

DV

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

October 31, 2007

A photograph of Michelle Obama, the first lady of the United States, standing in front of a large American flag. She is wearing a dark grey blazer over a white shirt and has her hands clasped in front of her. She is looking slightly upwards and to the right. In the background, several people, including children and adults, are visible, some in military uniforms. The overall tone is patriotic and formal.

***The first lady
visits Third Army***

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Map-making Soldier navigates a course from Green to Gold.

On the cover

First lady Laura Bush awaits her turn to address servicemembers at Life Support Area, Kuwait, Oct. 25. For the full story, turn to page 8.

Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox

Contact us

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

National American Indian Heritage Month



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THIRD ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY CENTRAL
COALITION FORCES LAND COMPONENT COMMAND
1881 HARDEE AVE SW
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25 October 2007

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: American Indian Heritage Month 2007

1. On August 3, 1990, President H.W. Bush signed Public Law 101-343, which recognized November as "National American Indian Heritage Month." During November, we observe the rich cultural traditions and proud ancestry of American Indians and Alaskan Natives. This year's theme is "Honoring Warriors: Past and Present."
2. The theme is indicative of the fighting spirit, exceptional leadership and courageous actions demonstrated by American Indians throughout history, and now. Today, more than 35,000 American Indians serve in the Armed Forces, defending our nation against enemies, foreign and domestic. American Indians' courageous efforts have left behind an honorable path for others to follow. We salute the men and women who continue to carry on their centuries-old warrior tradition – serving with pride, courage and distinction.
3. As we observe and celebrate American Indian Heritage Month, I encourage each of you to learn more about their rich culture by participating in the various activities offered during the month of November.

R. STEVEN WHITCOMB
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

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**A Warrior's Tradition:
Contributing to our Nation's Freedom**

DV
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Magazine

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

Soldiers train to combat insurgent forces, terrorist attacks and improvised explosive devices. However, there is another killer that Soldiers must train against – cancer.

Members of Third Army/U.S. Army Central's Emergency Medical Facility – Kuwait hosted a health fair to raise awareness to the dangers of breast cancer and various other diseases at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 21.

"We have a great population of women over the age of 35," said Lt. Betty Ulmer, a troop medical center wellness nurse. "We want to get the fact out that breast cancer is a real threat."

Ulmer, a Natchitoches, La. native, said the health fair was designed to target women over the age of 35. She said once a woman reaches 35, the risk of breast cancer increases. According to the American Cancer Society, factors such as age, family history and race increases a person's risk of having breast cancer. That does not mean, however, that women under that age are immune.

"If you are under age 35 and your family has a history of cancer in the family, particularly breast cancer, you need to come in and get checked," Ulmer said.

Breast cancer is the second leading killer among women worldwide. Demographically, breast cancer is the leading killer among Hispanic women and the number two killer among Caucasian, African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American women. Statistics show that more than 240,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year. Of those 240,000 diagnosed, one out of every six – more than 40,000 in all – will die.

"If we can prevent this disease from spreading, then why not take the whole month to make people aware of it," Ulmer said.

Ulmer said the disease just isn't limited to women, though. While breast cancer is commonly found in women, men can get the disease as well.



Members of Emergency Medical Facility - Kuwait pass out pamphlets and brochures during a health fair at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 21. The fair was aimed at making people aware of the dangers of breast cancer and sexual education.

"More than 2,000 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, Ulmer said. "Of those, 450 will lose their life to it."

The month of October is not just Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It is also Sexual Awareness Month.

The goal is to educate people before they redeploy home, said Maj. Lisa Leazenby, a family nurse practitioner and Post Deployment Health Provider from Winamac, Ind.

"People are here. People are leaving. People are transient," she said. "When they go home, they need to have the knowledge to protect themselves."

Leazenby's booth included misconceptions about Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Plan B emergency contraception and the importance of barrier methods during intercourse.

For Sgt. Antonio Canada, 429th Transportation Company, the facts he learned at the presentation blew him away.

"I can't believe there are 39.5 million people with STDs worldwide," he said. "I never would have guessed that."

"You don't think of it in those terms," Canada continued. "That it is actually

prevalent in society, but it is."

Another topic discussed was cervical cancer. Lt. Cmdr. Joseph Ehle, an Obstetrics and Gynecology doctor from Lacrosse, Wis., said the major issue with cervical cancer is to spread the word and undo myths. He also said the fair was set up to educate patients and answer questions that they may not feel comfortable coming in and asking.

Cervical Cancer is the number two killer in the world, Ehle said. Conversely, it does not even make the top ten killer list in the U.S. Ehle attributes that statistic to women getting their annual pap exams.

