

# DV

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

October 3, 2007



***Courtesy,***  
***United States***  
***Marine Corps***

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Proper wear of the IBA can reduce the risk of personal injury.

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SWO element gets vital weather reports to the command group.

## On the cover

*Cpl. David Ulch, K Company, and a native of Lincoln Park, Mich., and squad leader, keeps a very close eye on one of his Marines during a hand grenade throwing exercise held at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sept. 14, 2007. For the full story, turn to page 6.*

*Photo by Marine Sgt. Ezekiel Kitandwe*

### Contact us

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## Corrections maintain standards, discipline

Though servicemembers rotate in and out of our area of responsibility regularly, the Third Army standards of competence and professionalism remain the same.

One way to maintain these standards is by checking our battle buddies. On-the-spot corrections are an integral tool leaders can use to take care of troops and ensure we're doing the right thing.

As leaders, our authority and credibility hinge on our actions and our ability to empower those under us to take care of the mission. When we correct unacceptable actions, we thereby diffuse potentially hazardous situations and enable troops to get things done in a safe and timely manner.

Corrections can be made in order to enforce operational security, force protection, safety, proper wear and appearance of the military uniform and other aspects of military life. They can range from making sure troops adhere to the speed limit while driving to policing up trash in a common area.

Sometimes it's inconvenient to stop someone to make a correction, but that little bit of inconvenience could save someone's life.

Several seemingly trivial things can sometimes add up and lead to significant accidents. We need to do everything in our power to avoid that. The things we chose to overlook, take shortcuts on or leave uncorrected might seem minor at the time, but we have to look beyond that.

Think about incidents where Soldiers have lost their lives or have been seriously injured. Go back hours or even days before that incident and, in a lot of cases, you'll find a trail of steps or precautions that were missed which led up to it.

The sad part is if someone had cared enough to say, "Hey Soldier, slow down," or "Put on your seatbelt," or "Fasten your chinstrap," or "Put your weapon on safe," maybe some of the people we have buried back home would still be serving alongside us.

One reason leaders and subordinates check and recheck everything is to avoid accidents and ensure no one gets hurt or killed. On-the-spot corrections are about leaders reinforcing discipline and making sure subordinates are disciplined to do the right thing and adhere to standards.

When someone approaches you, whether the reason is to tell you to put your headgear on or that you look very professional today because your uniform is squared away, at least they care enough to approach you. The first thing you should realize is the fact that someone is trying to look out for your best



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

interests.

Don't take a correction personally. A correction shouldn't be misconceived as an attack on your person or character, but as a reminder that we need to continually pay attention to detail, especially in a deployed environment where the goal is to complete the mission and return home safely.

Even if you're stopping a Soldier because of an open cargo pocket, an improperly displayed badge or telling them to take their hands out of their pockets, the significance behind the correction is to remind Soldiers of the importance of paying attention to detail and displaying military bearing.

Combat is a negative thing, as is the stress of being in a combat zone. We don't need people with negative attitudes to make that situation worse. Sometimes leaders have to go "negative" on a situation or on an individual to get a point across. That's the nature of military business. Should you find yourself on the receiving end of a correction, fix the malfunction, suck it up and drive on as an empowered individual made better by the experience.

Making on-the-spot corrections doesn't entitle us to talk to or approach each other disrespectfully. Bear common military courtesy in mind as you make and receive corrections. As I've said before, the military is a team event, and it requires us to work together to make things happen. To work together effectively, we have to respect each other.

It takes a collective effort on the behalf of leaders and individuals alike. Making sure that we do the right thing isn't just the responsibility of the commissioned or noncommissioned officer; it's up to the individual Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine as well.

I want people to be more proactive in helping each other out, more motivated when they greet each other, and more willing to accept constructive criticism and a nudge to do the right thing. I also want people to be proud of who they are, the uniform they wear and what they've accomplished in the military.

As long as we have leaders who care about Soldiers enough to stop them, pull them to the side, tell them what's wrong and how to fix it, we'll be okay. When that stops, the military will become a very dangerous, unpleasant place to serve. With the caliber of servicemembers I currently serve beside, I don't think we're anywhere near that point.

— Third, Always First.

