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Desert Voice Magazine

Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

August 8, 2007



***Divers raze
sunken ship***

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Command sergeant major wears same combat patch from Vietnam.

On the cover

Sergeant John Geffert conducts checks on his Superlite 37 Dive Helmet as Staff Sgt. Bradley Petersen operates the Diver's Air Control Console. For the full story, turn to page 6.

Photo by 1st Sgt. Rodney Heikkinen

Contact us

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No-go for attitudes, egos

As Third Army/U.S. Army Central Command Sergeant Major, it's my responsibility to live up to that position every day.

If I cop a bad attitude or let my ego get in front of me, I'm not going to be able to perform in a manner that's good for my Soldiers. I have

to be willing to take advice or criticism from people of all

ranks, and if I can keep a positive attitude and an open mind about that, it makes me a better person and leader.

If I start to think that because I'm the command sergeant major, people shouldn't be telling me what to do or how I should act, then I'm putting myself in a corner and I'm making myself ineffective. That's not good for all the people who are counting on me.

We all allow our attitudes and egos to get in the way sometimes. They cloud our judgment and affect how we see certain situations. Sometimes when you've been working six or seven days a week for months on end, you wake up in a bad mood. It happens. It's just human nature. However, as professional, mature people, we have to put our personal feelings aside and work together. We can all continue to improve on this area.

It's important to have a positive attitude. If you can't have a positive attitude then you need to keep your attitude away from other people. A negative attitude will cause you to not like anything, and that affects other people. Don't be selfish and influence other people to think everything is terrible just because you think that way.

Attitudes also get in the way of how we perceive other people in terms of what they're trying to accomplish. For example,



Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe
Third Army Command Sergeant Major

if you have a bad attitude and a peer, subordinate, or a superior is trying to point out a mistake to you and you wind up blowing it out of proportion, that's the wrong answer.

You should realize they're just trying to help you be successful because they care about you instead of taking it the wrong way.

Another thing all of us have to remember is to not allow our attitude to affect us when a subordinate is trying to help us out. If we give them negative feedback for that, we're shutting them down. We're actually hurting ourselves by not empowering our subordinates to do their jobs.

Egos also affect attitudes. First off, and I want to make this very clear, none of us are owed anything by anyone because we're here. Certainly, none of our fellow uniformed servicemembers owe us anything.

The American people treat us like heroes and I sincerely appreciate that, but we're all volunteers. We owe our country an obligation to do our duty in a professional, effective, mature manner and at the same time, work with our leaders, bosses, peers and subordinates in a positive way.

I want everyone to have the opportunity to be successful, to work in a positive environment, and to get the job done. I want us to pull together as a team. For those of you who do have a positive attitude and are out there doing the right thing and taking care of each other, thank you very much for that.

You're exactly the kind of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who make my life better, and cause me to want to stay in the service and continue to serve our country.
- PATTON'S OWN!

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Taking precautions to beat the heat



Courtesy photo

Servicemembers are urged to hydrate often during the intense summer heat.

**Story by
Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer**

Sergeant 1st Class Michael Sandknop, 640th Sustainment Brigade, knew something was wrong with his body. The then 20-year old private first class was working in the high desert of California when his body shut down. Sandknop had suffered his first heat injury.

"I felt like I was wrapped in hot towels," Sandknop said. "I couldn't seem to cool down."

As the summer temperatures continue to rise, averaging 114 during the summer months, the chances of heat-related injuries rise as well. Heat injuries – heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke – are the greatest single medical threat to Soldiers in the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of operations during the summer months.

A heat injury usually occurs when bodily fluids are lost through sweating. An injury means service members are losing fluids faster than they can be replenished by drinking water. Since May, there have been 57 heat-related injuries in Kuwait. Of those 57 cases, 25 involved heat exhaustion or heat stroke.

"Heat cramps are self explanatory, and the victim knows they are having them," said Lt. Cmdr. Timothy O'Hara, the officer in charge, Forward Deployed

Preventative Medicine Unit-South. "Heat exhaustion occurs as the body is unable to eliminate heat as fast as it is being produced. Heat stroke can result in death or permanent brain injury. This occurs with a rapid rise in body temperature to 105 or above and is a medical emergency. It can occur without having heat exhaustion or other forms of heat illness."

