brigade
411 Engineer Brigade
164th Corps Support Group
657th Area Support Group

1/34 Brigade Combat Team
45th Sustainment Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
593rd Corps Support Group
15th Sustainment Brigade

America Supports You: Hero Hugs Delivering Holiday Cheer to Iraq

by Samantha L. Quigley

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON -- Milk cartons stuffed with goodies and fashioned into presents, snowmen, elves and reindeer will be sent to Iraq to deliver troops a dose of holiday cheer from Hero Hugs.

Hero Hugs is a member of America Supports You, a Defense Department program highlighting ways Americans and the corporate sector support the nation's servicemembers.

Bailey Reese, her faithful sidekick, Hero the stuffed bear, and their Hero Hugs organization hope to send at least 1,000 milk carton characters to servicemembers this holiday season, she said. They've had lots of help turning plain lunchroom milk cartons into miniature works of art to be stuffed with all

sorts of snacks.

"My class at school is helping make them and we pack them with lots of stuff," Bailey, 10, said of the packages that will include the servicemembers' top request: chocolate.

"The Soldiers told us they want chocolate because this is one of the few times in the year we can send it without it melting and making a big mess before it gets there," Bailey said.

Among other edibles, each package also will include a handmade card, she said. "We sent kits out all over the country for the kids to help make the cards we will put in with the baskets and goodies," Bailey said. "We have more cards than we can do packages, probably."

The abundance of cards can be blamed squarely on the goodwill of cheerleaders at a competition in which Bailey participated. The cheerleaders took time between cheers to make cards, she said. In addition, a church also sent more than 1,500 cards.

"So, we will send some boxes of just cards, too," Bailey said, adding that she may include some chocolate in those as well.

While the deadline has passed to donate items for the Christmas packages, Hero Hugs still has to ship those items. Bailey's efforts through Hero Hugs earned the organization a \$2,500 donation to help do just that.

Bailey was named one of Build-A-Bear Workshop's 12 "Huggable Heroes" for 2006. A Huggable Hero is

anyone under 18 making a "Pawsome" difference in their neighborhood, school or community.

"I was nominated for the award by Command Master Sgt. Jerry Blankenship from the Missouri Air National Guard," she said. "(He) worked in the safety office at Balad Air Base (in Iraq) where many of my packages are sent and got to help pass out lots of my packages to Soldiers."

Blankenship will repeat the gesture when he starts another rotation in Iraq soon, she said.

Being chosen as a Huggable Hero also earned Bailey and Hero Hugs some Build-A-Bear gift cards. "I used those to make bears for some of the kids at my school who have a parent in Iraq because they like Hero so much and he makes them feel better," she said of her stuffed bear who was created at a Build-A-Bear Workshop.

As a Huggable Hero, Bailey represents the month of May in the 2007 Huggable Heroes calendar produced by Build-A-Bear Workshop.

The calendar is free with any purchase at Build-A-Bear locations and Bailey has a suggestion for those who may want a calendar but don't need a bear. "I have started getting a lot of requests from Soldiers for a bear like Hero," she said. "If anyone wants the calendar and can't think of anything to buy, they can always make a bear and send it to Hero Hugs so we can send it to a Soldier."

It would seem that perhaps bears spread holiday cheer better than even chocolate.



A 4-year-old child makes a card for servicemembers at the Worldwide Spirit Association cheerleading competition in Destin, Fla., on Dec. 3.



Bailey Reese, (far right) president of Hero Hugs, and her cheerleading squad, the Emerald City Jewels, show off holiday cards cheerleaders made at the Worldwide Spirit Association's "Christmas at the Beach" cheerleading competition in Destin, Fla.



Bailey Reese's classmates in Niceville, Fla., helped her turn pint-size milk cartons into holiday character baskets.

What special holiday tradition will you miss most this year?

Sgt. Rolanda Stone



"Making Eggnog and gumbo from scratch."

Sgt. Heather Williams



"Eating dinner with all of my family."

Senior Airman Bryan Lewis



"Watching my boys open Christmas presents."

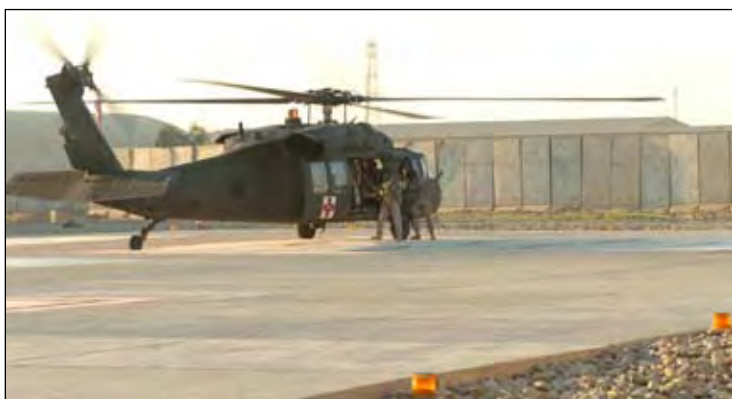
Staff Sgt. James Ritz



"Seeing my kids opening their gifts in the morning."



Blackhawk crew members prepare for their next flight, in which they will transport civilian patients to another hospital.



Crew members on board a medical evacuation Blackhawk dismount the helicopter as they help transport two casualty patients to the AFTH to receive further treatment.



Sgt. Ivan D. Haynes, a night shift casualty liaison team NCO for B. Detachment, 22nd Personnel Services Battalion stands behind a T-Wall as a Blackhawk approaches the landing pad to drop off Soldiers to the Air Force Theater Hospital.

Nighttime PAD crew leads casualties through “Hero’s Highway”

story and photos by Sgt. KaRonda Fleming

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - The casualty liaison team at the Air Force Theater Hospital can’t predict what circumstances a shift may bring. Even though the day shift carries the same job description as the night shift, darkness adds suspense to an already high-pace job.

It is hard to predict the number of casualties on any given day, said Capt. Francisco Pena, commander of B. Detachment, 22nd Personnel Services Battalion, from New York, N.Y.

Good weather permits more flights to come to the hospital, he said. In cases when there is limited visibility, it is harder for the helicopters to land.

Any shift, day or night, may have an influx of patients, no matter when the casualty occurred, he said.

The CLT works within the Patient Administrative Department, said Sgt. Ivan D. Haynes, a night shift casualty liaison team NCO for the 22nd PSB. The PAD is responsible for making rounds and checking on the patients. They also act as a liaison for all military and civilian patients in theater.

Haynes said the types of aircraft that transport casualties to the AFTH, are UH-60 Blackhawks and Chinook UH-46 Sea Knights. Aircraft travel in pairs, either with another MEDEVAC aircraft or an attack helicopter.

Once a casualty arrives at the hospital, the PAD takes them into the emergency room on Hero’s Highway, Pena said. Simultaneously, information is gathered from the patient as the doctors are treating their injuries.

“Everybody is considered a hero,” said Air Force Senior Airman Amber N. Brooks, of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, based out of Lackland Air Base in San Antonio, Texas.

“If they are still conscious, and you roll them under the Hero’s Highway sign, that just gives them the motivation to get better,” Brooks said. “Each servicemember that comes in is a hero to us.”

“Essentially, we take the information and put it into a Defense Casualty Information

Processing System folder report, which is sent up to the Multi National Corps – Iraq, the joint operations casualty cell, CJ1, in Baghdad,” Pena said.

“The CJ1 is the joint military section within the MNC-I Baghdad, including Marines, Soldiers, Airmen, and Navy,” Haynes said.

He said the information sent to Baghdad initiates the casualty notification process to the patient’s next of kin.

“We have a three-hour time limit once the casualty comes here,” Haynes said. “If the person is killed in action, or if someone dies here (at the hospital), we then have a two-hour time limit to send the report up (to MNC-I). There is a 61-line medical form that must be filled out. If there is something not pertinent, then that information is skipped.”