"A woman's first pap should be at least three years after onset of sexual activity and annually until 30 years of age," Ehle said "After age 30, it is recommended that women get their pap exam every two years afterward."

Whether it was a class on breast self-exams or the STD quiz, the message was clear. Ulmer said educating the service-members means showing them that you can't stop self exams just because you're deployed.

"These are topics that are important to the community," she said. 



A United States Postal Service worker sifts through paperwork for a package at a Post Office on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Holiday Mailing Deadlines!

Parcel Post	Nov. 13
Space Available (SAM)	Nov. 27
Parcel Airlift Mail	Dec. 1
Priority Mail	Dec. 4
First-Class (letters, cards)	Dec. 4

Keep holiday sanity, plan ahead

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

During the holiday season many servicemembers wish to send packages and mail home for Christmas. With 28 million pounds of mail projected to come through Kuwait, the post office can get flooded with incoming and outgoing mail at this time of year.

Being away from home for the holidays can be hard on servicemembers who are deployed. The morale boost that comes with giving and receiving gifts from loved ones is essential to keeping servicemembers motivated.

"To get a loved ones package or letter can brighten anyone's day," said Sgt. Emily Ayon, the postal noncommissioned officer in charge of zones one and six.

Some packages sent to or from home however, can get lost in the mail due to simple mistakes. Making sure you send the mail correctly and within the specified time limits is the individual's responsibility.

One mistake servicemembers constantly make is attempting to send unauthorized materials. Servicemembers often attempt to send

items such as weapons, bullets and magazines during the holiday season, said Justin Buzzard, a mail clerk and contractor for Combat Support Associated.

Other unauthorized materials are unexploded and exploded ordnance, knives, shell casings, perishable items, drugs, medication, combustible liquids, and fireworks.

Some non-mailable materials are less obvious.

"Things such as perfumes that are alcohol based cannot be sent in the mail," said Warrant Officer Errol Hammonds, chief of policy and plans.

Asking if a material can be sent beforehand is a good way to ensure that the package makes it without any problems.

A common mistake made by servicemembers and their families is having an incorrect address.

When sending a package home, the return address should include full name, rank, unit and zip code.

The destination needs to include a full name, street address, city, state and zip code.

To help servicemembers get their mail home on time they can follow the dates put out by the post office. These deadlines help ensure that your mail reaches its destination on time. 

44th Chemical goes under the spotlight

Story and photo by
Spc. Giancarlo Casem
Desert Voice editor

You step through the terminal doors, amidst the sea of people and bright lights, you see your family. You rush over to them, but a reporter cuts you off instead.

“What were you doing in Iraq? Where were you stationed? How do you feel about 15-month deployments? How do you feel about being home?”

Questions such as these are asked of Soldiers by media personnel, while deployed or redeployed. In order to properly train Soldiers how to cope with media, Third Army/U.S. Army Central’s public affairs office provides training for redeploying Soldiers.

“The purpose of the training is to inform Soldiers on the importance of engaging the media and to provide techniques on how to deal with media that they may run in to or who may be embedded in their units,” said Maj. Mary Constantino, Third Army/USARCENT media relations officer.

One of the subjects covered in the training is the importance of how a Soldier’s response may affect the Army as a whole, she said.

“When you get home and someone asks you questions, you say the first thing that pops into your head without thinking,” said Spc. Jordan Aldridge, a supply specialist with the 44th Chemical Company. “You have to remember that you are still in uniform and you are held in high regards.”

Aldridge, a Chesterfield, Va. Native, said the training was valuable especially since his unit will be redeploying back to Fort Bliss, Texas.

The public affairs office provides media relations training to units who request it.

“Third Army PAO will provide the media training to any unit assigned,



Maj. Mary Constantino (right), Third Army/USARCENT media relations officer, asks Spc. Jordan Aldridge (left in white), 44th Chem. Co., a question during his unit’s media relations training class at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 16. The question was an example of what a reporter may ask of him when his unit redeploys to Fort Bliss, Texas.

new or not, attached to the command at the unit’s request,” Constantino said. “There is no requirement on how often we provide it; we’ll come out and train units whenever they request it.”

Constantino told the Soldiers of the 44th to be prepared for media personnel as soon as they stepped off the plane. She reminded the Soldiers to remain calm when they are asked for an interview, and if they did not feel comfortable being interviewed, they could deny a journalist’s request.

Another topic discussed was the impact of the news media and the importance of the role that Soldiers play.