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# Proper wear of IBA reduces injury risk


Story by  
Lt. Col. Ingrid Moertl  
1st TSC Safety Officer

## Properly fitted IBA

Wearing the IBA properly will minimize your risk of having a neck and shoulder injury and make the IBA a useful combat multiplier.

Some of us rarely wear our Interceptor Body Armor while others wear it all the time. Soldiers of the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of operation have had Soldiers who occasionally feel the pain of wearing IBA incorrectly.

Wearing IBA incorrectly can cause medical problems including back injuries, shoulder and neck pain, rounded posture, muscle fatigue, loss of range of motion, tingling in arms and fingers and can lead to several doctors' visits and lost work time.

The IBA is supposed to save our lives not hurt us. 

Eight simple steps will help you line up and fit the IBA correctly each time you wear it.

1. Loosen the IBA each time
2. Look up
3. Cover the Velcro
4. Lower edges will not seem to line up
5. Hold vest OFF shoulders
6. Have Battle Buddy tighten IBA by pulling the straps
7. Pull the straps on both sides at same time
8. Tighten up around ribcage

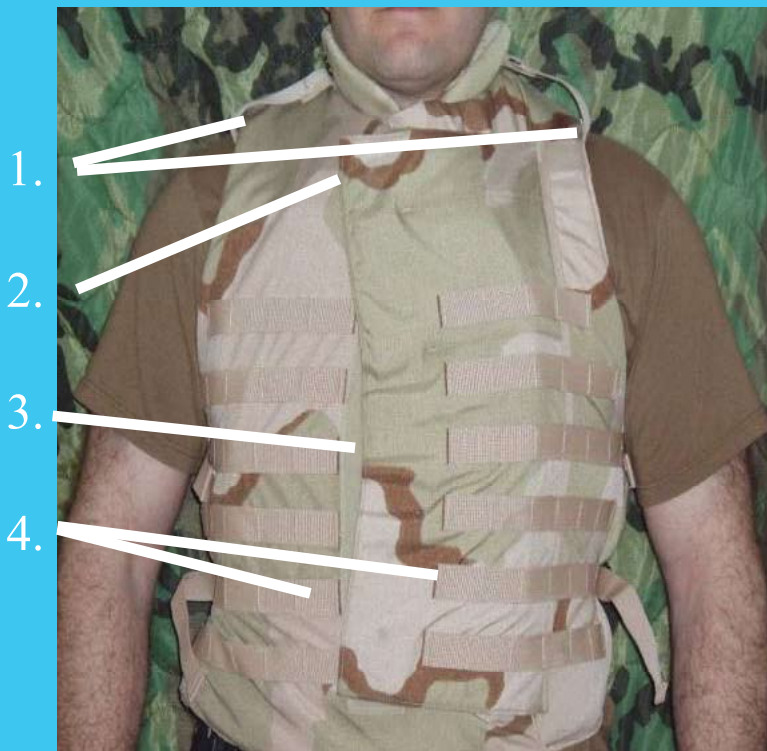


The photos below show incorrectly worn IBA:

1. In photo A, the upper edges are not flush; it is resting on the shoulders.
2. The vest is too tight at the top.
3. At the bottom it is too loose.
4. The trunk straps are not aligned. The weight of the IBA is not across the ribcage.

Photo A

Photo B



In Photo B it is easy to see that the upper edges of the vest are not flush, creating an improper fit that makes the IBA uncomfortable and unsafe.

# Rakkasans embark upon Kuwait



Sergeant Denae Nemanic and Sgt. Brian Terry, both from Company B, 626th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, lead a line of firers confirming their weapons' zero at Udairi Range Wednesday.

## Airborne troopers get boots on ground, start training

Story and photos by  
Sgt. 1st Class Kerensa Hardy  
3rd BCT, 101st AD Public Affairs

After emotional farewells to friends and loved ones, 12 hours on a plane, three hours on a bus and countless hours of the obligatory "hurry up and wait," the Rakkasans have reached Kuwait.

Advance parties from the 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, are adapting to the heat of the desert in the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of responsibility. The record-high temperatures that hit Fort Campbell a few weeks ago may have made the transition a bit easier.