Heat cramps are painful spasms and muscular twitches. They can occur due to heavy exertion. The cramps usually involve the muscles of the abdomen and the legs. It is generally thought that the loss of water and salt from heavy sweating causes the cramps.

"Heat cramps are common," O'Hara said. "However, cramps do not necessarily occur during exercise, but may occur in the evening at rest."

Heat exhaustion is the most common heat related injury affecting service members. O'Hara said the symptoms of heat exhaustion include dizziness, nausea, headache, increased pulse, sometimes cool clammy skin and disorientation. The main difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke, he said, is that there is neurological involvement, typically confusion that can lead to loss of consciousness, seizures, and severe disorientation.

"When heat stroke is suspected, the clock is ticking," O'Hara said. "That person needs to get to a medical facility immediately."

Sandknop said when he had his first heat injury in 1984, the Army did not know how to deal with it. Over time, treatment for heat injuries has gotten better because there is more information on them and what it can do to the body.

"Now, (The Army) gives a lot more training on how to prevent (heat injuries) from happening in the first place," Sandknop said. "Having been a heat casualty multiple times, I know the dangers of pushing too hard. My body has to learn or acclimate before I can function well. If I ignore that I can end back up in the hospital."

One tool that is used to assist unit commanders in assessing potential

heat stress is the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature. The WBGT is used to measure heat, wind and humidity. Using this index, the FDPMU determines the heat category and posts it on the web for all to see.

O'Hara said the best way to beat the heat is acclimation, fluid management, carbohydrates, electrolytes and adequate rest. Heat cramps can be treated with stretching as well as oral or IV fluids.

For heat exhaustion or heat stroke, the goal is to get the patient out of the heat, begin cooling and rehydration efforts and get them to a medical facility as quickly as possible.

"A person can progress to heat stroke rather quickly if not managed properly and it may be difficult for non-medical personnel to tell the difference between a simple case of heat syncope and the altered mental status of someone with early heat exhaustion or heat stroke," O'Hara said.

Sandknop said it usually takes him a day or two to fully recover from an attack. During that time, the body is reabsorbing all the fluids it can, but that's not all it needs.

"I know I have to eat," Sandknop said. "Often when I don't feel like eating I'll start with a salad, Jell-O or ice cream to cool off. Proteins are important too. Things like meats, nuts and eggs. I tend to skip the carbs when it's hot."

Another key, Sandknop said, is sleep.

"When I push myself to get things done and get only 3 to 4 hours sleep, my body isn't rested enough, and I can tell that my body is not able to regulate my internal temperature and I can go into cramps or exhaustion."

Sandknop tells his story to the Soldiers in his unit. He tells them it's better to be prepared than become the latest victim of heat injury.

"I tell them to avoid going into overheating in the first place," he said. "If they don't, they could end up a heat casualty, end up at the hospital and perhaps two days on quarters. So the best plan is never becoming a heat casualty in the first place." 

To protect and serve

Military police provide force protection backbone for Camp Arifjan

*Story and photos by
Spc. Giancarlo Casem
Desert Voice editor*

Force protection measures at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, require a lot of agencies working together as a team to ensure servicemembers stay safe and mission ready.

Servicemembers at Camp Arifjan are protected and served by the military police stationed here. Their presence contributes to the Third Army/U.S. Army Central's mission by protecting vital assets including human lives.

"We help make Camp Arifjan more safe and livable for all branches," said Petty Officer 1st Class Jose Pantoja, operations chief at the military police station at Camp Arifjan.

Military police officers ensure that servicemembers, Department of Defense civilians and contractors all stay safe and secure. This element of force protection helps keep casualties and

down-time to a minimum by having safety measures in place such as speed limits, said Master Chief Petty Officer Mark Seifert, senior enlisted officer at the station.

"It's a team effort," Seifert said. "Everyone's role is key."

Military police officers patrol Camp Arifjan as well as other camps in the Kuwait area of operations. These patrols make sure equipment and personnel are safe and secure. Any incident or crime that spurs investigations could cause a delay in Camp Arifjan's logistical missions, Seifert said.