The DCIPS is sent to Baghdad electronically to people on the distribution list, Haynes said.

The process for a casualty to arrive at the hospital begins when the incoming medevac aircraft notifies the ER of their approximate arrival time, Haynes said. Then, the ER calls the PAD and lets them know to get ready for the incoming aircraft.

The hospital here is a level-three, urgent surgical facility, he said. There are three operating rooms, which focus mainly on head and neck injuries.

“More serious patients are sent to Germany to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, which is a level four hospital,” Haynes said.

The difference in the two levels is that level three hospitals specialize only in certain areas, whereas level four hospitals do everything, he said.

“If more treatment is needed, then the patient is sent back to the United States,” Haynes said. “They try to send the patients as close to home as possible; however, it depends on what the patient needs as to which hospital they are sent to.”

“This is what we are here for, to do our job,” he said. “That is what we have been training for

during this entire time.”

“It’s a very important mission,” Haynes said. “It makes you feel really important after you see patients come in that are all beat up. Then you see them leave here and are in better shape. They come in and thank you for what you do.”

One experience that Haynes said that he had was with a Soldier who received a blast to the face by an improvised explosive device. He said that the Soldier bent down to do something when the IED went off. The doctors predicted the Soldier to lose both of his eyes.

“That kind of hits home ... because he has the rest of his life to live,” Haynes said, commenting that the Soldier was young and had a wife and children waiting for him at home.

The AFTH has intensive care unit bays in which the patients are closely monitored, Pena said. Patients are in the ICU for approximately six to eight hours, but no more than 24 hours before being sent to another hospital for further

treatment.

There is also an intensive care ward for patients who are stabilized, without a need for constant monitoring. He said that those patients don’t have life-threatening injuries.

Due to the amount of incoming patients, there are also two local national bays for each servicemember’s bay, he said.

The 332nd EMDG transports patients to and from the Baghdad area, Haynes said. For example, if a casualty incident were to happen around Baghdad, the patient will be sent to a nearby hospital to get stabilized.

“They will then medevac them here for that next step of treatment, allow them to stabilize, and then send them to Germany for further treatment,” Haynes said.

“It’s a great experience and Soldiers are learning a lot here,” Pena said.

“Many people go through life saying they wish they can help Soldiers out more; maybe they (should) change their military occupation skill to medical,” he said.



Spec. Valeri L. Kinzer, a casualty liaison technician for B. Detachment, 22nd Personnel Services Battalion initiates the Defense Casualty Information Processing System report for Sgt. 1st Class Roderick R. Williamson, an Army cook with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 136th Infantry, based out of Camp Hit. His hometown is Orlando, Fla.

Combat Stress Control

113th Medical Company (CSC)

829-1402

individual counseling by appointment or walk-in

command referrals

services for combat and operationally stressed soldiers

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

MONDAY TO SATURDAY
11 A.M. TO NOON

STRESS MANAGEMENT

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY
10 TO 11 A.M.

HOME FRONT ISSUES

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY
4:30 TO 5:30 P.M.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY
10 TO 11 A.M.

ANGER MANAGEMENT

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY
1:30 TO 2:30 P.M.

ANXIETY AWARENESS

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY
1:30 TO 2:30 P.M.

SLEEP HYGIENE

MONDAY AND THURSDAY
4:30 TO 5:30 P.M.

GOAL SETTING

WEDNESDAY
4:30 TO 5:30 P.M.

DEPRESSION AWARENESS

MONDAY AND TUESDAY
1:30 TO 2:30 P.M.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

MONDAY AND THURSDAY
10 TO 11 A.M.

WOMEN'S GROUP

THURSDAY
8 TO 9 P.M.

COMBAT ADDICTIONS GROUP

WEDNESDAY
7 TO 8 P.M.

for more information, email:
melissa.kale@us.army.mil

"Dirtboyz" keep Balad airfield operational

by Staff Sgt. Alice Moore

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- Every day, aircraft fly in and out of Balad Air Base to provide vital support for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Whether F-16, C-130 or HH-60,

the airframes are able to approach and depart because of fully operational well-maintained runways.

Better known as "dirtboyz," members of the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron pavements and equipment shop, work every day to keep the airfield open no matter how

challenging it gets.

"A typical day in the dirt shop would be repairing spalls on the runway, sweeping the airfield and taking care of any emergency repair that might occur," said Tech. Sgt.

Talmadge Markham, P&E assistant noncommissioned officer in charge, deployed from Ramstein Air Base, Germany. "We also work to repair the airfield from mortar attacks. We work a minimum of 12 hours a day, but there's never a set time that's considered close of business."

Recently, three pavements and equipment shop journeymen were put to the test on how quickly they could repair a portion of the airfield. While out working on a job, Senior Airmen Shawn Cox and Allen Banerian and Airman 1st Class Tim Howell got the call to repair a spall (hole in the pavement resulting from an attack) that was a result of an attack.

"We were repairing a spall at another location when we heard two loud booms," said Cox, who is deployed from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. "We heard over the radio that there was an explosion by the tower."

Once the area of the attack was cleared, the "dirtboyz" were called to go to the site and repair the area, which they completed in record time. The airfield was fully operational again in less than an hour.

"We went out there and performed an expedient repair job," Cox said.

The Airmen were recognized and coined by Brig. Gen. Robin Rand, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander for their efforts.

"We were just performing our everyday duties, but it was special to get recognized," Cox said.

In addition to airfield repairs, the shop also has many other tasks.

"We are responsible for pouring concrete, digging trenches for various jobs such as the new electrical lines for the base hospital and building gravel parking lots for the mudcon (mud condition or rainy) season," he said.

The dirtboyz also took on the project of revamping the munitions storage area here. The area was plagued by severe drainage problems, which prevented the delivery of weapons to aircraft last rainy season, he said. The efforts of the shop guaranteed the munitions mission could carry on without glitches, and it also saved the Air Force money in contracting costs.

Despite their long days, the "dirtboyz" enjoy what they do.

"I like the work we do on deployments because the scope of the jobs are bigger," said Staff Sgt. Ricky Johnson, pavements and equipment craftsman deployed from Charleston Air Force Base, S.C. "Back at home station, it's more maintenance work, but here, you get the opportunity to work jobs like the munitions storage area."

"I just love the equipment we use," said Airman Howell, also deployed from Eglin AFB. "It's great when you can actually look back and see the results of your efforts."



Staff Sgt. Shawn Ziesler operates a grader to level ground Nov. 1 at Balad Air Base, Iraq. Sergeant Ziesler is a 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron pavements and equipment craftsman deployed from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.



Senior Airman William Cravener operates a steel wheel roller Nov. 3 at Balad Air Base, Iraq. Airman Cravener is a 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron pavements and equipment journeyman deployed from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

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Joint Forces Deputy Commander Assess 15th SB

by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner

15th Sustainment Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq— Lt. Gen. John Wood, Deputy Commander of Joint Forces Command, met with leaders of the 15th Sustainment Brigade during a visit to Camp Taji, Iraq, here Tuesday. As part of an overall Enabling Force Assessment, Col. Aundre Piggee, Commander, 15th SB, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), provided the foundations and capabilities of the “Wagonmasters”.

One of Wood’s first priorities centered on matching strategic capabilities to resources available. “We need to bring the right size force to the fight; to support the fight,” he said.

As one of the new, restructured Sustainment Brigades, Piggee said that the modularity design works well, especially coming from Fort Hood, Texas. “By replacing the 4th Infantry Division, we already had a good working relationship with those units from home station,” he said.

Piggee pointed out that the Soldiers of the 15th SB provide supply distribution and logistics support to virtually every Coalition unit within the Multi-National Division- Baghdad footprint. “We move equipment throughout the entire battle space,” Piggee. Everyday, all classes of supply move on the roads of Iraq by troops of the 15th SB.

