

DV

Desert Voice Magazine
Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

August 29, 2007

Locked on



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As Ramadan approaches, U.S. servicemembers and civilians must adhere to laws.

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Father-son duo deploy and work together at Camp Arifjan.

On the cover

A sniper from 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, based out of Germany, looks down the scope of his sniper rifle at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Aug. 21. For the full story turn to page 6.

Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer

Contact us

Comments, questions, suggestions story ideas? Call the Desert Voice editor at 430-6334 or e-mail at desertvoice@arifjan.arcent.army.mil.

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility

As the Commanding General of Third Army, I have many responsibilities, none more important than ensuring Servicemembers are as safe as possible as they carry out their missions. I must also ensure that our Servicemembers work in places that are as safe



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

as they can be. We face many hazards as we go about our daily business, but facing a fire where we live or work is probably one of the most frightening and dangerous.

Recently we've had a rash of tent fires that have cost us over \$500,000 in lost property, to include Soldiers' personal gear. While we have been extremely fortunate these fires have not killed or injured anyone, the impact on our mission has been enormous since we lost essential equipment that must now be replaced. That means time and money which could have been spent on operations must now be spent on replacing what was lost.

Commanders throughout Third Army have an obligation to train and inform personnel in the identification and elimination of fire hazards, enforce fire prevention regulations, and ensure the availability and usage of fire protection facilities and activities. All of us must recognize, support, and emphasize fire prevention at all levels.

Each building and work section is required to have an appointed building coordinator who is responsible for ensuring there is a fire prevention

program in place and that it is being executed. This program is not meant to inconvenience you; it is in place to save your life and safeguard the equipment you need to get your job done!

We need your help to ensure these fire prevention programs are in place and are being

conducted. You can help in several ways.

Participate in scheduled fire drills; don't ignore them or take the attitude they aren't important. Historically, the more we train, the faster and more automatic our responses become. This quick response during a real fire could very well save your life one day. Also, make sure you know where the emergency exits are and how to use available fire extinguishers, and activate fire alarms. If a fire does occur, this knowledge will save precious time, equipment, facilities and maybe lives.

You can also help prevent fires by practicing fire-safe habits. Your fire prevention program personnel can help you identify risks. By doing such things as smoking only in designated smoking areas, not overloading electrical circuits, and turning off electrical appliances when not in use, you greatly reduce the risk of a fire.

We must continually be on guard against fires and work hard at preventing them. By practicing fire prevention, we protect our equipment, and more importantly, our people.

Patton's own!

Volume 29, Issue 13

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DV
Desert Voice
Magazine

Holy month of Ramadan brings joy, happiness, rules

Story by
Spc. Giancarlo Casem
Desert Voice editor

The month of September marks the end of summer and the start of fall, it also marks the beginning of Ramadan.

Ramadan is the holiest month in the Islamic faith. This year, it starts Sep. 12 and ends Oct. 13. During this holy month, there are special laws that all U.S. servicemembers, civilians and contractors must adhere to when they are in the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of responsibility.

This is the time that millions of Muslims believe the Holy Quran was brought to the people, said Talal Malki, Host Nation Relations, cultural awareness trainer.

"Ramadan is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar," Malki said. "In this month we believe the Holy Quran came down to people."

During this month Muslims begin fasting from dawn to sunset. They also visit each other for dinner and give gifts to each other, Malki said.

"The purpose is to have closeness to God and to get a feeling of what the poor and hungry people go through," he said. "It also shows God your willingness to let go of the basic needs of our bodies. By controlling our bodies, it strengthens the mind over body."

During this time, Muslims must adhere to laws and edicts set forth by religious leaders and the Quran,

"(Muslims) cannot eat, drink, smoke chew in public, even servicemen and women outside the U.S. camps," he said. "You have to follow the rules, if you're inside your own home or inside the camp or embassy, then it is no problem."

If a Muslim breaks these rules his fasting maybe voided, said Sgt. Maj. Sabih al Shannari, Kuwait Army liaison non-commissioned officer for Camp Arifjan, ASG-Kuwait.

"You have to be aware about all the rules of Ramadan to do it the correct way," Sabih said. "If you break something, your fast will be spoiled."

Sabih said the only ones exempt from

fasting are the sick, pregnant women, children and those traveling.

"It is an actual breaking of the law in Kuwait," Malki said. "In some countries it is frowned upon, here in Kuwait, it's the law. The sentence is usually one month jail time, or until October 13."