"If something happens down here, there will be a lot more delay," he said. "If the mission down here slows down, it would delay the supplies getting to our troops up north."

The MPs here in Kuwait are the first responders to traffic accidents off post involving military or government personnel. Aside from that, they also provide other services on post. They enforce speed limits and seat belt

regulations, Pantoja said.

The force protection mission provides servicemembers working and living on-post security.

"It makes us feel good," said Senior Chief Joseph Nace, the master arms senior chief. "It feels good that we can provide them safety."

Although the work load here is considerably less compared to installations back in the U.S., the officers here do not get complacent. They have some sort of refresher training every day, Nace said.

Pantoja said one of the biggest changes from the MP mission back in the U.S. is the amount of traffic. That could also add to drivers' complacency when it comes to driving under the speed limit.

"That usually happens with units that are in-transit," Seifert said. "We have to consistently remind units to wear seat belts and follow the speed limits."

Seifert said the MPs and the Provost



Petty Officer 1st Class Brenda Walton, Camp Arifjan Military Police, operates the radar gun to check a vehicle's speed to make sure it is traveling under the speed limit. Upholding the speed limit is just one of the MPs' missions here.



Petty Officer 1st Class Jose Pantoja, Camp Arifjan Military Police, cleans his 9 mm pistol. MPs must ensure they are proficient in their arms and confident in their equipment to properly protect and serve Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Marshal's Office provide training and briefings for leaders and senior personnel to keep their troops safe. Seifert said that speed limits and seat belt rules are enforced for everyone's safety.

The MPs work closely with Combat Supports Associates contractors to provide physical security around Kuwait.

"It's because of them that we can sleep at night," Seifert said. "They are very important to us. Having them here takes the strain out of the military to provide personnel."

With more MPs being able to provide patrols and security inside the installation, the MPs can do the best possible job of ensuring servicemembers, contractors and equipment are safe.

"People know we are being proactive, when they see us roll up, they know the MPs will take care of business," Pantoja said. "People do appreciate us here, it gives them a sense of security."

Editor's note: This is the second in a three-part series about the emergency services in Kuwait. **A**



Camp Arifjan Military Police officers fold the American Flag at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Raising and lowering the flag is one of the MPs' duties.

7th Engineer Dive Team blasting their way into Kuwaiti hearts



Photo by Sgt. John Luchak

(Above) Specialist Martin Lott and Sgt. Kane Tomlin enjoy the sunset before a meal with the Kuwait Naval Force onboard the Kuwaiti ship "Al-Dorrah". In the foreground three demolition nets are prepped for the next day's operations.



(Left) Sergeant 1st Class Christopher D. Green, Sgt. Nathan A. Haney, and a Kuwaiti Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician make final preparations for casting off from the U.S. Army boat "Buena Vista." Two 15-man Zodiac boats are lashed together side by side to accommodate the width and weight of the charges.

Story by
Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer
Desert Voice staff writer

They raise sunken ships, clear navigational hazards, conduct hydrographic surveys and perform numerous repairs, and inspections on vessels from the Army, Navy and Coast Guard. As long as it's in the water or near it, the 7th Engineer Dive Team knows how to fix it or get it out of the way.

A tugboat, being used for target practice by fighter pilots off the coast of Faylakah Island in the Persian Gulf, sunk in shallow waters. The smokestacks of the vessel protruded from the water and presented a risk to ships sailing through that area.

To dispose of this hazard the 7th EDT made a net made from more than 5,000 pounds of C-4. The plan

was to cover the sunken vessel with the net of explosives and blast it down in size. The hazard protruded about seven meters from the ocean floor before the blast. After the detonation of the C-4 net it was cut down to about a third of a meter. The Soldiers of the 7th EDT turned the potential navigational hazard into nothing more than a bump on the seafloor.

During the operation, the 7th EDT worked alongside Kuwaiti divers of Task Group 74 and Explosive Ordnance Disposal technicians, showing them new equipment and instructing them on how the charges were set up.

For all their work on eliminating the hazard, the 7th EDT was awarded the Kuwait Special Diving Badge on July 31 during an award ceremony at Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

Their hard work in planning and executing the operation fostered good

relations with the Kuwait Naval Force and ensured the safety of ships that would travel that part of the Persian Gulf.