"Many of the Rakkasan Soldiers said their goodbyes, the arriving Soldiers now get to turn their attention to conducting the final required training here in Kuwait prior to moving into Iraq," said Lt. Col. J.B. Becker, 3rd BCT executive officer.

While brigade and battalion staffs work to get their tactical operation centers up and running and establish a battle rhythm, others have begun attending

invaluable training sessions.

Two classes on counter-improvised explosive devices and radio-controlled IEDs marked the beginning of official training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Soldiers were alert in the classes, not wanting to miss any of the information provided by subject-matter experts that could potentially save their lives.

Quickly rising temperatures require an "o-dark-thirty" start for ranges in Kuwait to avoid the scorching heat.

The stay in Kuwait is as short as a few days for some and a few weeks for others. But it is the last hurdle to be crossed before setting out to accomplish the mission in Iraq.

Many of the Rakkasans have seen multiple deployments and expressed mixed feelings about being here so soon after the last deployment.

To some Soldiers, it felt like they were just here said Capt. Kashe Brooks, the brigade assistant communications officer.

"I've talked to people and we say, 'It felt like we just had an extended mid-tour leave,'" Brooks said.


Another Soldier who is also on his second deployment said he's looking at the potential benefits down the road.

"The way I look at it is, if I'm here fighting this war now, my kids won't have to when they become of age," said Sgt. Dan Evans, B Company, 3rd Special Troops Battalion.

Evans also said the anxiety he felt prior to his first deployment is gone.

"I already know what to anticipate and look for," he said.

One infantryman, also on his second tour, said he's glad to be here so the mission can begin.

"I'm anxious and excited," said Spc. Ronnie Sopko, C Company, 1st Battalion, 33rd Cavalry Regiment. "As soon as we got in country my motivation kicked up. I'm ready to get started." 



# Fuel farm keeps the gears of war turning

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

When most people hear the word “farm,” they think of crops and animals being harvested, grown, and sold for profit. However, when the Army talks about a farm, it takes on a whole new meaning.

That’s because the farm is actually a temporary storage area for jet fuel run by the Army and Navy until the fuel is transported.

Shortly after the Iraq War started, the military began converting jet fuel or JET A-1 into JP8 fuel to support its operations in the region. Five years later, the military continues to convert jet fuel into JP-8. The 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) operates the Tactical Petroleum Terminal Fuel Farm for Third Army/U.S. Army Central in Kuwait.

“Without fuel everything comes to a stoppage,” said Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Twiddy, Navy Petroleum Detachment, Alpha, officer-in-charge of the 24-hour, seven-days-a-week, fuel operation. “Everything stops; it’s critical. You have to have fuel to keep the war going.”



**Sgt. Donald Mattox, petroleum specialist of the 1175th Transportation Company, Tennessee National Guard, opens the valve to check the line to ensure fuel flows properly without any problems.**



**Lt. Cmdr. Thomas Twiddy, Navy Petroleum Detachment Alpha officer-in-charge, checks the equipment to ensure all safety precautions are met on a fuel pump at the Tactical Petroleum Terminal Fuel Farm in Kuwait.**

Keeping planes in the air, buses on the road, and convoys moving is top priority for the Army.

“No fuel is a show stopper, and you can not put planes in the air or operate buses without fuel,” said Twiddy, of the Virginia Fleet Composite Squadron, who has 30 years of military service and deployed to Iraq.

Since the 1st TSC took over fuel operations, they began receiving more fuel per day.

“We needed to send more fuel to Iraq, and now we are able to send 30 percent more fuel up to southern Iraq to support the war,” Twiddy said.

The goal is to send out about a quarter of a million gallons of fuel daily, Twiddy said.

“This increase allows truck and field stations to send all of their JP-8 up north instead of keeping it in Kuwait,” Twiddy said.


Twiddy, who is also responsible for making sure the operation is successful, developed a tracking system to determine the amount of JET A-1 which is downloaded and converted

to JP-8. When trucks arrive at the fuel farm, the JET A-1 is downloaded and pumped into fuel bags. Workers then use an additive to convert it into JP-8. The process takes more than 10 hours.

Sgt. Donald Mattox, petroleum specialist of the 1175th Transportation Company, Tennessee National Guard, supports the petroleum operations.