Malki said there are myths about Ramadan that many Americans do not understand.

"They just think Muslims just starve themselves they might even laugh, but I think most Christians can understand, just like when they go through Lent," Malki said. "Most people just don't really know about it that much."

He also said it is rude to offer food to someone who is fasting. Out of respect, servicemembers and civilian contractors should also try to cover up tattoos, Malki

said.

Malki said it is important for Americans in Muslim countries to know about Ramadan.

"It is important first of all because of the law, we don't want them jailed, stopped or shamed in public in Kuwait, the last thing we need is an international incident," he said. "The main reason is out of respect for this culture. The Kuwaiti people have hosted us for many years after their liberation, and most of them are thankful for it. We have to respect the country's people by following their (laws), just like you would expect anyone coming to the U.S. to follow your own country's (laws)."

For Sabih, it all comes down to respect.

"If you respect others," Sabih said. "They will respect you." **A**

I Want You



-Don't Eat
-Don't Drink

-Don't Chew Gum
-Don't Smoke

To Be Considerate

Remember, Ramadan is from Sep. 12 to Oct. 13.
From sunrise to sunset, obey the law!

When you are off-post, including inside vehicles, remember these laws. These laws apply to all U.S. servicemembers, contractors and civilians.

Joint Mobile Training Team trained so others may live



Courtesy photo

Spc. Annetta Radka, Spc. Melanie Norton and Sgt David J. Schwartz (from left to right), all from 557th Med. Co., conduct Vehicle Extraction Training with the Kuwaiti National Guard, June 2007.

Medics wrap-up memorable year

Story by
Sgt. David J. Schwartz
557th Medical Company

To save lives, ambulances and medical personnel are always ready. However, saving a life may require quick and immediate action by the nearest personnel.

This is where the Joint Mobile Training Team comes in.

Assigned to the 557th Medical Company Ground Ambulance, the JMTT began conducting Combat Lifesaver Training at Camp Arifjan in October 2006.

Specialists Melanie Norton and Annetta Radka, 557th Med. Co., began to revamp the CLS program to implement their experiences from their previous combat tours.

"This gave the CLS students a real-world angle on the training," Norton said. "They benefited deeply from the experience."

Norton said that without the support of their chain of command, who

encouraged the team to branch out and train at other locations, their CLS program would not have been as successful.

The team has trained more than 1,100 servicemembers throughout the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of responsibility. They have also trained servicemembers from other nations such as Kuwait and Japan.

"The most special moment of the tour came in July when we graduated our 1000th student," Norton said. "It was one of the more moving experiences of the year."

The JMTT was assigned to Basic First Responder Training at the request of the Kuwait National Guard. During this training, the team learned to overcome barriers and bridge gaps between the U.S. and Kuwaiti medics.

"I realized that the Kuwaiti National Guardsmen required more hands on training and less slide show," Radka said.

As a result, during her own time, she worked to streamline the mate-



Bahraini Soldiers conduct a "Care Under Fire" training exercise during a Casualty Care Information Exchange in Bahrain, Feb.

rial. The Kuwaiti National Guard translated her booklet and published it. The booklet is now used as a First Responder Training Guide by the guardsmen.

Aside from training in Kuwait, the team has also trained servicemembers in other countries in the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of responsibility.

In November, 2006 the JMTT conducted a mission to Bahrain to conduct an information exchange with



Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Spc. Melanie Norton, of Mobile, Ala., explains proper I.V. inserting procedures to servicemembers during a CLS refresher course at Camp Arifjan, Aug. 10.

Courtesy photo

' demonstration during the Tactical Combat Cas-
. 2007.

the Bahraini military. The information exchange culminated in a live demonstration of the Bahraini Combat Medics in action in front of a review stand of senior leaders and delegates. The demonstration included a simulated attack while the medics cared for the wounded under fire.

Even though CLS is an Army specific program, the JMTT opened it up for all branches of service and even department of defense civilians, Norton said. **A**



Photo courtesy

Sgt. David J. Schwartz (right) instructs Staff Sgt. Kennji Tomiyama of the Japan Air Self Defense Force how to properly roll a casualty to conduct patient assessment at Life Support Area, Kuwait, May 2007.



A sniper from 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, aims at target at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 21. The 3-2 SCR used Third Army/U.S. Army Central training facilities in Kuwait before heading to Iraq.



A shooter and a spotter of a three-man sniper team with 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, zero a sniper rifle at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 21.