In addition to ensuring that ammunition and materials get to the fight, Piggee explained that of all the Supply Support Activities in the Iraqi Theater, the 15th SB has more than half.

With an area that large, asked Wood, could the “Wagonmasters” extend that support to, say, the Marine Corps operating in the west?

“We could very easily support the Marines with the assets we deployed,” said Piggee. The issue was not maintaining supply and logistics to Marine units, but one of inter-service supply



Lt. Gen. John Wood, Deputy Commander of Joint Forces Command, talks to Col. Aundre Piggee, 15th Sustainment Brigade Commander, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), about life on Taji.

communication channels. Simply put, translating Marine Corps supply lingo to Army supply lingo.

One solution offered by the brigade during the assessment discussion was the creation of “super” SSAs; large, centrally-located, multi-class supply yards. With two or three “super” SSAs, units would have a “one-stop-shop” for material, ammunition and supplies. “In my opinion, it would work very well,” said Piggee.

The next point Wood asked of the 15th SB leadership was training the Iraqis on logistics. “We’ve grown tactically within the ISF (Iraqi Security Force),” he said. However, logistics; “That’s the chronic weakness...of the ISF.”

We currently give technical assistance and advice to the training of the Iraqis, said Piggee. Currently separate units have the responsibility of operating Mobile Training Teams; we advise the MTTs, but they do the training, he explained.

Regardless, he added, “We stand ready to undertake a larger role in training the ISF. We have experience upon experience.”



Capt. Douglas Sweet recites the Oath of Enlistment to Staff Sgt. Christopher Dulaney.

596th is “Army Strong”

Al Asad, Iraq— As the temperature cools down, the 630th Combat Service Sustainment Battalion of the 593rd Corps Support Group continues to take care of their Soldiers in western Iraq.

In the past 45 days, nine “No Slack” Soldiers from the 596th Maintenance Company raised their hand as they recited the Oath of Enlistment; together they received a combined bonus of \$108,000.00. Some Soldiers waited several months for the opportunity to re-enlist. While still in the rear, Soldiers started coordinating the details of their re-enlistment with the company re-enlist NCO Sgt. Philip Simonds.

In a combat zone, Soldiers who are qualified to re-enlist for a bonus, is entitled to receive the bonus tax free. Each Soldier received a bonus that ranged from \$4,000.00 to \$15,000.00 -- all tax free.

Every Soldier had an explanation for re-enlisting to stay in the U.S. Army. Staff Sgt. Christopher Dulaney, 34, from Cleveland, Ohio, re-enlisted for a six-year commitment and received a tax free bonus.

In his words he chose to re-enlist for “stability, education and the awareness of helping Soldiers.”

“I chose to re-enlist to serve my country and to provide for my family”, said Staff Sgt. Augusta C. Hill, 39, from Jacksonville, Fla.

Staff Sgt. Bradley S. Schade, 30, from Sheboygan, Wis. said, “I’m at the half way mark to retirement and I decided to stay in; why not, I’m half way there now.” Staff Sgt. Hester Bennett, 30, from Jackson, Miss. re-enlisted indefinitely to complete his 20-year career in the Army.

Six Soldiers re-enlisted for six-year commitments; three re-enlisted indefinitely. Eight of the nine “No Slack” Soldiers that re-enlisted in the past 45 days were Noncommissioned Officers.

“The NCO’s are setting a positive example for our Soldiers to follow,” 1st Sgt. Darrold Harper said, “I am proud to serve with each one of them.”

Hill plans to invest his bonus, just as many of the other NCO’s. Saving money and paying off loans or bills were the primary spend plans for these Soldiers.

There were mixed emotions from the families of these Soldiers. Schade’s family is proud to have him serving our country and happy he made the decision to stay.

“My family is amazed that I chose to re-enlist because of the war,” SSG Dulaney said. He also went on to say that “everyone does not agree with the war, but I would rather fight here, than on my own ground.” “Take the fight to them,” he said. “Army Strong!”

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Army Reserve Affairs

Building 4135

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TOPS IN BLUE

the Air Force's Expeditionary Entertainers showed Anaconda the power of love with...



the electrifying sounds of Tina Turner, Huey Lewis, Barry White, the Temptations, Trisha Yearwood, Alan Jackson and Celine Dion
by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq—Sequins, lights, and cowboy hats could be seen in full force Dec. 6, at Sustainer Theater as the Air Force's Expeditionary Entertainers, Tops In Blue, took to the stage.

The entertainers, who are on a three-week tour of the Middle East, brought some excitement and a little flair to the desert through their motto, "What's love?"

All of the songs performed followed the tour's theme, such as "Heat Wave," by Martha & The Vandellas, "I'm Your Lady," by Celine Dion, and "When a Man Loves a Woman," by Michael Bolton. Throughout the show, the performers tried to convey a message of love for life, family, and country.

The approximately two-hour show catered to a nearly-full Sustainer Theater with a dominant Air Force turnout.

With their patriotic-colored costumes, and upbeat dance routines, the 35-member group sang their way through the evening. The performers created a lighthearted atmosphere by heading into the audience to serenade individual service-members during almost every song.

Spc. Brianne M. Luck was one of the audience members who got a semi-private show by a member of Tops In Blue.

Luck, a medic from Jefferson City, Mo., with the 206th Ariel Support Medical Company, said it was nerve-racking being sung to in front of a full audience.

"I was set up," Luck said, commenting that members of her unit told the performers to sing to her.

Although she was subjected to a few minutes of embarrassment, Luck said she liked the concert. She said the most memorable part of the show for her was when the cast sang "God Bless the USA," at the end, and the whole audience stood up.

"It was great," she said. "I've never been to an Air

Force show before."

Brig. Gen. Robin Rand, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, complimented Tops In Blue on their performance.

"I want to tell you, you do represent our Air Force well," Rand said to the touring group. "Don't ever think you aren't appreciated, because you are."

Tops In Blue was created in 1953 by Air Force Maj. Al Reilly, who started a musical competition called the Air Force Worldwide Talent Contest. His plan was to provide entertainment for Air Force families all over the globe, spreading the idea of "family entertaining family."

Reilly chose the top contestants to form the first Tops In Blue, and they have been touring ever since, with a different cast each year.

Members of Tops In Blue are Airmen who hold every kind of military job, but also have musical talent. Airmen can audition for Tops In Blue, and if selected, will spend one year touring with the group.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Brian Granger, a technical director for Tops In Blue from Opelousas, La., said his primary military job is in the communications field.

Granger has been deployed five times in his 10 years in the Air Force to locations such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Hungary.

He said he wanted to

join Tops In Blue because he is a musician, and wanted to see more of the world.

"I like it (Tops In Blue)," Granger said. "It takes the troop's mind off of things when they are deployed."

Air Force 1st Lt. Mimi Ledet from Franklin, Tenn., who plays keyboards for the group, said she joined partly because she also wanted to tour the world.

"It's amazing. The reaction to us is always stronger overseas than in the U.S.," Ledet said.

Ledet, who is normally an electrical engineer, said that it is moving to be able to perform for deployed troops, and that her eyes had tears in them during "God Bless the USA."

"Don't lose hope, we're routing for you back in the States," she said.

Tops In Blue will hit approximately 13 bases on this tour before taking their show to another location for Christmas. The current cast has about a month left in their one-year run with Tops In Blue, and will soon be replaced with a batch of fresh faces.



Apache mechanics help unit obtain high maintenance title for Iraq



(Clockwise from above) Spc. Kendrick William, Company D, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack), 22, from Spartanburg, S.C., ensures the Apache's laser-guidance system is working properly. Spc. Brandon Buchanan, Company D, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack), 22, from Cleveland, Texas, puts a panel back on the Apache. The panel protects the helicopter's communication equipment. A Soldier tests the Apache's avionics systems after a phase inspection. Every 250 hours, the Apache is pulled off the flight line and gets completely examined by Company D Soldiers. Spc. Rodney Bastow, Company B, 449th Aviation Support Battalion, from Nevada, Miss., cleans a 30 mm machine gun before reinstalling it on the Apache. Every section of the helicopter is inspected before the helicopter is allowed to fly again.