“Nothing moves without fuel; no trucks, humvees, planes or choppers,” said Mattox, a native of Lawrenceburg Tenn., who deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. “I watch for spills, leaks, maintain the fuel bags, and ensure safety precautions are maintained at the fuel farm.”

The Army said it will continue to operate the fuel farm well into the future.

“As long as the need is there we will maintain a holding facility for fuel before it is moved up north for the war effort,” said Master Sgt. Michael Patton, a petroleum noncommissioned officer of the 164th Quartermaster Group. “We will stop when they quit fighting the war.” 

# 'Devil Dogs' land in Kuwait,

## Marines come ashore by sea, air

Story by  
Marine Sgt. Matt Epright  
22nd MEU Public Affairs

Elements of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) came ashore at Camp Patriot, Kuwait, Sept. 8, after more than a month aboard the ships of the Kearsarge Expeditionary Strike Group.

"It's a good breather," said Cpl. Hannah Lisowsky, an administrative clerk with the Command Element. "It's nice to be able to walk around on solid ground."

The Marines came to Kuwait to conduct sustainment training, including live fire and maneuver ranges, vehicle convoy training, combined arms training and advanced medical training at Third Army/U.S. Army Central ranges.

"Most of our weapons training on ship is stationary and at very short distances," said Sgt. Maj. Thomas Hall, the 22nd MEU(SOC) Sergeant Major. "We're unable to do the fire and maneuver portions, and we're limited to personal weapons on the ship."


Hall said the best part of Camp Buehring and the nearby training facilities is the ability to conduct live-fire and large-scale combined arms training, which combine air and ground assets moving together in support of each other.

"By coming ashore, we get to hone our conventional military skills, which we have not even been able to do since June," Hall said.

He added that those traditional combat skills are "very perishable" and should be practiced as often as possible.

While some personnel coming ashore flew on helicopters of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 (Reinforced) to the desert outpost, most of the Marines and sailors had a long, hot day of travel over sea and land.

Upon completion of training, the Marines and Sailors of the MEU are scheduled to rejoin Kearsarge Strike Group and continue Maritime Security Operations (MSO).

"As the (Central Command) reserve, we have to be ready to respond to any emergency," Hall said. 



Marines from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) debark from a Landing Craft Utility vessel in Kuwait, Sept. 8. The Marines and sailors of the unit are conducting sustainment training at Camp Buehring.



Leathernecks with the 22nd MEU (SOC) make their way from the well deck of the USS Kearsarge to an awaiting Landing Craft Utility vessel headed for Kuwait Sept. 8. The Marines and sailors of the 22nd MEU(SOC) were on their way to Camp Buehring, Kuwait, where they will conduct sustainment training.

Cpl. D. [unclear] pany, wall a

# conduct refresher training

## Marines get refamiliarized with grenades

Story and photos by  
Marine Sgt. Ezekiel R. Kitandwe  
22nd MEU Public Affairs

The hard-charging Marines and Sailors of K and L Companies, 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), shook the ground of Camp Buehring, the remote desert training camp, during a recent grenade-throwing training exercise, Sept. 14.

The two companies are part of Battalion Landing Team, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, and are currently deployed as the Ground Combat Element for the 22nd MEU(SOC).

The training exercise conducted at a Third Army/U.S. Army Central training range, is one of many sustainment exercises the Marines will be conducting. The training not only emphasized safety and excellence of execution, but also helped eliminate anxieties any of the younger Marines may have developed in the past.

“When it comes to throwing grenades, sometimes Marines tend to get jittery and that’s when bad things happen. So, just relax and follow your training,” said 2nd Lt. Mathew Seglem while addressing the Marines prior to the start of training.

According to Lance Cpl. Bradley Turnbo, Weapons Platoon, Co. K, it is always a hair-raising feeling when he releases that grenade and feels the



Marines with K and L Companies, components of Battalion Landing Team, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, watch an explosion during a hand grenade throwing exercise at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sept. 14.

vibration of the ground soon after the explosion. This is his first deployment and only his third time throwing a grenade.

Making an unscheduled stop to view the training was Col. Doug Stilwell, the commanding officer for the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) and his sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Thomas Hall.

