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Desert Voice Magazine

Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

July 18, 2007



***IED training keeps
Soldiers on point***

DV Contents

Page 3

Water conservation ensures post facilities stay operational during summer months.

Page 4

Top Army engineer visits Camp Arifjan, checks progress on new hospital.

Page 8

Navy Customs ensures servicemembers enter and leave AOR safely.

Page 10

Trial recycling program kicks-off in Zone 6 on Camp Arifjan.

On the cover

Soldiers of the 82nd Financial Management Company react to possible hostiles outside Forward Operating Base Dagger, Kuwait, during Convoy Improvised Explosive Device training July 5, 2007. For the full story turn to Page 6.

Photo by Pvt. Christopher Grammer

Contact

Comments, questions or suggestions?
Call the Desert Voice editor at 430-6334.

Water conservation is everyone's responsibility

For thousands of years, fresh water has been considered a precious commodity throughout the Middle East and the world. Kuwait itself was founded when local tribes discovered water and started a settlement. To U.S. forces stationed in Kuwait today,



**Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb
Third Army Commanding General**

water is just as precious a commodity as it was in the past.

We don't often think about these issues in the western world. Access to a reliable water source is the norm. Compared to many other places in the world, we have it pretty good with water shortages being an anomaly although parts of our country and specifically our headquarters in Atlanta are also currently experiencing severe drought. We regularly waste large amounts of water, literally letting gallons go down the drain. That way of thinking must change because, although we seem to have it quite good in Kuwait, part of that goodness is illusory.

U.S. forces are in Kuwait as guests. Each summer, our Kuwaiti host suffers through a countrywide shortage of water, and this year will be no different. It is, therefore, essential to maintaining a great responsible relationship with our Kuwaiti hosts and friends by not wasting water from the time we wake up to the time we go to bed.

Every base in Kuwait has its own water usage challenges and no base has an unlimited amount to use. Those challenges are made more difficult when water is needlessly wasted. Last year, our camps suffered through several bouts of

severe shortage of our water supply that directly affected the health and welfare of our troops. That is why I am taking the time to reiterate the importance of conserving water.

You can start doing your part by following some basic water conservation guidelines:

- turn off the water while brushing your teeth and shaving
- limit your time in the shower and turn the water off when lathering up
- be aware of any water leaks and report them to the facility manager or maintenance for fixing
- set laundry washers to wash at the proper load size and, when possible, use the cost-free post laundry service

We are all in this fight together and we must all work together to keep the resources that are vital to our missions across the spectrum of joint operations. Anything less could significantly impact not only our quality of life, but our overall mission success.

Patton's Own!

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Water conservation protects desert resources

Story and photos by
Pvt. Christopher Grammer
Desert Voice staff writer

As the summer heat looms over Kuwait, the desert floor becomes bone dry and barren. Yet in this desert heat, life continues.

Life forms have adapted to conserve water and stay cool. Human beings, unlike other life forms however, have adapted their surroundings to themselves.

Water is routed through a complex system of pipes underground to homes and places of work. Though water is made more readily available through advanced means, it is not without limit. Water in Kuwait needs to be filtered and purified in a process called desalinization before it is ready for consumption and this process takes time. If water supplies are used up faster than they are produced, then the result is a shortage in supply.

People have become dependent upon a constant supply of water to live comfortably.

Without water it becomes difficult to wash clothes, take showers and brush teeth.

Simple actions can be taken to conserve this resource vital to everyday life throughout the Third Army area of operations.

Simply shutting off the faucet



Simple acts of conservation like turning off the water faucet may add up to save hundreds of gallons of water.

while shaving and brushing your teeth can save two to three gallons of water per minute.

Taking short showers can save five to seven gallons of water per minute. Refraining from excessively flushing the toilet and using it as a trash can save a couple gallons per flush. Another way to conserve water is to use the washing machines only when you have a full load of laundry and using the short cycle setting.

Water is provided by Kuwait to U.S. forces for free as a part of the Defense Cooperative Agreement.

Civilian and military personnel should respect the host nation's water supply by limiting the amount of water consumed on a daily basis to ensure there is enough water for everybody.

"All U.S. military personnel stationed throughout Kuwait should practice water conservation at all times to help ease the burden on our host nation's water supply, ensuring there is water available for everyone's needs," said Capt. Laura Shiplet, deputy director for the Directorate of Public Works.