Snipers zero in on skills

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

The loud crack of rounds heading downrange and directions yelled from spotters to adjust fire were heard as the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment's sniper teams zeroed their weapons at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 21.

The 3-2 SCR used Third Army/U.S. Army Central's various ranges in Kuwait including the Military Operations in Urban Terrain facilities and the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, to prepare for operations in Iraq.

"A sniper can engage precisely and hit precisely," said Command Sgt. Maj. Everett O. Clark, 3rd Sqdn., 2nd SCR command sergeant major.

Armed with an array of sniper rifles

including the 50-caliber Barrett Sniper System the 3-2 SCR's snipers are divided into three man teams including a shooter, spotter and a radio telephone operator. The snipers of the 3-2 SCR train the way they fight, without headgear to weigh down on their necks and mess up their aim, said Staff Sgt. Daniel Schwendeman, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the 3-2 SCR sniper team.

The shooter gets the target in his sites and fires the weapon as the spotter watches downrange for the impact. The spotter observes where the round hit and provides the proper corrections to the shooter. The shooter then adjusts the weapon to compensate for the wind and distance. Using data on previous engagements the snipers are able to switch out firers without re-zeroing the weapons each time another set of hands

touches them, Schwendeman said.

"One shot one kill is a myth," said Schwendeman. "Everybody misses once. The best way to get good at shooting is to find what works for you."

The 3-2 SCR is a very experienced unit with more than 75 percent of its Soldiers having been deployed to Iraq, Clark said.

Snipers are pulled from within an infantry unit as some of the best marksmen among their peers. Once sniper qualified they can count themselves among the best marksman in the Army, able to eliminate an enemy thousands of meters away, Clark said.

Morale is high and the Soldiers of the 3-2 SCR appear trained up and ready to head into Iraq, Clark said.

"I love what I do," Schwendeman said. "I think it's the best job in the Army." 



A sniper from 3rd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, zeros his M-4 at a training facility near Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 21.

To ensure Soldiers get to their destinations

LNOs *step up*

Story and photos by
Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer

Sergeant 1st Class Ramil Las Dulce, a liaison noncommissioned officer with 4th Brigade Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, stepped up to the formation and addressed the group of Soldiers standing before him.

"This week, it is my job to make sure you get the necessary training that will allow you to travel north," he told the formation. "If you do what you're supposed to, you will fly at the end of the week."

The job of an LNO is to train the Soldiers to standard, receive mandatory training, and resolve all combat equipment issues so they are focused and ready to accomplish the mission in Iraq. LNOs help conduct the Third Army/U.S. Army Central's logistical support mission by ensuring servicemembers get up to Iraq

and back. Las Dulce and his LNO team traveled to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 12, to meet up with the latest 4-2 SBCT Soldiers going to Iraq. Without the LNO, the Soldiers are lost, Las Dulce said.

"We coordinate everything the Soldiers will do that week," he said. "We make sure their classes are set. We make sure the ranges are ready for them to go on. We do a lot of behind-the-scenes planning to help the Soldiers in their journey to Iraq."

Las Dulce said if the LNOs weren't on the ground with the Soldiers every step of the way, they would not know what to do or where to go. He said they would be unsure as to what steps they should take to get up north.

"They would take unnecessary classes and take part in ranges that aren't part of the guidelines the brigade has up for them," Las Dulce said. "If that were to happen, it would set them back weeks

getting to their units."

Staff Sergeant Daniel Jolley, LNO for the 25th Infantry Division, said his job is difficult yet rewarding. He said the Soldiers become his top priority until they board the plane and go north.

"You have to devote a lot of time making sure (the Soldiers) are well cared for," Jolley said. "They depend on you to get them through that week of training so they can continue the mission."

Las Dulce said his typical week starts when he picks up the Soldiers at Camp Buehring.

He greets them and then takes them to the Personnel Support Battalion. There, they watch the welcome video and get the first in a series of briefings on the policies here in Kuwait. After the briefings, it's chow and then some much needed down time.

"After the initial briefings, I usually give them 24 hours to recuperate," Las Dulce said. "They've had a long flight and probably haven't slept. This time gives them a chance to acclimate to the climate."

While the group is resting, Las Dulce attends a training meeting to set up his Soldier's training needs. At the meeting, he coordinates the classes that are needed and the various ranges his group will fire on. Las Dulce said it's important to have someone present to confirm the training is set.