After a few words from Bader and Lt. Col. Rashid Al- Abdoulla, the commander of Task Group 74, the Soldiers of the 7th EDT were presented with their awards. One by one they received the badge and were given gifts by Al- Abdoulla in appreciation for their efforts on behalf of the Kuwait Naval Force.

"It's an honor," Capt. Dan Curtin, commander of the 7th EDT, said on receiving the award. "We deployed here to work shoulder to shoulder with the Kuwaitis and have made some good friends along the way. This award is great confirmation to us that our efforts have been successful in our mission to support the country of Kuwait." 



Sergeant Adam Peterson salutes Lt. Col. Rashid Al- Abdoulla before being presented with the Kuwait Special Dive Badge at an award ceremony July 31.

Background photo by 1st Sgt. Rodney Heikkinen

AVCRAD gets BL



A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter takes off in Kuwait. Members of AVCRAD, July 13. The pilot and crew are from the 158th Aviation, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, and all are deployed as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 158th is based out of Balad, Iraq.

Specialist Alan Palancle, of Hawaii, works on his UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter July 13, in Kuwait. Palancle is from D Co., 5th Bn., 158th Aviation, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade based out of Balad, Iraq. Palancle deployed as part of Third Army/U.S. Army Central in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

**Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Michele R. Hammonds
1st TSC Public Affairs**

As rows of helicopters lined the port at Camp Patriot, Kuwait, crews scurried about with tools and parts in a continuous effort to maintain the vital aircraft, July 13.

Helicopter mechanics from the Aviation Classification and Repair Activity Depot unfolded and reassembled the blades of UH-60

Blackhawk and CH-47 Chinook helicopters as well as other reassembly and maintenance checks. The pilots then did inspections and other checks prior to flying the aircraft to Camp Buehring's Udairi airfield in Kuwait.

"We have a deploying unit we are trying to assist with the reassembling of their aircraft. Getting them safely to Udairi (range) is top priority," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Brenchick, noncommissioned officer

in charge of AVCRAD. "I have got aircraft sitting and (getting ready) to launch."

Soldiers assigned to AVCRAD and the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade are in Kuwait as part of Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

As Soldiers finished assembling the helicopter blades and other maintenance, they stood in the shade drinking water to stay hydrated, a brief respite from the 128 degree heat. Every 10 minutes throughout the day, a Soldier drove onto the flight line in a golf cart to distribute cold, bottled water to mechanics and pilots still working on the helicopters.

Blackhawks ready to fly



after it was off-loaded and reassembled by members of the 158th Aviation Regiment, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, Third Army/U.S. Army Central in support of operations in Balad, Iraq.

"I have not had any heat casualties or other physical injuries, and it's only about 125 degrees in the shade," said Brenchick with a smile as sweat poured off his face. "Things are going good. It's a little warm, but it's going good. I see the smiling faces of the troops and morale is good. Good morale means good maintenance."

"We are here to support units that are transitioning through the port," said Staff Sgt. Glenn Cartwright, Blackhawk mechanic crew chief assigned to AVCRAD. "We reinstalled antennas, and we assist the units with whatever they need to help



Spc. Alan Palancle and Pfc. Matthew Kearn, of Show Low, Ariz., work on their Blackhawk helicopter, nicknamed "Dr. Beat Down," through the 128 degree heat July 13 in Kuwait. Both are assigned to D Co., 5th Bn., 158th Aviation, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade based in Balad, Iraq.

them get up north."

Cartwright had spare parts on hand as he and Sgt. Alex Desha worked on a Chinook helicopter. Desha stood on top of the Chinook and pressure tested its seals.

"We off-loaded helicopters, went through the checks, and hung blades to make sure the helicopter is ready for them to deploy," Desha said.

Pfc. Brandon Sorrell, AVCRAD

helicopter mechanic, put his skills to work as he did general maintenance and replaced parts on some of the helicopters.

He said working through the heat was worth it to get the helicopters operational and ready for the mission up north.