If there is a leak in a faucet or showerhead report it to the facility manager immediately to reduce the amount of water wasted.

If water is not conserved, laundry facilities can be closed as well as latrines.

The high quality of life enjoyed by civilians and servicemembers in Kuwait can be maintained simply by watching the everyday consumption of water. **A**



Water conservation ensures facilities such as the pool stay operational, especially during summer months.

New hospital under construction on

Story and photos by
Sgt. Jacob A. McDonald
Desert Voice NCOIC

The construction of a 25-bed hospital on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, drew the attention of the new chief of the Army Corps of Engineers during his visit here June 27.

The new facility, will replace the existing fleet hospital currently housed in a temporary structure.

"The reason we are building the new hospital is our existing hospital is a fleet hospital," said Navy Lt. Joe Kascak, health facility planning, project officer. "It is a temporary structure and it has been here well past its expected life cycle. And, our population size here warrants a military facility to support the (servicemembers) here in Kuwait."

While the new hospital is categorized as a 25-bed facility, it has a capacity to treat more than 40 patients in emergency situations.

"This hospital has 21 medical surgical beds and four ICU beds," Kascak said. "It has two full operating rooms. It has one endoscopy procedure room that can also be used as a third operating room. It also has an 11-bed ER.

"We can expand up to and beyond 44 beds in a crisis or emergency, provided the staffing is available to take care of that many casualties," Kascak continued.

In addition to having more beds available for patients, the new 3,200 square meter facility will have more overall space to treat patients.

"Its functionality is the same (as the existing facility). The space will be larger, because we used our space planning criteria. That allowed us to build our exam rooms, our operating rooms and things of that nature to specific sizes. We will have more space to take care of the patients."

Other features of the new facility include X-ray, CT Scan, a capacity for



Mansur H. Cheema, resident engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kuwait Area Office, right, explains a detail to Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, Chief of Engineers and commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during his visit.

up to 72 hours of emergency power and modern systems to keep the air in the facility clean.

"We plan on having X-ray and CT Scan capabilities to perform operations and diagnoses," Kascak said. "We have a laboratory to check for diseases and such, and of course we have a pharmacy and an internal medicine clinic.

"The cleanliness will be a lot better," Kascak said. "We will be able to keep the sand out. We will have breezeways and modern HVAC. We also have the vestibules that will help with temperature control. With the building's systems, the air conditioning units and things of that nature our maintenance load will go way down. That will free us up to help do more

patient care activities rather than worrying about keeping our building or our tents operable.

"What I am really happy with, is they are building more towards our (handbook to specify the physical environment inside a healthcare facility)," Kascak continued. "That includes building systems like our air conditioning, our temperature controls and our emergency power. We have 15 hours current emergency power; we are going to jump up to 72 hours without refueling our generators. That is a big plus. If something goes down and they can't get fuel in for a few days we will still be able to deliver (full) health care for 72 hours."

Maj. Timothy Vail, U.S. Army

Arifjan, top Army engineer pays visit



ogram of a new 25-bed hospital being built on Arifjan to Lt. visit here June 27. Van Antwerp visited several construction

Corps of Engineers, construction agent in charge of the project, said the new fixed facility will have fewer complications due to weather and the harsh conditions here and will be more energy efficient.

"It needed to match the construction on Arifjan and it needed to be a quick build," Vail said. The location on Arifjan was picked carefully. It had to meet specific guidelines before construction could begin. In order to meet the building requirements, the new facility will be connected to the existing Troop Medical Clinic and Dental Clinic.

"We decided to connect it to the TMC and the Dental Clinic to make one large medical complex," Vail said.



Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp presents a coin to Navy Lt. Joe Kascak, health facility planning project officer, June 27.

Construction of the new facility began in mid June and is scheduled to be completed by mid December. It is scheduled to open Dec. 30.

"They are working under a tight timeline for completion," Vail said. "Construction began June 18 and they have 180 days to complete it. They have come up with a well-synchronized joint occupancy plan where the hospital will begin moving in while some of the construction is still going on in order to open and begin treating patients on time."

During his visit here Lt. Gen. Rob-

ert Van Antwerp, Chief of Engineers and Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was impressed with the teamwork shown between the Army, Navy and civilian construction company and other contractors in order to get the hospital completed on time.