According to Stilwell, he believes it is important to get out and visit training for several reasons. First, he wants to personally ensure his Marines and sailors are given the time and attention they need to gain thorough individual and unit proficiency in preparation for combat. Second, he wants each of them to know that they are important and that their training is one of his top priorities.

“This kind of training will save lives,” Stilwell said. “It also gives Marines the confidence and conviction they need to apply this training without hesitation in a combat environment.”

Stilwell added that another reason he visits the training sites is more personal than professional.

“I want to be around our Marines and Sailors,” Stilwell said. “Whether individually or collectively, they are the primary reason that our Marine Corps is so revered. There is nothing better than to be amongst fellow warriors.”



(Special Operations) at Camp Patriot, 22nd MEU(SOC) are in Kuwait.



David Ulrich a resident of Lincoln Park, Michigan, and squad leader for K Company, watches closely as one of his Marines heaves a grenade over a protective barrier at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, Sept. 14.



*Soldiers perform Military Operations Terrain training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.*

*Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer*  
**A Soldier from the 82nd Financial Management Company hooks up two Humvees after one took simulated damage while participating in Convoy Improvised Explosive Device training at a range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, July 5, 2007.**

# **Training**

**Soldiers check out a checkpoint during Convoy Improvised Explosive Device training at a range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.**

*Photo by Sgt. Jacob A. M...*



**Camp Buehring**



Courtesy photo  
s in Urban  
wait.



Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer

**Soldiers of the 221st Explosive Ordnance Disposal dispose of munitions left over from the Danish Army Aug. 4 at a training facility near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.**

# for the fight

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

Servicemembers move through Camp Buehring, Kuwait on a daily basis to utilize its various training facilities.

Troops are trained in everything they need to know to survive in the battlefield including marksmanship with their respective weapons, reaction to improvised explosive devices, military operations in urban terrain, Humvee driver's training and Biometrics.

Third Army/U.S. Army Central provides these training facilities to troops training before moving north to Iraq. Training in Kuwait gives the troops a chance to acclimate to the desert climate and keeps them sharp on their skills as highly trained warfighters.

With the ever increasing use of IEDs in Iraq training troops in avoiding and defeating these threats becomes increasingly important. Camp Buehring and the outlying ranges house multiple facilities staffed by instructors who train troops in every aspect of detection and reaction to IEDs.


Ensuring that troops continue to serve their country safely and return home at the end of their tour is the goal of Camp Buehring's training personnel. 



Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

**David Boykin, an up-armored Humvee training instructor, takes a Humvee through the mud at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.**



Photo by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Maj. Michael H. Arakelian and Air Force Master Sgt. Richard Lopes.

# Third Army's weather team is on the job

## Rain or Shine

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

There are 27 nations in the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of operations and more than 200,000 personnel. Any change of the weather can affect operations such as training and any convoys bringing supplies to the troops on the battlefield.

Troops on the battlefield can be blinded by sandstorms or become dehydrated when the heat becomes too much. Accurately predicting the weather conditions before an operation is one way to circumvent such problems.

Using various resources to survey the changes in the weather the weather team facilitate mission success.

"Weather is extremely important in today's battlefield especially with all of the complex weapon systems and the different types of aircraft that are employed against

the enemy," said Maj. Michael H. Arakelian, the officer in charge of the weather section. "Our work is extremely important to the overall theater weather situation."

If an operation is to be conducted in a certain area of the AOR, a request is put in to the weather team. The weather team then surveys the weather situation in that area to determine if the operation is possible or if it will be stopped by inclement weather, Arakelian said.

"It is impossible for a military leader to have total control of a battle without predetermining the impacts of weather," said Master Sgt. Richard Lopes. "Accurate forecasts of impending inclement weather can save lives and military equipment."

Lopes, who has been in this line of work his whole 15 enlisted years, is slated to report to Air Force Officer Training School on Dec. 3. Upon completion of his officer training he will forfeit his Senior NCO status to be a lieutenant in the

same career field.

Arakelian, whose father spent 34 years in the military, follows in his footsteps having spent 33 years in the military himself. With 12 years of experience as a weather officer under his belt, Arakelian has been deployed previously with the 10th Mountain Division Aviation Brigade to provide weather support.