149th Aviation Regiment has surpassed Army Aviation standards by an average of five to 15 percent each month since arriving in Iraq

story and photos by Staff Sgt. Lorin Smith

36th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs Office

LSAANACONDA, Iraq—Getting Apaches back in the air in record time is nothing new to Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Parish. He's been maintaining the most feared weapons system on the battlefield for more than 12 years.

As the maintenance platoon leader for Company D, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack), 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, he has 22 Soldiers who maintain the battalion's 20 or so Apache helicopters.

"Maintenance is important because if we don't fix our aircraft and (give the pilots a problem-free helicopter), the mission can't be done," said Parish, 42, from Pearland, Texas.

His battalion's helicopters have to be completely torn down, inspected and put back together at regular intervals during the aircraft's life, which is Company D's primary

maintenance focus. These inspections must be completed before the aircraft is allowed to be flown again.

Back home at Ellington Field, Texas, this can take up to a month. The Company D maintenance crew turns the aircraft around here in less than two days, earning recognition for the unit as having one of the highest operational ready rates in the Central Command's Area of Operation.

To ensure there are enough aircraft available to continue the mission and conduct routine maintenance simultaneously, the Army created a standard dictating a percentage of how many helicopters had to be in the air versus in the maintenance hangar.

The 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment has surpassed this standard by an average of five to 15 percent each month since arriving in Iraq. Exceeding the Army's standard means more aircraft are in the air flying vital missions in support of Multi National Corps-Iraq and helping win the Global War on Terrorism, Parish said.

The aircraft standard was also created so that units could develop a maintenance plan where enough helicopters to perform the mission are ready to fly, while others receive routine upkeep.

The Company D Soldiers aren't surprised they are doing so well — everything they do in Iraq is just like home, only faster. Parish believes the unit is doing so well because National Guard technician mechanics who work on the same Apache everyday for years.

For example, Staff Sgt. Gilbert Pena has been working on Apaches for more than four years. Pena, 35, of Dickenson, Texas, said 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment's aircraft has been with the unit for almost seven years, and the maintenance crews have been working the same helicopter for all that time.

"We can troubleshoot and pinpoint problems with our aircraft faster than other units because we have been with them day in, day

out," said Pena.

Company D Soldiers understand their role in the mission. Spc. Paul Morgan, 21, from Lathrop, Miss., maintains the Apache's electrical systems, navigational systems and communications equipment.

"Pilots lives are in our hands, and I want to make sure everything I do is right before they go back (in the air)," Morgan said.

Spc. Brandon Buchanan, 22, from Cleveland, Texas, is a former active duty infantryman turned National Guard mechanic. He is part of the battalion's Downed Aircraft Recovery Team, which goes into action if an Apache has to make a precautionary landing and needs critical maintenance to get it back to safety.

Buchanan serves as the recovery team's security team leader because of his infantry skills and previous deployment to Afghanistan a few years ago. When he's not turning a wrench or reassembling a rotor, he trains the other team members on how to survive in a combat zone — not in the air, but on the ground.

Even though the unit is doing their job better and faster than most, they never stop refining their maintenance methods. "We are like an Indy pit car crew," said Sgt. Jared Donahue from Houston, referring to how good each mechanic has to be at his or her job and the ability to work together as a whole.

Providing the administrative oversight is 1st Sgt. Charles Holicek, 56, from Baytown, Texas.

He tracks each helicopter's maintenance record and ensures the mission doesn't stop when Soldiers go to guard duty or home for Rest and Relaxation leave.

"We don't try to be speedy, but develop a system that will make us more efficient, because if you hurry up a maintenance process, chances are you will overlook something," Holicek said.

He attributes most of the unit's success



Spc. Daniel Acevedo, B Company, 1st Battalion, 449th Aviation Support Battalion, from Houston, checks all the wires inside an Apache helicopter's nose gear box.

to getting hard to find parts that he probably couldn't get back in Texas. "We are the top priority (for parts) in the world because we are in combat," said Staff Sgt. Brian Johnson, from Spring Hill, Kan.

Johnson is in charge of Company D's day shift. He said that today's technicians are much more intelligent and computer-savvy than mechanics 60 years ago were.

His grandfather flew airplanes during World War II, and would use a grease pencil on his window to mark where enemy bullets were being shot from.

Now, Apaches and most U.S. aircraft have GPS tracking systems, which helps locate the enemy faster.

These mechanics have to understand systems like this, as checking a helicopter's avionics is part of all inspections.

After the Soldiers leave Iraq, they will go back to their respective units and share the knowledge they have learned.

"When we go home, we are going to take the same techniques we've refined here and make them even better," said Sgt. 1st Class Steve Popkowski, 36, from Houston.



Soldiers assigned to the attack battalion work on an AH-64 Apache helicopter.



Sgt. Labon Hassett, Company D, 1st Battalion, 149th Aviation Regiment (Attack), from Grants Pass, Ore., helps guide an Apaches' main rotor head suspended by a crane. The rotor will be fully torn down and inspected while the helicopter gets a new one.



The Iraqi Highway Patrol and the 134th Brigade Support Battalion Soldiers work together during a recent joint patrol outside the Dhi Qar Province.

The IHOP Boys

"These [Iraqi Highway Patrol] are truly heroes of Iraq...I am in awe of their dedication and the sacrifices they make in building a better Iraq for future generations."

- Capt. Tim Engle

Minnesota guard, Iraqi Highway Patrol work together to secure roads from insurgents, terrorists

story and photos by Staff Sgt. Bill Snellman

CAMP ADDER, Iraq -- U.S. Soldiers are working with Iraqi Security Forces in Southern Iraq to improve both groups' effectiveness and provide a more secure environment for all Iraqis.

The Iraqi Highway Patrol (IHP) is working with the 134th Brigade Support Battalion, based in Little Falls, Minn., to improve their training, tactics, and credibility with the Iraqi people. Led by Sgt. 1st Class Eric Emery of Albertville, Minn., and Sgt. Michael Wells of Gwinnett County, Ga., both military policemen, a team of BSB Soldiers conducts joint patrols with the IHP on a regular basis near An Nasiriyah, Iraq.

Capt. Tim Engle of Sartell, Minn., works with Emery, Wells, and Maj. Ali, the IHP Commander, to plan and evaluate the joint operations.

The IHP joint patrols combine with the 134th BSB's civil military efforts to form a multi-faceted approach to reinforce Dhi Qar Province's recent transfer to Provincial Iraqi Control and allow the Iraqis to establish a firm base on which to build their new, democratic future.

IHP patrol leader Ghazi Sarghan explained the benefits of the patrols.

"These patrols have given us the opportunity to take the skills we learned in the academy and actually see them work," Sarghan said. "Additional training in vehicle placement, responding to unexploded ordinance, and first aid has increased my ability to serve the people of Iraq."

IHP Patrol Officer Sammy Jacob elaborated, "[The joint patrols] have given me the opportunity to use my skills and make a positive impact in my province."

Both Sarghan and Jacob expressed gratitude for the training and respect the American Soldiers shared with their group.

IHP-coalition joint patrols allow both groups to share their respective expertise. American Soldiers possess experience in patrolling and police work while the Iraqis contribute invaluable knowledge and experience in their culture and the attitude and actions of Iraqi citizens in their area. This collaboration of professionals has contributed to an increase in security and service to the people of Dhi Qar.

Before, during, and after joint patrols, Emery and Wells explain tactics during "rock drills." During these drills, Soldiers and IHP officers use U.S. and Iraqi flags to represent the response of each vehicle in the patrol to various situations they encounter.

After the Americans present their tactics, the Iraqis provide their input and the two groups discuss their options. The Iraqis then present the rock drill back to the group before, finally, the patrol executes their plan on the roads and highways of Iraq.