"This is a priority for us," Van Antwerp said. "There is a tremendous amount of effort here. This is challenging for the contractors. It is great to see the partnering when personnel are changing out every six months. It is the combination of things." 



Navy Capt. Daniel Hansen, chief of professional services, explains some of the functions and facilities in the current expeditionary hospital to Van Antwerp.

FOB Dagger hosts C-IED training

82nd Finance Soldiers train to stay vigilant, stay alive

*Story and photos by
Pvt. Christopher Grammer
Desert Voice staff writer*

Clouds of dust are kicked up as a long string of humvees roll down the long desert road. A smoke grenade sets off with a quick bang, Vehicle One has been hit.

"It woke a lot of people up to the threats of IEDs," said Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Murdorf, a finance specialist with

Charlie Detachment, 126th Finance Company.

Soldiers of the 82nd Financial Management Company are performing Convoy Improvised Explosive Device training outside Forward Operating Base Dagger before heading to Iraq.

The IED range was operated and run by Third Army/U.S. Army Central personnel. It is one of the ranges offered in the Third Army's area of operation for units bound for Iraq.

During the training, smoke grenades simulating IEDs are strewn along a stretch of road which the convoy must navigate utilizing convoy movement tactics to minimize damage while accomplishing the mission.

The course is broken down into five checkpoints in which various situations are presented to challenge the Soldiers to react to dangers they may face in the war zone. Before the training begins the units participating are given intelligence about the area and its history, giving the unit an idea of what to expect on the course and a chance to form a plan of action.

Keeping civilian traffic out of the convoy is a problem they may face in Iraq and it is also the first challenge they face as a part of the training. Civilian vehicles trying to enter the convoy must be prevented from doing such.

The next checkpoint is at an overpass that has been rigged with an IED in the middle of the two-way highway. The idea of this challenge is for the convoy to react to the first IED, if they spot it, by backing off into another IED that lays in wait behind them. In the second story of a building nearby are a camera and a trigger for the device.

Third are a series of IEDs made from artillery simulators that the convoy must avoid to move on and continue the mission. The fourth check point has multiple IEDs together in a daisy chain and cars blocking the road to channel the convoy where the insurgents would want them to go.

At the fifth and final checkpoint the convoy is informed of a car wreck blocking the road in front of them, forcing them to communicate with the Iraqi police to work out the situation and get around the road block.



A Soldier from the 82nd Financial Management Company participates in CIED training outside of FOB Dagger, Kuwait, July 5. The smoke simulates the marking of a landing zone for medical evacuation of injured Soldiers.



Spc. Louis Johnson, a finance specialist with 126th Finance, C Det., mans the turret gun atop a humvee during Convoy Improvised Explosive Device training outside FOB Dagger, Kuwait, July 5.

The instructors monitor radio chatter and observe how the Soldiers perform during the exercise. Afterwards, they get the unit together for an After Action Review.

What sets this training apart from the training available in the United States is its proximity to the real thing.

Soldiers and servicemembers perform the training in an atmosphere closer to that of Iraq where the heat is

intense and the people, and customs are unfamiliar, said Spc. Seth Loftin, communications specialist with the 82nd FMC.

“You can train all day in the states but it won’t be anything like Iraq,” Loftin said.

Though the 82nd FMC is made up of Soldiers whose mission is not on the frontlines, that doesn’t mean they are immune to the dangers of the war

zone, Loftin said. Without this training servicemembers may find themselves in a situation they cannot get out of or avoid. Preparation for dangerous situations whether they happen or not can save the lives of war fighters down range.

“Everyone goes on missions and you need to be prepared,” Loftin said. “The training made me more aware of the appearance and placement of IEDs.” 



A convoy moves out of FOB Dagger, Kuwait, for Convoy Improvised Explosive Device training July 5.

Navy customs ensures service



(Above) Petty Officer 2nd Class Ryan Biggs, with Coalition Joint Task Force in Afghanistan, cleans his weapon at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, before going home.

(Right) Petty Officer 1st Class William Jefferson Davis, the leading petty officer of Alpha Company, Navy Customs Battalion Sierra, holds up the shell to a 5.56 mm NATO round found in a vehicle at the wash racks on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

One weapon...