Being a member of the weather team gives servicemembers a chance to serve their country and have a major impact on operations. The experience acquired by the weather team personnel also helps open a window into a civilian career as a meteorologist.

Watching the skies, keeping troops safe and making sure convoys, and equipment get to their destination without being accosted by the elements is a full time job for the military's meteorologists. **A**

**(Background) Staff Sgt. Robert Cook watches a storm move south at Manas Air Base, Kyrgyzstan.**

Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Lara Gale

## Lending a helping hand ...



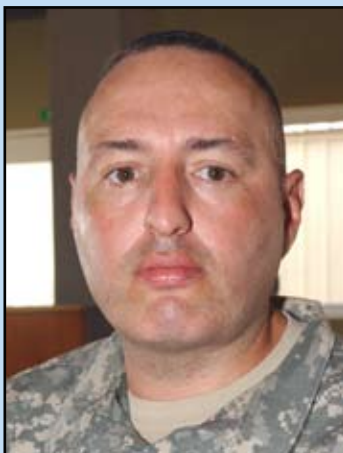
Photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Oscar Espinoza

(Above and below) Boarding team members from the frigate USS Carr rendered assistance to a United Arab Emirates-flagged fishing dhow (a traditional Arab sailing vessel) in the Central Persian Gulf Sept. 26. The fishing dhow was having engine problems and an engineering team from Carr was able to get the dhow running again. Carr also provided the dhow's crew with fresh water, food and a medical kit.



### Why I serve:

Sgt. Sergio Blanco  
Gun truck security commander  
109th Transportation Company



The Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., native explains why he chose to join the military.

**"I joined to give my family a better life. I decided to stay in when I realized I liked the job."**

## Just One Question...

**"What quality makes a good leader?"**



**"The ability to learn from his people."**

Petty Officer 1st Class Vernon Bailey  
Riverton, Wyo.  
Career counselor  
Navy Coastal Warfare, Squadron 5



**"Responsibility to take care of Soldiers."**

Staff Sgt. Lezthair Estrada  
Honolulu  
Supply NCO  
225th Aviation Brigade



**"Setting the standard. Leading by example."**

CW1 Kenneth Stecher  
Iowa City, IA.  
Movement Officer  
10th Transportation Battalion



**"Knows his peoples strengths and weaknesses. Knows how to motivate and utilize his people to complete the mission."**

Lt. Commander Nathan Johnson  
Spring Valley, NY  
Medical officer  
Emergency Medical Facility Kuwait



**"Making sure the Soldiers needs are met. Go out of your way to make sure they are accomodated and lead by example."**

Staff Sgt. Jane Boots  
Colorado Springs, CO  
Headquarters platoon sergeant  
2nd Transportation Company (HET)