"I check to see if there is anything broken and I fix it," Sorrell said. "I love my job." **A**

Vietnam vet still wears same patch

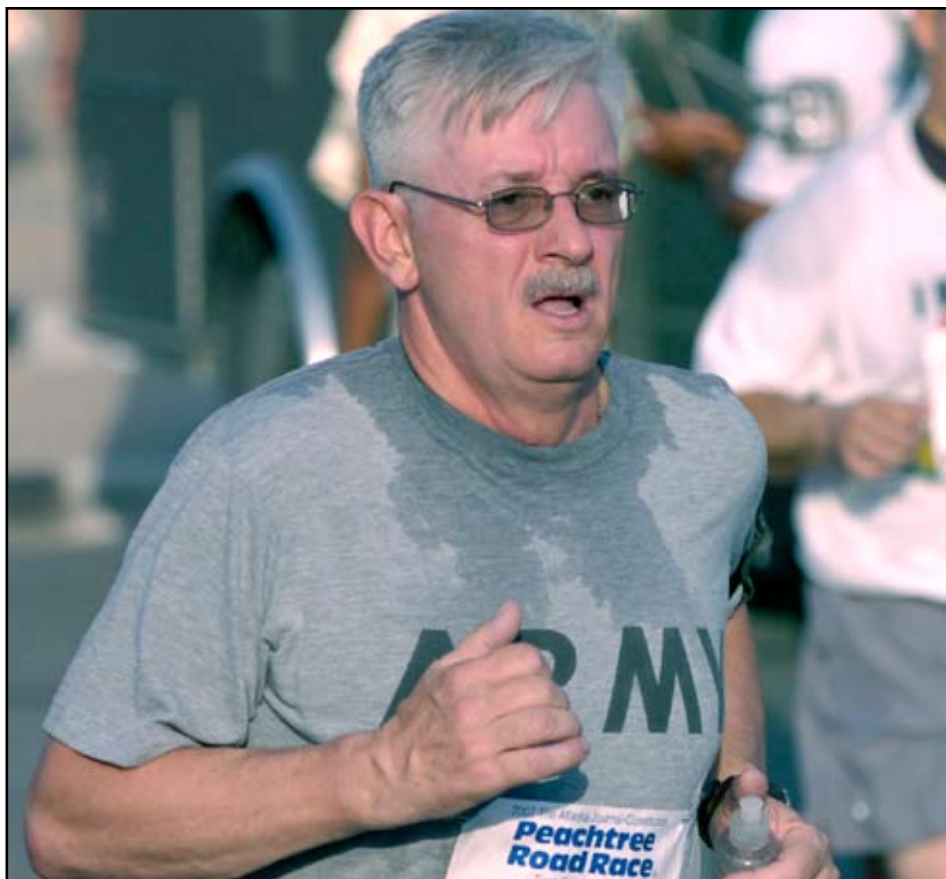


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Tuttle

Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Donohue takes part in the Peachtree Road Race held in Kuwait July 4. Hundreds of military, government and contract civilian employees participated in the Peachtree race. Donohue is deployed to Kuwait as part of the 1st TSC, Third Army/U.S. Army Central, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

**Story by
Master Sgt. Michele Hammonds
1st TSC Public Affairs**

When a young Private Thomas Donohue served in the Republic of Vietnam in 1970, he wore the original 1st Corps Support Command patch. Fast forward more than 37 years later, the now command sergeant major wears the same patch at his current assignment in Kuwait.

The old 1st COSCOM, transformed into 1st Sustainment Command, (Theater) in 2006.

"Well, it surprises me that I have been with the service that long and that after all that time, it looks like I will close out my years of service with almost the same command that I started with 37 years ago," said Donohue, who is the 475th Quartermaster Group (Petroleum) command sergeant major.

Donohue, 56, a native of Williamsport, Pa., spends a lot of time on the road when he is engaged in reserve affairs. The 475th Quartermaster Group is based in Farrell, Pa. His area of responsibility includes managing troops from quartermaster units in Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania.

"Basically I have moved around and I have 'punched my ticket,' as they say, throughout my career, going from a platoon sergeant to instructor to first sergeant, then finally getting appointed as a CSM in 1996," he said.

Donohue spends his weekends driving from his home to other units, some of which are 200 miles away.