(Above) A Soldier cleans his weapon at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

(Right) Petty Officer 3rd Class William Jefferson Davis, the leading petty officer of Alpha Company Navy Customs Battalion Sierra, holds up the shell to a 5.56 mm NATO round found in a vehicle at the wash racks on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Story and photos by
Pvt. Christopher T. Grammer
Desert Voice staff writer

The leading petty officer with Navy Customs Battalion Sierra holds up the shell to a 5.56 mm NATO round found in a vehicle during a precleaning inspection.

Removal of contraband and prevention of its outflow to the United States is the mission of Navy Customs.

"The main mission is to keep anything from harming the United States," said Petty Officer 1st Class William Jefferson Davis, leading petty officer with Alpha Company, Navy Customs Battalion Sierra.

The customs battalion inspects vehicles and equipment that have been in theater since the liberation of Iraq in 2003. The customs battalion also inspect servicemembers' bags as they redeploy or go home on leave.

Vehicles come down to the Third

Army area of operations from Iraq and Afghanistan and are inspected, cleaned and then stored in an area called the sterile lot. The vehicles are guarded to maintain sterility until ready to be taken to their next destination.

Vehicles are checked for contraband and cleaned at wash racks where every inch of the vehicle is hosed down to remove dirt and bacteria that may damage the agricultural community at its ultimate destination.

Servicemembers get home safely



...s the undercarriage of a humvee at the wash racks on Camp

d Class Gerald Gammad, a wash racks inspector with Alpha
s Battalion Sierra, points out a spot to be cleaned at the wash
Kuwait.



...one vehicle at a time



Items found in vehicles coming from Iraq are mainly shells to rounds fired from M-16s or M-4s, but in some instances M-9s stashed by Soldiers for quick access may be found in the vehicle as well as live rounds. Keeping these items from falling into the wrong hands can prevent someone from hurting themselves or others, said Davis.

The thing found most in the vehicles however is dirt. Lots and lots of dirt, Davis said.

When Soldiers return home for leave or at the end of their tour their bags are checked for contraband. Alcohol, explosives, pornography and weapons are among the main items checked for during baggage

inspection, however the items confiscated the most are knives and lighters. Sometimes Soldiers forget to put their Gerber in their checked baggage or dispose of lighters beforehand, said Lt. Cmdr. Jimmy Hahm, battalion operations officer, Navy Customs Battalion Sierra.

Some items have to meet certain criteria to pass inspection such as war trophies and hookah pipes.

Containers that hold military equipment are inspected before they are sent back to the unit's home station or wherever they are headed.

The approximately 370 Navy customs personnel screen about 600-1,000 civilians and servicemembers every day, Hahm said. Divided into

companies Alpha through Echo, Navy customs is spread throughout Kuwait and parts of Iraq.

Alpha company, operating at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, specializes in vehicle and baggage inspections while Bravo through Echo companies tends to specialize in one or the other.

"I love it," said Davis about working with Navy customs. "It's a great job."

Defending the United States by preventing contraband and hazardous materials from entering its borders is the contribution of Navy Customs Battalion Sierra to the efforts of brave American and coalition servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan. 

Third Army/U.S. Army Central recycles for future



Courtesy photo

Soldiers sort through recyclable bottles before discarding them in a specially marked recycling container.

Story by
Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer

During the summer months, approximately 800,000 bottles of water are supplied to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. While that quenches the thirst of the military and civilian personnel at this desert installation, it also means all that solid waste. What happens to those bottles? They end up in a Kuwaiti landfill.

In late June, Col. Kenneth Beard, Commander for Zone 6, 113th Field Artillery, suggested to members of Combat Support Associates, Ltd., Environmental Health and Safety Directorate, Pollution Prevention Branch, the designated manager of the Quality Recycling Program for the Area Support Group-Kuwait area of responsibility, to use Zone 6 as a partner to kick off a six-month trial plastic water bottle recycling pilot-program on Camp Arifjan.

The project is designed to peak interest in recycling, said Clara Lewis, a pollution prevention environmental engineer with ASG-Kuwait. She said the trial program was set up at Camp Arifjan to work out the logistical kinks in the system before applying the program at the other bases in Kuwait.

Col. John Alexander, ASG-Kuwait commander, approved the six-month trial as a good-faith obligation to clean up the areas around Camp Arifjan.

"When he signs off on policy here, he has made a mandate for all service personnel, anyone in his area of responsibility, to recycle and minimize waste," Lewis said.