"Sometimes, the instructors cancel classes or ranges," he said. "If you don't go to the training meeting you're setting up your Soldiers for failure."

The next two days vary from either the classroom portion of the training or the weapon familiarization. Either way, that training gets done, Las Dulce said.

At that point, the Soldier's mandatory



Sgt. 1st Class Ramil Las Dulce, 4-2 SBCT LNO, tells his Soldiers the itinerary for the next few days during the first day of mandatory training at Camp Buehring.



Soldiers from 4-2 SBCT get familiar with their weapons during a firing exercise at training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Aug. 15.



Soldiers from 4-2 SBCT unload their gear at Camp Buehring Aug. 13. The Soldiers began a week of training in preparation for duty in Iraq.

training is done, Las Dulce said. Next comes movement to the Area Support Group – Kuwait Life Support Area. The Soldiers board buses and are transported to the LSA to go through the Rapid Fielding Initiative.

At RFI, the Soldiers are issued their combat gear if they don't already have it. While the Soldiers go through RFI, Las Dulce said he coordinates flight times and informs the group leaders what time they need to have their Soldiers ready for transport.

"After RFI and flight coordination, my job is done," Las Dulce said. "I turn the

Soldiers over to the officer-in-charge and the noncommissioned officer-in-charge at that point and let them run the show."

However, their job is not over. Redeployment is next.

"Depending on the circumstances, we could have a brigade on their way back to the U.S. in a matter of weeks," Jolley said. "Once one brigade is done, another one comes down from the north and we start the process all over again."

Jolley said he averages between 200 and 300 Soldiers coming through for refresher training before pushing onward into the 25th ID's area of operations.

Las Dulce said he averages around 100 personnel coming through every month. Jolley said he could be pushing through Soldiers up to 30 days from redeploying back to the United States.

Las Dulce said the best part about of his job when he sees the Soldiers board the plane bound for Iraq confident that they are ready to do the job.

"I wish I could be there with them," Las Dulce said. "They're doing a job that is the greatest job in the world. I'm just doing my best to make sure they are taken care of prior to leaving for combat." 

Father, son roll into 1113th family

Story and photos by
Sgt. Eddie Siguenza
1113th Trans. Co. Public Affairs

For nearly two months, Sgt. David Thresher debated with his son about military priorities. Will there be a time when he has to make the choice of being a father first or being a Soldier ... what would he do? It was the same for Pfc. Christopher Thresher; a Soldier or a son, what will come first?

The Threshers, natives of Carl Junction, Mo., are newcomers to the 1113th Transportation Company, a California Army National Guard unit out of San Jose, Calif. The 1113th works under the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) which supports Third Army/U.S. Army Central here in Kuwait.

The Threshers talked about responsibilities in Kuwait, where the father-son duo are stationed.

They discussed possible situations in Iraq, where the truck drivers will drive to and from while on a year-long deployment. Their talk then returned to their home, where the rest of the family resides.

"The bottom line is you've got to be a Soldier first," Sgt. Thresher said. "Some how you always seem to find the right thing to do at the right time, even if it is a tough decision."

"I'll always be worried about him, wondering if he's taking care of himself. He'll be doing the same thing," said Pfc. Thresher. "But he's right. Here, you've got to be a Soldier first. Even though he's my dad, he's still wearing the same uniform as everyone in the U.S. Army."

They will still be father and son, but during this deployment, they will be brothers among their unit's family.

The Threshers were originally assigned to the Missouri Army National Guard. Their journey to Kuwait began last year when Pfc. Thresher ran an Internet search for a deploying transportation company and found one.

In April, Pfc. Thresher received orders which required him to attend Soldier Readiness Processing in preparation for deployment. However, the orders were for



Sgt. David Thresher, left, and Pfc. Christopher Thresher are a father son who, in late July, joined the 1113th Transportation Company's family at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The 1113th TC is California National Guard unit out of San Jose, Calif.

Sgt. Thresher, his father.

But rather than correct the problem, Sgt. Thresher accepted the orders.

"Those orders were for him. But when I got them, I was glad because I wanted to keep him from going," Sgt. Thresher said. "He's my son."

The elder Thresher wanted to deploy instead of his son to keep him safe.

"I'm the one who volunteered, but they picked him, not me," Pfc. Thresher said. "This is something that I wanted to do. Just me. This was my opportunity. I felt like he was stepping into something that's mine. But as time went on, I got used to the fact that he's going."