“This training helped remind us not to let the media control the interview,” said Spc. Deanna Reskalla, a chemical operations specialist with the 44th Chemical Company, originally from Greenville, S.C.. “However, we know that the media is a good tool.”

Constantino said the media is one of the best ways to tell the Soldier’s story and stressed the importance of media engagement skills.

“Soldiers must be able to engage the media in order for the world to stay informed on what the U.S. Army is doing and for the U.S.

servicemembers’ stories to be told,” she said.

“You have done great and wonderful things here,” Constantino told the class. “You should tell it.”

During the class, some Soldiers were selected to participate in some “hands on” media training. The Soldiers were asked a variety questions ranging from topics such as their mission in Kuwait to political questions.

The Soldiers were coached to stay within topics that were inside their area of responsibility. They were also coached on what to say to reporters if they felt uncomfortable with the interview.

Aldridge and Reskalla both agreed that the training was important and they both learned a lot from it. Reskalla said she looks forward to finally coming home after being away for so long.

However, things have changed a lot in her hometown. These changes could be stressful for some Soldiers returning home. The media training could help alleviate some of the added stress of dealing with media, Reskalla said.

“It’s going to be different when we go back,” Reskalla said. “It’s good real-world training, it’s good to be confident about some things.” 

To rock



Robert Willard and Wade Kahane, both Army Safe Driver Training instructors, take an M-1114 Humvee for a spin on Training Area Papa at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



An M-1114 Humvee is silhouetted by the sun after climbing a steep incline at Training Area Papa at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Service-members participating in the training have to overcome various obstacles such as steep inclines, declines and blind turns.

'n' (not) roll

(Right) An M-1114 Humvee tears up the trails of Training Area Papa at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The Humvee Familiarization Driver Program is a training program set up to give troops more experience behind the wheel of an up-armored Humvee.



Soldiers train to stay safe on the roads

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

The calm of the abandoned quarry is upset by clouds of dirt kicked up as the M-1151 Humvee tears across the barren terrain. The Humvee pounds the rocks on the ground with its more than five tons of weight, weathering it down to a fine dust.

The Humvee Driver Training Program is a training course offered at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, to familiarize troops with the up-armored Humvees while in the Third Army/U.S. Army Central area of responsibility before deploying to Iraq.

"We have a lot of Soldiers coming down with little to no familiarization with a Humvee," said Juan Amill, a Humvee Driver Training Program instructor.

Many servicemembers who arrive to Kuwait have yet to drive an up-armored Humvee. These Humvees weigh as much as three times the weight of previous models. Lack of experience with a vehicle that is in everyday use in combat

zones, can lead to accidents, which may leave troops injured or even cost them their lives.

The unnecessary loss of combat ready troops due to vehicle accidents is what inspired John Hutchinson to take a personal interest. Hutchinson founded the Army Safe Drivers Training that later evolved into the HDTP, said Eric "Shorty" White, the acting supervisor of ASDT North.

The driving instructors for the HDTP are from various military and civilian backgrounds and each bring their own experience and skills into the program, White said.

"We really do take pride and integrity in what we do," said Rez Shirazi, a Humvee Driver Training Program instructor.

The course starts with the instructors training two or more master drivers from within the unit the day before the bulk of the unit participates in the training. The master drivers are to train the rest of the unit as the instructors oversee the training the next day. Each master has the job of either instructor or examiner.

The examiner gives classroom train-

ing, oversees the hands-on training and assists where needed. When it comes to the hands-on portion of the training the instructor is the one in the vehicle with the trainees, giving them pointers and making sure they overcome each obstacle correctly.

In the morning of the next day, the unit is briefed in a classroom on safety and course overlay before heading to the training area. The training is broken into two areas, training area Alpha and Papa. Training area Alpha is the intermediate course and is where most of the servicemembers are trained. Training area Papa is the advanced course and is usually only for the master drivers.

"It makes me feel good to know we have a product to give (the troops) that will be beneficial to them," said Jess Sammon, a Humvee Driver Training Program instructor.

The driving instructors, who have been in Kuwait since Feb. 18, are what holds the program together, said White. With non-combat related injuries on the rise, training troops to stay safe becomes an increasingly important part of the war on terror. 

First lady Laura Bush visits T

Story by

Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox

Third Army/USARCENT public affairs

and Sgt. 1st Class Paul Tuttle

1st TSC public affairs

First lady of the United States, Laura Bush, visited with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines Thursday as a part of her Middle East tour of countries to promote women's rights and health issues.

The staging area through which more than 700,000 U.S. troops flying into and out of Iraq and Afghanistan in support of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, was transformed from a military marshalling area into a venue packed waiting for the first lady. Tents normally used as waiting areas were emptied of chairs, desks and even walls to make room for a stage where Mrs. Bush addressed the hundreds of assembled servicemembers.