During the patrols, the IHP are always in the lead with the U.S. vehicles and Soldiers acting in a support and mentoring role.

"These joint patrols are helping secure Iraq by encouraging the IHP to conduct the patrols, helping them resource the patrols, and by educating them to patrol effectively," Engle explained. "These patrols also show the civilian population in the area that their security force is out there to help and leading the way."



The Iraqi Highway Patrol and the 134th Brigade Support Battalion Soldiers take a few minutes before a joint patrol to coordinate efforts and to answer any last-minute questions.

Speaking of the benefits the joint patrols provide to American Soldiers, Emery said, "[working with the IHP] has given me a greater sense of pride that I am able, personally, to help out the people that want to make a difference in Iraq with what knowledge I know."

Wells shared similar feelings. "This opportunity to work with the IHP is one of a lifetime," he said. "Being a police officer back home, it gave me an opportunity to see difficulties and diversities of an Iraqi police force. These police officers face dangers on and off the job that we as police officers in the States could not imagine. These men are truly heroes

of Iraq, knowing the dangers they proudly put on their uniforms and patrol the highways of Iraq. I am in awe of their dedication and the sacrifices they make in building a better Iraq for future generations."

As the Americans and Iraqis gain expertise through their cooperation, the citizens of Dhi Qar province see their IHP performing professionally and with the respect of Coalition Forces.

The IHP are demonstrating to the entire world the success Iraq is having as its citizens and security forces take responsibility for their security and their future.

Have a safe and happy holiday season from the Anaconda Times and Newsreel Anaconda Staff

Maj. Jay Adams, Maj. Kirk Slaughter, Maj. Robert Catlin, Capt. Perry Jarmon, 2nd Lt. Michael Meyer, Sgt. Maj. Mark Schulz, Sgt. 1st Class James Lilly, Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell, Staff Sgt. Angela Archie, Sgt. Gary Witte, Sgt. Joel Gibson, Sgt. Kevin McSwain, Sgt. KaRonda Fleming, Sgt. Marc McNab, Sgt. Paul Roberts, Spc. Adryen Wallace, Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown, Spc. Amanda Solitario, Spc. Bryan Tull, Spc. Tony Knouf, Spc. Kirk Bell, Spc. Walton McJordan, and Spc. Bryan Randolph

Difficulties Soldiers, families face being away from home over the holidays

by Staff Sgt. Glenn Chrisman

1744th Transportation Company

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq- Christmas this year will be memorable for a number of families, but not for traditional reasons.

For many members of the 1744th Transportation Company, this is their first holiday season away from home.

While some Soldiers from the Streator, Ill. National Guard unit have decorated their rooms with holiday cheer, others are hoping the season will come and go quickly.

For most, being a half a world away from family and friends during the holidays is not easy.

The holidays are especially difficult for Soldiers who have young families at home.

Sgt. Steve Clark, 24, of Liberty, Ill., is a single father who says the holidays aren't easy. He said he feels bad not being home for Christmas but knows he is doing the right thing serving his country in Iraq.

Clark has a two-year old son named Noah. He said he will definitely miss seeing the smile on his son's face when he opens his gifts Christmas morning. Clark says the hardest thing is trying to explain to a 2-year-old where his Daddy is.

Sgt. Jason Schwartz, 32, of Prophetstown, Ill., is one of about a dozen Soldiers from the 1744th who became new parents during the unit's deployment.

Schwartz's wife gave birth to a baby girl, Sydney, on July 3. Schwartz is on his second deployment overseas, but this is the first time he's had a child at home.

He said it's really difficult for his wife,



Spc. Kyle A. Hollingsworth, supply clerk for the 1744th Transportation Company, an Army National Guard unit based in Streator, Ill., places an ornament on the battalion Christmas tree.

Photo by Sgt. Kevin McSwain

but the longer the unit is deployed the more she learns to cope with his absence.

Sgt. Austin Watts, 28, knows how special Christmas is in his Wedron, Ill. home. His 4-year-old daughter, Adalynn, always helps him put up the Christmas decorations and now she is devastated because her Daddy isn't home to help.

His 3-year-old son, Alexander, is just starting to learn what Christmas is all about and Watts said that makes it hard to miss the holidays as well.

Watts said it would be easier if his kids were older, but his two children don't understand why he is gone and don't understand why Daddy won't be there to see them open

their presents.

Sgt. Amy Mackowiak, 23, of Hazel Crest, Ill. misses her young family, but said she doesn't think it's going to be an emotional roller coaster. She said 4-year-old Shawntee, and 6-year-old Shawntel will still be opening gifts Christmas Day, but this year Mommy just won't be there to watch.

Mackowiak said she misses her husband and two girls, but she tries to distance herself from home so she can focus on her mission in Iraq.

Sgt. 1st Class Aliska Pond, 33, of Streator, Ill., misses her children a lot during the holidays.

Unlike many other Soldiers, Pond has a special Christmas present planned this year. Pond flies home for her two-week leave in mid-December and her children have no idea she is coming home.

She is excited to see the looks on the faces of 2-year-old Benjamin and 8-year-old Delaney when she walks through the door.

Pond is on her second deployment, but was never away during the holidays when she was deployed the first time.

When asked what 2-year-old Benjamin wants for Christmas, all he can say is, "I want my Mommy home." It looks like this Christmas, Santa will be making an early stop in Streator.

For most Soldiers, being away from friends and family during the holidays is one of the hardest parts of their deployment.

The troops know they are giving up a year with their family, and they hope it helps make future holiday seasons in America safer for everyone.

LSAA Holiday Religious Schedule

Hanukkah

Sunday, Dec. 17th

Provider Chapel 6 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 18th

Tuskegee Chapel 6 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 19th

Freedom Chapel 6 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 23

Tuskegee Chapel at 5 p.m.

Provider Chapel at 8 p.m.

Sunday Dec 24

Freedom @ 0730

Tuskegee Chapel at 9 a.m.

Provider Chapel at 9 p.m.

Christmas

Air Force Recreational Facility 11:30 p.m.

Mon Dec 25

Provider Chapel at 7:30 a.m. and 9 a.m.

Tuskegee Chapel at 9 a.m.

Air Force Hospital Chapel at 11 a.m.

Freedom Chapel at 6 p.m.

LSA ANACONDA RELIGIOUS SCHEDULE

Religious schedule subject to change

Roman Catholic Mass

Saturday 5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Saturday 8 p.m. Provider Chapel

Sunday 7:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel

Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Sunday 5:30 p.m. Provider Chapel

Sunday 11 a.m. Air Force Hospital

Monday - Friday 5 p.m. Tuskegee

Sacrament of Reconciliation

30 minutes prior to each mass

Protestant-Contemporary

Sunday 10 a.m. Town Hall

Latter Day Saints

Sunday 1 p.m. Provider Chapel

Sunday 4 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Sunday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Church of Christ

Sunday 2 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Islamic Prayer

Friday 12:30 p.m. Provider Chapel

Samoan Congregational Service

Sunday 4 p.m. Provider Chapel

Friday Shabbat Service

Friday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Protestant-Gospel

Sunday, 11 a.m. MWR East Building

Sunday 11:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel

Sunday 2 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

Sunday 7 p.m. Provider Chapel

Protestant Praise and Worship

Sunday 9 a.m. MWR East Building

Sunday 9 a.m. Eden Chapel

Sunday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Sunday 7:30 p.m. Eden Chapel

Wednesday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Protestant-Traditional

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Air Force Hospital

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel

Sunday 10 a.m. Freedom Chapel

Sunday 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Sunday 8:15 p.m. Air Force Hospital

Non-Denominational

Sunday 9 a.m. Signal Chapel

Non-Denominational Spanish

Sunday 2 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Protestant-Gospel

Sunday 3:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Protestant-Liturgical