When ASG-Kuwait announced the recycling program, phone numbers were provided for people to participate. Lewis said the response was overwhelming.

"Our phones were ringing off the hook," Lewis said. "Units and sections, both military and civilian, were

calling requesting to participate. We even got people that kept us on the line that wanted to do something individually."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Reatha Candler, Forward Deployed Preventive Medical Unit South, was one of those individuals. Candler said she was familiar with recycling and it was something she was interested in from the start. The petty officer explained to Lewis and her staff that she had success with recycling while in Preventive Medicine Treatment School in San Diego, Calif. She separated recyclables from the trash and made money off of the recycled material. Candler said she once made over \$300 for her PMT class with recycling. The petty officer told Lewis that she'd do anything to help out with the recycling project.

"Candler told us 'if you want me to collect or hand out flyers, I'm willing to do that and I'm willing to take the lead in getting my unit to help as

well,” Lewis said. “It would be a lot harder on us if we did not have that type of support.”

Candler said her views toward recycling did not change once she landed in Kuwait.

“I’d already been [recycling] prior to coming here so I just took notice of things and I thought that it should continue,” she said. “I didn’t want to throw away the bottles and newspapers in just the trash receptacles.”

Once the phone call was made, Candler’s recycling plan was put into motion.

“I called them up and Mr. Vick Loan answered my call and brought out two containers,” Candler said.

So far, the program has met with success. The orange collection bins are visible throughout Zone 6 and Lewis said the leadership has taken to the idea of cleaning up through recycling.

“We have this strong partner in the Zone 6 command cell with Col. Beard and Chief [Harold] Layton,” Lewis said. “With their leadership, they are also bringing another 5,000 or so people under the umbrella to make sure that at least they know from the top down that we are going to recycle.”

Lewis said the program has

many benefits – the first being a clean environment. When the bottles stay in the trash, they are taken directly to a Kuwaiti landfill.

This will have a negative effect in that the U.S. military could be labeled a huge contributor of non-degradable plastics. This could add up in the long run because the Army will have to pay to have the area cleaned up once the U.S. military decides to leave Kuwait. The program would ensure that the plastic bottles are taken out of the main trash stream.

While the orange bins are currently only on Arifjan, Lewis offered some suggestions for those waiting for the bins to be made available in the other camps.

“To get staff in the mode of recycling, just set up a box or a trash can and label it plastic water bottles so when (the bins) do come, they’re already taking them out of main waste stream and setting them aside,” Lewis said. “Even if you don’t have a bin, we’ll come and pick those up. You got two bags, three bags – holler and we’ll pick them up.”

To put your name on the ‘Orange Star List’ to order a collection bin, call C.W. Lewis at 707-0257. **A**



Hometown Hero

Sgt. 1st Class Carla Hodge
222nd Transportation Co.

Hodge, a native of Tuscon, Ariz., is a line unit platoon sergeant. Hodge explains why she decided to join the military.

“I serve because joining the Army was something I wanted to do since I was a child. The Army has given me a lot of opportunities that would have not have been presented to me. I still serve because of the Soldiers. They keep me motivated.”

Just One Question...

“What is your favorite activity to do during your off time?”



“Talk to my family and get extra sleep.”

Spc. Ellis Myers
El Paso, Texas
Patriot crewmember
3rd Bn., 43rd Air Defense Artillery



“I don’t get much off time. Off time is used for regrouping, resting up and getting ready for the next time.”

Lance Cpl. Shiloh Morrison
San Angelo, California
Flightline worker
COC 115



“I watch movies and go to country night.”

Petty Officer 2nd Class Leigh Johnson
Janesville, Wisconsin
Construction mechanic
Naval Mobile Construction Battalion



“I usually go to the gym. I study professional development guides.”

Master Sgt. Limweshe Wright
Detroit, Michigan
Vehicle maintenance superintendent
386th ELRS



“I like to play music.”

Pfc. James Lurati
San Antonio, Texas
All-wheel vehicle mechanic
109th Transportation Company

What's happening around Kuwait ...



A mushroom cloud rises from the Kuwaiti sands during a controlled unexploded ordnance demolition conducted by 221st EOD Detachment at Udairi Range, July 6. See the next issue of the Desert Voice for the full story.

Photo by Pvt. Christopher Grammer