She told the troops they earned the respect and gratitude of the American people and of the president of the United States for what they have accomplished.

"At the heart of your mission to protect America's freedom is securing the freedom of others," she said. "Because of our men and women in uniform, 50 million people who once lived in tyranny can now choose the future direction of their countries – and their own lives."

She reminded them that Third Army/U.S. Army Central's Life Support Area is the first base that Kuwaiti and American flags flew side by side and spoke of the progress of Kuwait as an emerging democracy in today's world and Kuwaitis' gratitude for America's assistance in establishing it.

"Two years ago, Kuwaiti women achieved the right to vote," she said. "Yesterday, I met with women political leaders who are working to expand their representation in Kuwait's parliament."

She said, "During our meeting – more than 15 years after American



First lady Laura Bush is introduced to service members at Life Support Area, Kuwait, Oct. 25, and the American people for their efforts in the war on terror as they awaited flights home o

troops helped drive Saddam Hussein's army from Kuwait – a Kuwaiti government official told me, 'We will never, ever forget' America's liberation of Kuwait. 'It's engraved in our hearts and in our history books.'"

Mrs. Bush said that her trip has been devoted to bringing awareness of breast cancer. She visited allied nations in the Middle East, Oct. 19, to speak to women and leaders about the accomplishments and direction of the U.S.-Middle East partnership for breast cancer awareness and research.

The Partnership is a collaboration whose purpose is to hold training workshops and discussions about breast cancer and to establish community outreach in Saudi Arabia and the

United Arab Emirates.

"Through this initiative, American cancer hospitals will join with cancer hospitals here in the Gulf area to expand research – to find out why there's a higher incidence of breast cancer diagnosed at a younger age across the Middle East," she said. "And the initiative will work to raise awareness of breast cancer and help women across the Middle East take charge of their own health – by seeking screenings so that they can detect cancer in its earliest stages."

Prior to visiting Kuwait, Mrs. Bush was hosted in Abu Dhabi by Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak – wife of United Arab Emirates president, Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed, and one of the

Third Army



Photos by Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox

Mrs. Bush expressed the thanks of the president to their assignments in Iraq or Afghanistan.

founders of the UAE women's foundation. She visited Dubai and Jordan and was hosted by King Abdullah in Saudi Arabia where she officially launched the Breast Cancer Partnership program in that country.

Although Kuwait is not currently a Breast Cancer Partnership country, Mrs. Bush stopped to meet with Amir Al-Sabah, president of Kuwait, to showcase other programs dedicated to women's rights in that nation and visit the troops there.

After her address, Mrs. Bush met and shook hands with the men and women and posed with those who brought their personal cameras to the event.

Her tour concluded in Jordan later in the week. 



Servicemembers take pictures of first lady Laura Bush during her speech at Life Support Area, Kuwait, Oct. 25. Bush addressed the Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen who were awaiting flights to go home or to their assignments in Iraq or Afghanistan and expressed thanks from the president and the American people for their efforts in the war on terror.



First lady Laura Bush poses for a picture with Airmen after her speech at Life Support Area, Kuwait, Oct. 25. Bush addressed the Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen who were awaiting flights to go home or to their assignments in Iraq or Afghanistan and expressed thanks from the president and the American people for their efforts in the war on terror.

Topographer charts course from Green to Gold

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Anishka Fulton
1st TSC public affairs

She gazed into the light blue sky as the humid breeze brushed against her face and made her short, curly hair sway in the direction of the wind. She shifted her body to reposition herself against the concrete barrier and snapped back to reality. Her large, brown eyes sparkled and a huge smile swept across her face as she explained her contribution to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sgt. Bernice Stratton is a geospatial analyst from 1st Sustainment Command (Theater). Her job is to ensure that all map requests are done accurately and in a timely manner. These maps outline the areas of operation of Third Army/U.S. Army Central and coalition troops and routes of travel.

"My job involves the management, development and dissemination of topographic data. We create and engineer battlefield assessment and aid in the planning and decision-making process during intelligence preparation of the battlefield," Stratton said. "We do maps for exercises and contingency operations. It is tailored to the unit's mission. This unit's mission is logistics, so we focus on main supply routes and alternate supply routes."

Stratton, a native of Del Rio, Texas, is married to Warrant Officer Joshua Stratton, who is currently deployed in Iraq, and they have a three year-old daughter, Isabella. Stratton (Bernice)

was recently awarded a four-year scholarship for the Army Green to Gold program, and will soon join her husband in the officer ranks.