Saturday 7:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

December 20**Aerobics**

6 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Yoga

6 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Boxing

7:30 to 9 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Rock Climbing Class

8 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

8-Ball Tourney

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

Madden '05

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

9-Ball Tourney

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

DJ Classes

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

December 21**Tae Kwon Do**

7 to 8:30 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

NOGI Jiu-Jitsu

9 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Level 2 Swim Lessons

7 p.m.
Indoor Pool

Level 1 Swim Lessons

8 p.m.
Indoor Pool

ANACONDA ACTIVITIES

Your one-stop connection to activities around LSA Anaconda
to add your activity to the event calendar, email anaconda.times@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Battlefield Ground

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

December 22**Aerobics**

5:30 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Boxing

7:30 to 9 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Chess Tourney

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

4-4 Volleyball Tourney

8 p.m.
West MWR Fitness Center

Caribbean Dance

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

December 23**Aerobics**

noon to 1 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Open Court Volleyball

6 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

500m Fins/Kickboard

9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Indoor Pool

Texas Hold'em

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

Aerobics

8 p.m.
West MWR Fitness Center

Salsa Dance

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

Tae Kwon Do

7 to 8:30 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

NOGI Jiu-Jitsu

9 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Level 2 Swim Lessons

7 p.m.
Indoor Pool

Level 1 Swim Lessons

8 p.m.
Indoor Pool

Command & Conquer

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

Dodgeball Tourney

8 p.m.
West MWR Fitness Center

Texas Hold'em

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

December 24**Aerobics**

5:30 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Boxing

7:30 to 9 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

100m Butterfly

10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Indoor Pool

Spades Tourney

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

4-4 Volleyball Tourney

8 p.m.
West MWR Fitness Center

Caribbean Dance

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

December 25**Aerobics**

noon to 1 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Open Court Volleyball

6 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

One-Mile Swim Race

10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Indoor Pool

Texas Hold'em

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

Aerobics

8 p.m.
West MWR Fitness Center

Salsa Dance

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

December 26**Open Court Volleyball**

6 p.m.

East MWR Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do

7 to 8:30 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

9 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Green Bean Karaoke

8 p.m.
Green Bean Coffee Shop

5-5 Basketball Tourney

8 p.m.
West MWR Fitness Center

Poker

8 p.m.
East Rec Center

December 27**Aerobics**

6 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Boxing

7:30 to 9 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

Rock Climbing Class

8 p.m.
East MWR Fitness Center

One-Hour Swim-A-Thon

Two-Person Teams
5:30 a.m.
Outdoor Pool

Jam Session

8 p.m.
West Recreation Center

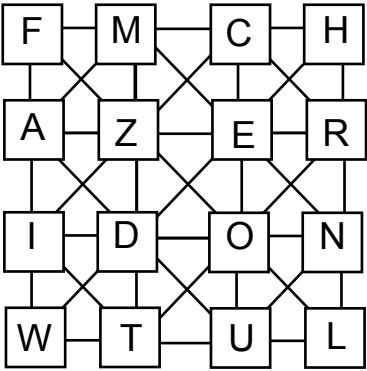
Aerobics

8 p.m.
West MWR Fitness Center

A New Years Eve Sports Extravaganza
Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders
Superbowl XX Championship
Quarterback Jim McMahon and kicker Kevin Butler
Karri Turner from the hit television series JAG
visit your local MWR facility for times & locations

ALL FOURS

How many four-letter words can you find in the diagram by moving from letter to adjacent letter up, down, forward and diagonally? Do not return to a square to repeat a letter in a word. Proper names, abbreviations, contractions and foreign words are not allowed.



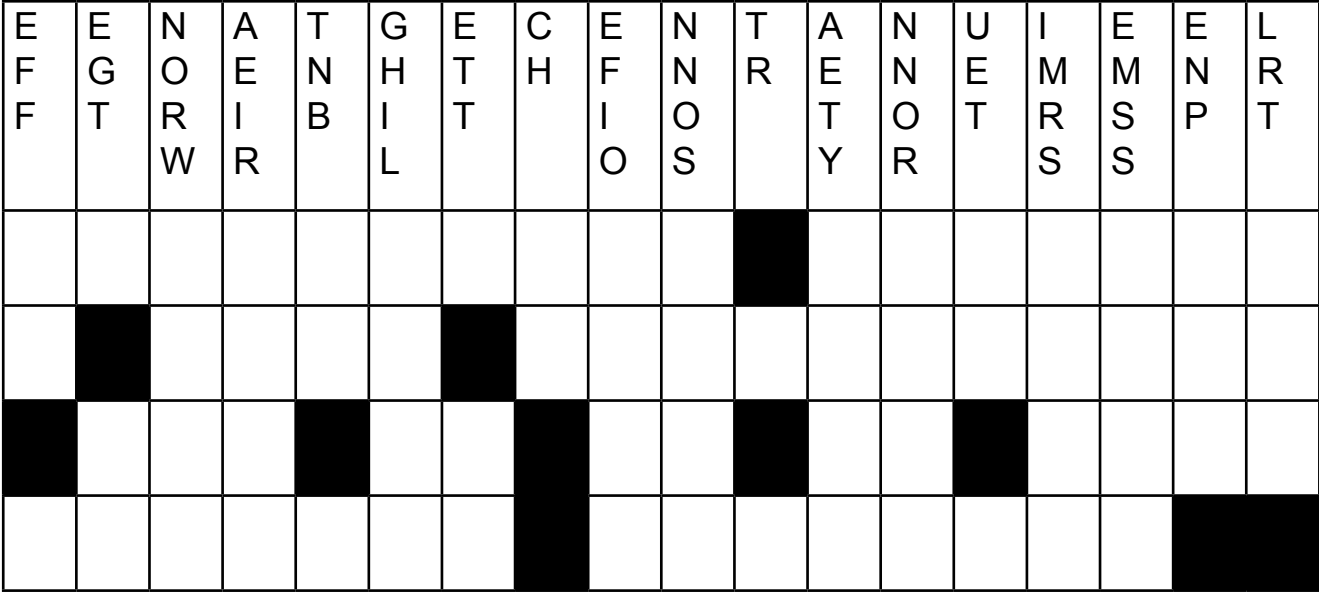
YOUR WORD LIST

Fill in as many boxes as you can to form 11 different words starting with the given letters. Words starting with a capital letter, foreign words, contractions and abbreviations are not allowed. No letter may be repeated in the word itself, in the word above, or in the word below. For each word, the number of letters needed to earn the maximum score is indicated by the number of boxes.

SCORING:
Each letter you use is worth one point. Give yourself a bonus of 10 points if you use all 26 letters of the alphabet. Include the given letters in your score.

WORD	SCORE
H E <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
C <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
S <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
B <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
H I <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
F R <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
D <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
B <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
C L <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
H <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

The letters in each vertical column go into the squares directly below them, but not necessarily in the order they appear. A black square indicates the end of a word. When you have placed all the letters in their correct squares, you will be able to read a quotation across the diagram from left to right.



SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

(Schedule is subject to change)

Wednesday, Dec. 20
5 p.m. Santa Clause 3 (G)
8 p.m. Charlotte's Web (G)

Thursday, Dec. 21
5 p.m. Pursuit of Happyness (PG-13)
8 p.m. The Marine (PG-13)

Friday, Dec. 22
2 p.m. Man of the Year (PG-13)
5 p.m. Santa Clause 3 (G)
8:30 p.m. We are Marshal (PG)

Saturday, Dec. 23
2 p.m. Flicka (PG)
5 p.m. We are Marshal (PG)
8 p.m. The Departed (R)

Sunday, Dec. 24
2 p.m. Santa Clause 3 (G)
5 p.m. Santa Clause 3 (G)
8 p.m. Christmas w/ the Kranks

Monday, Dec. 25
2 p.m. Santa Clause 3 (G)
5 p.m. Santa Clause 3 (G)
8 p.m. Christmas w/ the Kranks

Tuesday, Dec. 26
2 p.m. Flicka (PG)
5 p.m. We are Marshal (PG)

DITTOS

Form five common 5-letter words by using all the given letters and adding the letter B as often as necessary. Cross off each given letter as you use them.