Both Threshers later contacted their unit commander, who then served up orders for Pfc. Thresher. By mid-July the pair was en route to their mobilization station and finally landed in Kuwait two weeks later.

Within the 1113th TC, the pair is in separate platoons.

The separation heals the healthy competitiveness between father and son. During weapons qualification, Sgt. Thresher shot a near-perfect 38 of 40 targets, but Pfc. Thresher shot 39, earning the family's bragging rights.

"He hasn't let me live that down yet," Sgt. Thresher said.

"I don't think I will," Pfc. Thresher said.

The usual referee of their jousting resides thousands of miles away back in Missouri. Julie Parker, Pfc. Thresher's

mom and Sgt. Thresher's former spouse, is doubly proud of her family serving a notable cause.

"She's twice as worried," said Sgt. Thresher. "She gave me that extra responsibility of making sure Chris gets home safely."

The Threshers see their Kuwait connection as a blessing. Pfc. Thresher's presence does away with a lot of the homesickness. Sgt. Thresher said.

"We'll meet up sometimes, grab a pizza. To me it's more like a dad thing. I'm proud of him," Sgt. Thresher said. "I'm just not going to admit it to his face."

"This is something we can do together for all the times he's been away," Pfc. Thresher said. "Who knows? I may look back and say, 'This is the best time we've ever had together.'"

However, there are disadvantages of having father and son in the same unit.

"I know I'll be worried about him doing some of these things. I'll be wondering if he's taking care of himself out on the road. He'll be doing the same thing," Pfc. Thresher said.

"With me here, he doesn't just have to worry about himself. He has to worry about me," added Sgt. Thresher. "With me going out, I know he'll be asking himself how he can help keep me safe when he's not there."

Whatever outcome, the Threshers confirmed this: here, there or anywhere, the family that plays together stays together, even thousands of miles from home. **A**



DO YOU REALLY
WANT YOUR TRIP
TO END THIS WAY?



OBEY THE RULES
OF THE ROAD!
Please Drive Responsibly

Safety Tip: Speed Kills

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 31% (15,580) of all fatal motor vehicle accidents last year (50,258) in the United States were the result of excessive speed.

20% of the fatalities and injuries in the Global War on Terrorism occur from preventable accidents, and not as a result of enemy action.

Poor decisions and complacency are the root cause of most accidents.

Just One Question...

"If you could make one change to improve the working and living conditions in Kuwait, what would it be?"



"More days off for supply. Right now, we work six days with one day off. Sometimes we work all seven days."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Colleen Miller
Portland, Ore.
Inventory manager
Naval Logistics



"Improve communication between officer and enlisted."

Spc. Giovanni Stanziale
Johnson, R.I.
Signal specialist
385th Signal Company



"More MWR shows here. I missed the comedy show because I was working."

Petty Officer 2nd Class Darryl Smith
Jackson, Mich.
SPOD Security
142nd Security Detachment



All in a day's work

Photo by Master Sgt. Michele Hammonds

Pfc. Sarah Wheatley, a driver with 640th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), checks for oil leaks at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, July 30. She is part of the Third Army/U.S. Army Central in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Why I serve: Petty Officer 1st Class Brian Bolden
Electronics Technician
142nd Security Detachment



The Chicago native explains why he chose to join the military.

"Initially, it was an access for going to school. Maturing in the service, it has become a job. If I don't serve and someone else doesn't serve, who will?"

What's happening around Kuwait ...



Sustaining the mission

Photo by Master Sgt. Michele Hammonds

Spc. Micah Mead, 640th Sustainment Brigade, replaces the ball joint on a Humvee at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, July 30. Meade, of Winton, Calif., is a track vehicle mechanic with from the 640th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) and supports Third Army/U.S. Army Central in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Slackers serve it up

Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Christopher Johnson (right) from Team Slacker, blocks a spike by a player from the Marine Central Command (Fwd) team during the Camp Arifjan unit level volleyball championship tournament, Aug. 22. After the game, the Slackers were crowned champions. Both teams went to play in the ASG-Kuwait tournament Saturday and Sunday where the Slackers finished in second place and the MARCENT took third. First place went to the Air Force team from 'The Rock' at Life Support Area, Kuwait.



USARCENT LABOR DAY FUN RUN



CAMP ARIFJAN

USARCENT will host a 5K fun run / walk on Labor Day, Monday, Sep. 3, starting at 5 a.m. in front of the Zone 1 Gym.

Come out and enjoy some friendly competition.



We will see you there!

KUWAIT