Stratton will be pursuing a degree in nursing. She chose to become an Army nurse because of her love for people and her desire to give back to her community.

"I'm very proud of the fact that she has been accepted to go from Green to Gold. They could not have chosen a better candidate," said Master Sgt. Quintina M. Donald, the security manager for 1st TSC. "The enlisted side of the Army will be losing a born leader. She has the attitude of a go-getter and strives for perfection. Going Green to Gold was something that was near and dear to her heart. She wanted it, and she went out and got it."

There are new challenges ahead for Stratton as she prepares to go to school on the scholarship, but she is grateful for the opportunity to return home to her daughter and provide some kind of stable environment for her while going to school. Her daughter is currently with her parents in Mexico due to the deployment of both parents.

"The thing I look forward to the most after redeploying is spending time with my daughter," Stratton said. "I am grateful to my parents for all their love and support, especially taking care of our daughter during our deployment."

With an important role to play in



Staff Sgt. Bernice Stratton

sustaining the mission, Stratton ensures that the work she produces is of optimum quality and that it reflects all the effort that was put into making each map.

"She produces outstanding products. She is very strict in upholding her map standards," said Donald, a Williston,

Fla., native. "On top of that, she is also the platoon sergeant, the training noncommissioned officer-in-charge and the equal opportunity representative for our section."

With all the challenges that she faces on the job, Stratton enjoys what she does and would have it no other way. She enjoys working with people and working to get the mission accomplished, no matter how hard the mission gets.

"I love the continuous learning process that is involved with my job," said Stratton. "It's very challenging and it is a tedious process to gather the data and learn the various networking and software updates."

The mission of the 1st TSC continues, and so does Stratton's critical role in its success. Geospatial analysts will continue to be one of the main tools commanders use in getting the mission accomplished.

"She is one of our greatest assets in the topographic section," Donald said. "She motivates the Soldiers to get the mission accomplished. She is the epitome of military leadership." 

Fight Germs and Stay Healthy

If you have a cold or flu:

Avoid contact with other people of possible.

- Germs are transmitted by sneezing, coughing and even while speaking.
- Do not share drinks or eating utensils.

Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing.

- Use a tissue or your sleeve to cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing.
- Do not cough or sneeze on other people, their food or anything they may put in their mouths.

Wash your hands often.

- Always wash your hands before eating and after using the latrine.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with warm, soapy water or alcohol-based gel.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

- Germs are often spread when people touch something contaminated with germs (for example, other people's hands or smooth surfaces) and then touch their own eyes, nose or mouth.
- Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to 2 hours on smooth surfaces like wall lockers, latrine countertops, door-knobs and desks.

See a medic if you are sick, especially if you have a fever.

- Medical care can help control the spread of infection and help you feel better sooner.

Just One Question...

"What was your best Halloween costume?"



"A vampire. Because it's scary and it catches attention."

Sgt. Karina Almada
Tucson, Az.
NCOIC Postal Inspector
8th Human Resources Support Command



"A Clorox box, because it was original."

Capt. Pace Brown
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Deputy Support Operations Officer
HHC Area Support Group-Kuwait



"I once dressed up as a woman. I wore a skirt, pantyhose, had my hair done. It was great."

Cpl. David Moore
Searcy, Ark.
Wheeled vehicle mechanic
20th Eng. Bn., Forward Support Co.



"I dressed up as a schoolgirl; plaid skirt, fishnet stockings and the button down school-girl shirt tied at the midriff."

Spc. Jonathan Workman
Sebek, Minn.
Food service specialist
20th Eng. Bn., Forward Support Co.



"I dressed up as a Tylenol Bottle. I had a cardboard box with the bottle logo on the side."

Sgt. Michael Hulsopple
Fort Campbell, Ky.
Heavy equipment repair
887 Engineers

Why I serve: Master Sgt. Eric Cuffee ARCENT Signal University NCOIC 335th Signal Command



The Durham, N.C. native explains why he chose to join the military.

"I joined because I knew there was a bigger mission, the freedom of America. I know we have a job here and we're making it happen."

What's happening around Kuwait ...

Arabian nights on Camp Arifjan



Photos by Spc. Giancarlo Casem

Servicemembers dance with traditional Arabian dancers during "Arabian Nights" at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 26. The event was sponsored by the MWR and featured music, dancing and camel rides.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Tiffany Ingram, Navy Customs Tango, a native of San Diego, rides a camel at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 26.



Traditional Arabian dancers perform a routine during "Arabian Nights" at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Oct. 26. The event was sponsored by the MWR and featured music, dancing and camel rides.