A E E E
I I L L L
O R R U
Y Y

Find your way from START to FINISH by passing through all the white squares one time only. You may move up, down, and across, but not diagonally.

A slice of home

by Senior Airman Josh Moshier

Airmen, Soldiers revel in America's pastime ... Iraq style

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq -- If you visit the softball diamond at Logistical Support Area Anaconda, Iraq, on any weekend day or night, you're likely to see a co-recreational game with players on both sides swinging the bat, circling the bases and trading friendly barbs with one another.

At first glance, the scene would appear no different than any other softball game you've watched – until you look around and realize there are military convoys passing on the street and fully-loaded Blackhawk helicopters and F-16 fighter aircraft circling overhead.

Behind the outfield fence and extending from the right field corner past dead center is a 12-foot wall of concrete barriers intended to shield servicemembers from fragments should the base be attacked by insurgents' rockets or mortars.

Modest wooden benches for the few spectators who show are covered by camouflaged netting. Players carry loaded weapons with them to the field, and guard towers overlook the grounds beyond the perimeter of the highly fortified base.

It's a surreal picture in a world most people are only familiar with through images seen on the nightly news. For the athletes, it's an hour each week to step away from the reality of living in a combat zone and enjoy a game that reminds them a little bit of home.

"Getting the chance to come out here and play once a week is definitely a morale boost," said Army Staff Sgt. David Cutsinger of the 1744th Transportation Company, an Army National Guardsman deployed here from Streator, Ill. "It gives people something else to get their mind on other than being in Iraq."

The league is made up of 28 teams, representing various units from the base, split into two 14-team divisions. The season is 13 weeks long and culminates in an end-of-season championship tournament. The level of participation was a welcome surprise for



Photos by Airman 1st Class Chad Kellum

Air Force Maj. Caleb Malcolm (center), 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron, leads his teammates in a cheer following their victory over the 1744th Transportation Company at the Logistics Support Area Anaconda softball field Saturday.

the Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation unit responsible for organizing the league.

"We got more teams than we expected," said Army Sgt. John Gumataotao, 657th Area Support Group MWR noncommissioned-officer-in-charge, from Hagatna, Guam. "We were going to try to limit the league to 10 teams in each division, but there was so much interest, we decided to expand that number. It's been very successful."

Playing games and running a league in this environment is certainly not without obstacles. There's no grass anywhere in sight, and the sheer quantity of rocks practically guarantees fielders won't see many true hops. Iraq sees little rain, making the ground hard, and line drives skip off it as if they were hit on

blacktop. The outfielders must occasionally navigate an enormous mound of rock and dirt inconveniently dumped in deep center field.

Gumataotao does what he can to maintain the field, but his time is limited to dragging it and marking the lines every Saturday and Sunday morning.

"It's a challenge playing on a field full of rocks," said Airman 1st Class Andrew Emert of the 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron, who's deployed here from the 99th Communications Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. "You think a ball is going to stay down, and then it hits a rock and it's in your face."

Regardless, Emert looks forward to each week's game as a release from the never-ending work cycle.

"This is fun, and it gets me out of the office and takes my mind off the stresses you have here for an hour each week," he said. "Just getting out and having a good time takes my mind off of missing home."

According to Gumataotao, the biggest challenge is ensuring each team can get enough players to show up each week.

"Obviously, the mission comes first," he said. "Unfortunately, some teams have to forfeit because they have to accomplish their mission."

Cutsinger said the 1744th is one that has had to play most weeks without its full complement of players.

While he acknowledges there's plenty of military responsibility to tend to, he doesn't sell short the importance of playing games, either.

"This is very important for morale," Cutsinger said. "When you're over here,

your life consists of work. Sometimes, guys don't want to come out because we get beat pretty bad most of the time. But I tell them, 'come on – we have 50 minutes on this field each week; let's take it.'"

While the players agree the most important thing is for everyone to have fun, avoid injury and spend time with teammates away from the work environment, there's still a competitive fire burning underneath.

"Every unit here is competitive and wants to be the best," said Staff Sgt. Terry LaBreck of the 332nd ECS, deployed here from the 83rd CS at Langley AFB, Va. "My motivation to play is to make sure I do my part in the 332nd ECS smack down on the Army teams we play. We've got to show them that what they call the 'Chair Force' can be competitive."

Ultimately, the opportunity to play a game that's taken for granted back home – a game as simple as softball – is contributing to a positive experience for the servicemembers' time here.

"I've been playing softball for 24 years, so this is a nice release," said Chief Master Sgt. Bryce Maxson, 332nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group superintendent. "Besides, how many people can say they've played softball in Iraq?"

The game between Maxson's 332nd ECS and Cutsinger's 1744th ends with the Air Force squad handily beating their Army counterparts by the 10-run rule. While the victory gives the Airmen temporary bragging rights, it doesn't mean the playful bantering is over.

"We can definitely see who has time to practice and who doesn't," Cutsinger joked.



Army Staff Sgt. David Cutsinger, 1744th Transportation Company, takes a swing during his team's game with the 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron Dec. 2.

13 runners and the miles they ran

Sgt. Jacob Boyce	19
*Sgt. Maggie Harrold	8
Sgt. David Kuhns	18.25
Sgt. Michael Marszalek	19
Staff Sgt. Robert Meldrum	19
Sgt. Jennifer Moran	19
Sgt. Chad Morris	19
Sgt. 1st Class Terry Mullins	19
*Sgt. Eric Noomen	9
*Staff Sgt. Joseph R. Rios Jr.	15.25
Sgt. Adam Sauer	19.25
Sgt. May Squibb	19.25
*Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Weiland	16.5
Total	220 miles
	880 laps

**didn't finish relay due to injury*

Dec. 3 Pearl Harbor Memorial Biathlon Results

		Swim	Run	Overall
1	Martin Wennblom	0:14:28	0:18:39	0:34:23
2	Tony Rovertoni	0:13:33	0:19:45	0:34:46
3	Anthony Calingo	0:16:34	0:17:09	0:35:34
4	Mike Phillips	0:13:35	0:22:12	0:37:17
5	Marcus Maris	0:15:05	0:20:28	0:37:30
6	Steve Casson	0:12:36	0:23:55	0:37:40
7	Jacob Boyce	0:13:54	0:23:47	0:38:56
8	Laura Schmutzer	0:13:47	0:24:06	0:39:33
9	David Kuhns	0:11:23	0:24:18	0:39:34
10	Jen Fuller	0:13:55	0:24:10	0:40:03
11	Nathan Lewis	0:17:15	0:20:56	0:40:26
12	Larry Parada	0:17:46	0:20:44	0:41:20
13	Shannon Moran	0:15:13	0:24:00	0:41:35
14	Chris Gayagas	0:13:46	0:25:56	0:41:49
15	Will Raguro	0:15:02	0:23:43	0:41:49
16	Mark Pallis	0:16:54	0:23:26	0:42:55
17	Ryan Kay	0:15:23	0:24:54	0:43:13
18	Laren Terzenbach	0:15:20	0:25:48	0:44:26
19	Corey Terry	0:16:10	0:23:47	0:44:27
20	Mohan Karki	0:16:04	0:25:48	0:44:33
21	John Holliday	0:17:42	0:21:03	0:44:40
22	Raul Resio	0:17:21	0:25:34	0:44:54
23	Keith Smith	0:14:45	0:25:55	0:45:09
24	Joseph Potestivo	0:15:17	0:25:48	0:45:24
25	Chris Claus	0:16:09	0:25:35	0:45:42
26	Mitchell Delvalle	0:18:30	0:24:22	0:45:42
27	Amanda Engen	0:19:06	0:20:37	0:46:58
28	Raymond Perez	0:17:14	0:26:21	0:47:13
29	Christian Presiado	0:17:40	0:25:42	0:47:25
30	Amanda Glade	0:16:04	0:28:16	0:47:47
31	Jessi Mead	0:16:33	0:28:14	0:47:50
32	Matt Castro	0:18:00	0:27:35	0:48:04
33	Tom Burke	0:18:11	0:26:48	0:48:31
34	Kris Duggar	0:22:33	0:23:00	0:48:45
35	James Beeve	0:20:53	0:23:38	0:49:04
36	John Redford	0:20:51	0:26:49	0:49:45
37	Brian Haskan	0:19:41	0:27:06	0:50:45
38	Les Martin	0:22:13	0:23:59	0:51:50
39	Patrick Daulton	0:22:45	0:26:59	0:52:01
40	Mike McNealy	0:22:04	0:26:09	0:52:05
41	Raymond Dharsono	0:23:04	0:25:54	0:53:20
42	Jeff Moyer	0:21:57	0:27:26	0:54:22
43	Diane Bulman	0:22:08	0:27:36	0:54:24
44	Steven Kot	0:20:57	0:31:28	0:55:50
45	Joy Schmalzle	0:19:51	0:32:17	0:56:53
46	Archie Clark	0:26:08	0:27:06	0:57:25
47	Brodie Kennedy	0:23:26	0:30:24	0:59:03
48	Lance Braswell	0:24:20	0:31:12	1:00:38
49	Maura Newby	0:24:41	Best	Wishes

DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO TELL?

Let the 13th SC(E) Public Affairs Office tell your story to LSA Anaconda and the world.

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Never Forgotten

Indiana-based Reservists run in honor of those killed Dec. 7, 1941

story and photos by Sgt. Kevin McSwain

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq—President Roosevelt mandated that Dec. 7, 1941 was to be a date that would live in infamy.

But for the Soldiers of the 209th Quartermaster Company, a Reserve unit from Lafayette, Ind., this year it was a day of remembrance.

On Dec. 7 at 7:55 a.m., Soldiers from the unit began a 24-hour relay run to honor the servicemembers who lost their lives on that day.

"We began our run at the approximate time the naval base was attacked by Japan's first wave of aircraft," said Sgt. 1st Class Terry Mullins, tactical operations center noncommissioned officer in charge for the 209th QM.

Mullins, the organizer of the event, said this was the 65th anniversary of the attack that launched the United States into World War II.

"A few weeks ago, I was thinking about Pearl Harbor and about a way we could commemorate the sacrifice of so many Soldiers," he said.

Mullins said the event started out with 10 runners, with each participant running 18 miles for a total of 180 miles.

"The distance was based on a calculation with each Soldier running a lap in two minutes for 24 hours," he said.

During the planning of the event, Mullins began to receive additional volunteers, some even from other units.

"I heard about the relay last week and I wanted to be a part of it," said Sgt. Jennifer Moran, supply NCO with the 127th Quartermaster Company. "And I also love to run."

Mullins said after people became aware of his relay run, four additional runners were added to his team and a large group of volunteers who ran anywhere from one lap to one mile, participated also.

"The team must constantly have one runner on the track," he said. "Each member will run one lap and then 'tag' the next runner, who would complete the next lap. Additional volunteers were allowed to run as many laps as they wished and their total would be added to the final distance."

Mullins said the event was a way for Soldiers here to honor fellow servicemembers and to also boost the morale of Soldiers during the holiday season.



Sgt. Elliott Gaskins, of the 209th Quartermaster Company, leads the formation of participants in the "Pledge of Allegiance" prior to the start of the Pearl Harbor 24-hour memorial run on Dec. 7 at Holt Memorial Stadium here.



Members of the official 24-hour relay team pose for a photo prior to the start of the memorial run at Holt Memorial Stadium here for the servicemembers who died during the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.



Members of the volunteer team complete one lap during their run. The six member team completed four laps, which added 6 additional miles to the official teams distance during the Pearl Harbor 24-hour memorial relay run on Dec. 7 at Holt Memorial Stadium.

SOME SAY THINGS HAPPEN IN PAIRS OF THREES

December rings in three holiday celebrations

story by Sgt. Kevin McSwain

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - With all the hype about Christmas each year, other winter holidays can be overlooked.

"There are three main holidays in December this year; Christmas, Hanukkah, and Hajj," said Chaplain (Capt.) Michael Stephan, 49th Movement Control Battalion chaplain. "Each one of these holidays will be celebrated in the month of December but each celebration has its own meaning."

Stephan said that each holiday has a specific day that it is known for, and each religion has a preparation period before that day arrives.

"Christmas, celebrated on Dec. 25, actually begins its celebration during advent," he said. "Advent is the Christian time of preparation for observing the birth of Jesus Christ."

Stephan said advent begins on the Sunday nearest Nov. 30 and is the beginning of the Christian worship year.

The season continues through Dec. 24 and is observed with the lighting of advent candles, the display of wreaths, and special ceremonies, he said.

In addition to Christmas, the Jewish holiday Hanukkah is observed in December.

"Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, commemorates the Maccabean recapture and rededication of the Jerusalem Temple," Stephan said. "The celebration, which lasts eight days, is celebrated with special readings and songs focused on liberty and freedom."



Chief Warrant Officer Brian Bachus, HHC 36 CAB, demonstrates the proper wear of a Santa hat and gold garland.

Stephan said during this time, the eight-candle Menorah is lit in remembrance of the eight days the lamps burned during the recapture of the Jerusalem temple. Due to the Jewish lunar



The MWR East Recreation facility staff decorate the main lobby with presents, Santas and trees.

calendar, the celebration takes place on different dates in December.

For the Islamic religion, the prominent holiday in December is Hajj.

"Hajj, a sacred three-day pilgrimage to Mecca, is one of the most important rituals in the Islamic faith," he said. "It is one of the Five Pillars of Faith, a Muslim's five central duties. The ritual takes place during Dhul al-Hajjah, the last month of the Islamic lunar calendar."

Stephan said on the third day, after the pilgrims have completed a major part of Hajj, Muslims around the world join in the celebration of Eid al-Adha, "The Festival of Sacrifice."

The time of celebration and the traditions associated with each holiday, come from a significant event in the history of their religion.

"Christians celebrate Christmas to celebrate the birth of Jesus," he said. "The Jewish religion celebrates Hanukkah to remember the miracle of the lamps in which the Jews only had oil enough to burn their candles for one night. But God allowed their lamps to burn for eight days, which helped them defeat their enemy."

"Hajj celebrates a pilgrimage which was

taken by the Prophet, in which he asked God to pardon the sins of pilgrims who stood at Arafat. And also to celebrate the victory of the Prophet Ibrahim over Satan, who was trying to persuade him not to follow God's command to sacrifice his son."

In addition to the major celebrations during the month of December, there are several days that are observed that coincide with the holidays.

Saint Nicholas day, the Christian celebration of the birth of Saint Nicolas, is observed on Dec. 6. Saint Nicolas is the patron saint of children and role model for gift giving.

Waqf al Arafa, an Islamic day of observance during Hajj, is a day in which pilgrims pray for forgiveness and mercy.

Stephan said remembrance of their faith is what these celebrations have in common. Any Soldier that would like to celebrate these or other religious holidays can contact their chaplain.



The 593rd Corps Support Group command group staff, based at Al Asad, take a photograph in front of their group Christmas tree donated by their family support group in Fort Lewis, Wash.



Master Sgt. Patricia Marsano, assigned to the 164th Corps Support Group points to her Christmas decoration on the unit Christmas tree.



Soldiers assigned to the 36th Combat Aviation Brigade take time out of their busy schedules to give their office a little holiday spirit.



Col. Megan Tatu, commander of the 164th Corps Support Group, gives a little holiday smile in front of the unit Christmas tree.