# What's happening around Kuwait ...

## Going for a drive and a swim

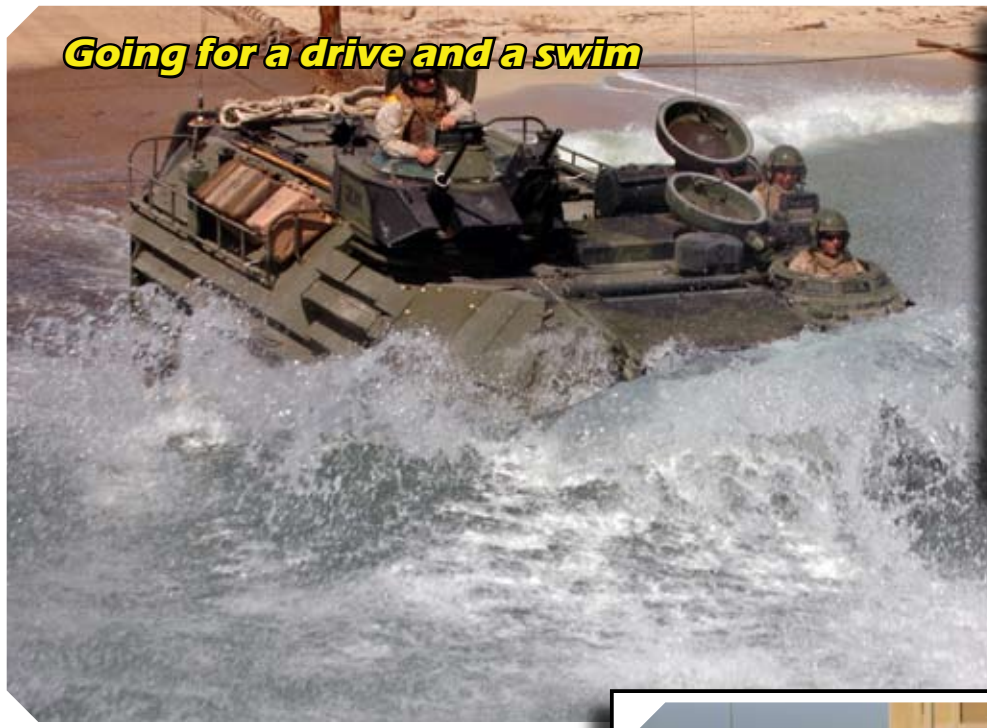


Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Paul Tuttle

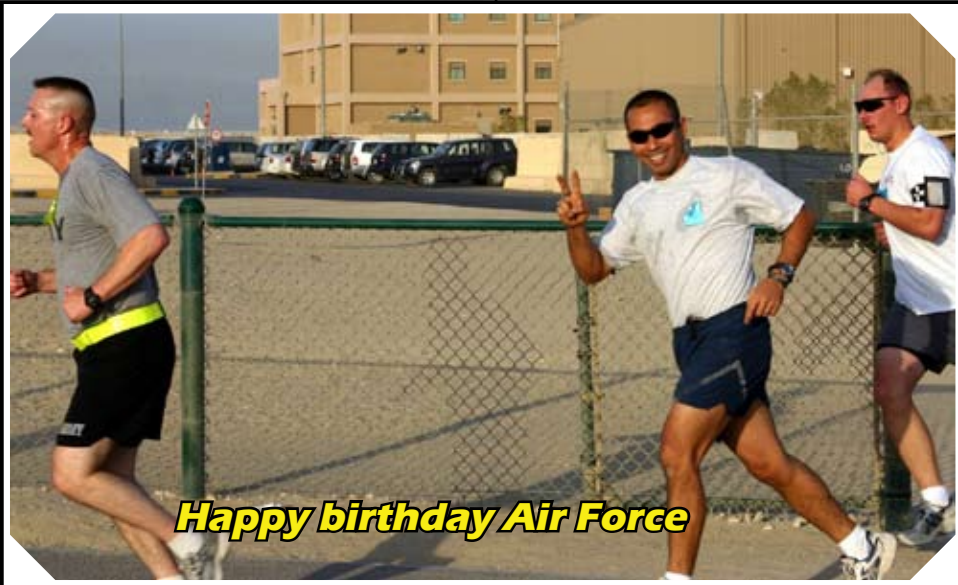
An amphibious assault vehicle from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit hits the surf at Camp Patriot, Kuwait, Sept. 26. The AAV is enroute as it "swims" out to the USS Rushmore, anchored off the coast of Kuwait. The 13th MEU is returning home to Camp Pendleton, Calif., after deploying to Al Anbar Province, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## Bridging gaps



Photo by Lt. Col. David Hylton

Third Army / U.S. Army Central Exercise and Training Chief, Col. Mark A. McManigal, conducts a field training exercise briefing during Steppe Eagle in Kazakstan Sept. 19, 2007.



## Happy birthday Air Force

Courtesy photo

Servicemembers go for a fun run commemorating the Air Force birthday at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

## 10th Mountain leaves its mark



Photo by Master Sgt. Michele R. Hammonds

Pvt. Jeremy D. Maul, (right) 25, of Machias, N.Y., Spc. Albert Altreche, (middle) 36, of Seguin, Texas, and Sgt. Timothy Dunn, 29, of Rochester, N.Y., all from 10th BSB, 1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division, put their art skills to work as they paint the final touches on a large concrete barrier at Camp Buehring, Kuwait Sept. 18, 2007. The Soldiers endured the 120 degree heat while painting the barrier.