Early in his career, Donohue said he wanted to make a difference for Soldiers and not be just a number in a unit. He wanted to go out and see the troops.

"Back home I made it a point to try and get to every [Army Physical Fitness Test]. I always carried my [physical training] uniform, and if they were going to do PT, I would be involved," said Donohue.

The sergeant major also likes to be visible by getting out and spending time with his Soldiers. "When I was an E-4, E-5 and E-6, I never saw the CSM, and I made a promise to myself that my Soldiers were going to know me if I was wearing civilian clothes on the street," he said.

Over the years, Donohue grew up understanding that taking care of Soldiers is a top priority.

"I want to be out there and talk to Soldiers, make them relax and open up and feel free that they can talk to me," said Donohue, who wears dual hats as an Army Reserve Soldier and a military technician/government civilian employee. "When you are in the first sergeant or command sergeant major positions, your time is devoted to your Soldiers. If you have command sections under you, it takes a lot of your own time to do it."

His Soldiers hold Donohue in high regard.

"If there is one thing I can say, and I mean this from the bottom of my heart, it is that Command Sergeant Major Donohue will work day and night to make sure Soldiers and mission are taken care of," said Master Sgt. Crystal Michael, who has worked with Donohue for more than 20 years as a supervisory military technician.

While the years have passed by, Donohue faintly remembers serving with the old COSCOM in 1970.

"I think I was part of the 1st Logistical Command right before I departed Vietnam. They had taken over the logistical command in Vietnam," he said.

Donohue said he will continue to wear the original COSCOM patch as his combat patch in Kuwait where he is part of the Third Army/U.S. Army Central in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. **A**

A change of hands



Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Brigadier Gen. Geoffrey Freeman receives the 335th Signal Command (Provisional) guidon from Maj. Gen. Dennis Lutz, the 335th Signal Commander (Theater) commanding general, Aug. 2 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Freeman assumed the provisional command from Brig. Gen. Stuart Dyer, far right.



Hometown Hero

Sgt. Maj. Golden Giddings
Munitions Branch Sgt. Maj.

The Alexandria, Va., native explains why she decided to join the military.

"I joined because a friend joined up. He got out. I stayed in. I was promoted to Sergeant Major and decided to stay in permanently. The younger Soldiers keep me motivated."

Just One Question...

"What lessons will you take away from this deployment?"



"Be careful in the heat."

Lt. Cmdr. Vince Barthel
Baltimore
Infectious disease physician
Emergency Medical Facility Kuwait



"I've learned it does not matter who you are or where you're from, if we pull together and work as a team, we can accomplish anything."

Spc. Bryan Whittecar
Casa Grande, Ariz.
Truck driver
222nd Transportation Company



"I have a very deep appreciation for family and friends."

1st Lt. Shannon Decker
Fountain, Colo.
Executive officer
424th Medium Truck Detachment



"Always stay alert. Never let your guard down. Do the best in everything you do."

Pvt. Scott Blackstone
Ellsworth, Maine
Truck driver
546th Transportation Company



"Better time management skills. You have so many things coming at you from different directions. I've learned how to handle them."

Sgt. Tobias Kiuntke
Columbus, Neb.
Communications NCOIC
CFLCC HHC

What's happening around Kuwait ...



Arifjan receives CFC check

Rene'e Acosta, president and CEO of Global Impact, presents a check for 3,510 dollars to Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb. The check is for the amount of money donated by servicemembers in the Third Army/U.S. ARCENT area of operations to the Family Support and Youth Program during the calendar year of 2006. More than four million dollars have been donated to the Combined Federal Campaign by servicemembers who are deployed overseas in '06.

Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer

Ultimate Fighting Championship's Justin McCully, in blue, and Tito Ortiz, in red, pose with Marines July 30 at the Zone 6 Community Center at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

UFC fighters meet warriors



Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum

UFC fighter Tito Ortiz, of Huntington Beach, Calif., signs a copy of the Desert Voice magazine during a meet-and-greet session July 30 at the Zone 6 Community Center at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



Secretary of Defense visits troops

Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates gives a brief speech to servicemembers at the Zone 6 dining facility at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Aug. 1.



Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum