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

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Warriors training Warriors

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On the cover

Soldiers react to a simulated attack at a training lane on Camp Buehring's training village. First Army assists Third Army/U.S. Army Central in providing a training area for units enroute to theaters in Iraq and Afghanistan. For the full story, turn to page 6.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jacob McDonald

Contact us

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

Third Army / USARCENT / CFLCC Commanding General's Safety Reminder

Do the mission...protect the force. We in Third Army / USARCENT / CFLCC do this day in and day out, in countries scattered around the globe. I'm sending this reminder, late in the holiday season, because I want each and every one of you to continue to make safety a priority as we roll the calendar to the New Year.



Remember that the hazards we face on a daily basis do not take a holiday... and those hazards are many. Hazards are present in our operational missions, in the routine tasks we perform on a daily basis, and in our off time.

Chief among these hazards is vehicle travel. Rain in Africa...dust in the Middle East...snow in Afghanistan...icy conditions in the States...this is not business as usual. Use Composite Risk Management, the Travel Risk Planning System (TRiPS), and your safety briefings to mitigate risks. **Everyone in this organization is a leader—don't cut corners and don't compromise standards.**

There is much to do in 2008...and we need every member of this team in order to do it well. **Do the smart things...the right things...**that will allow you and your Family to welcome the New Year healthy and ready to continue the important work you do for our nation.

Patton's Own!

LTG Jim Lovelace

—Third, Always First

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Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum

Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, chief of Army Reserve, re-enlists nine Reserve Soldiers at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Dec. 27. Stultz visited Reserve Soldiers during the holidays to talk to them about future job opportunities.

Army Reserve leadership brings holiday message to Kuwait

Story by
Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer
and Maj. Michele Sutak
Third Army/USARCENT Public Affairs

The Chief of Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz and Command Sgt. Maj. Leon Caffie, Army Reserve command sergeant major, spoke to Reserve Soldiers deployed in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom on Christmas Eve at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, and sent a message of brightness and hope about their Army careers.

The Reserve leadership toured the Middle East during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Stultz said the trip was long but worth it.

Stultz first met with Lt. Gen. James J. Lovelace, Third Army/U.S. Army Central commanding general; and received a Third Army/USARCENT brief before meeting with Reserve Soldiers.

"I think we (Command Sgt. Maj. Caffie and I) slept most of the way

here," Stultz joked with the crowd of more than 250 Reserve Soldiers.

Stultz also discussed transforming the Reserve over time by standing up operational and functional units so reservists would have a solid career path and functional oversight.

"Don't worry about your future – the future is very bright – we're going to have more and more opportunities for you," Stultz said. "We're going to have more and more units. We are looking out there and saying, 'okay where do we need to make sure we have a career path?'"

Stultz told the crowd he was making waves of progress with transformation, particularly with civilian employers.

"I went to the L.A. (Los Angeles) Police Department a few weeks ago and talked to the big bosses. While we talked, I heard their pleas for manpower," he said. "I got them to jump on the program when I told them I could find them qualified people, train them to do the job and help with health insurance.

"The LAPD told me if I could do

that for them, they would guarantee that person a job and help offset salary disputes," Stultz said.

Stultz then introduced Caffie. The general said his sergeant major is an individual who really cares about Soldiers.

"The most important persons in this room are the young Soldiers ... they are the future," Caffie said to the Reserve Soldiers.

Caffie then told the crowd there are two types of leaders – those that care about their Soldiers and those that care just for themselves. He gave advice for those people in the second category.

"If you are in the latter category, step up and tell me," Caffie said. "I will shake your hand, give you a coin and show you out the door because I don't want you in my Reserves if you have that 'me first' attitude."

The Army Reserve leaders also addressed Family support while deployed, health care and recruiting.

Stultz and Caffie wrapped up the visit by re-enlisting nine Reserve Soldiers in front of their peers. **A**

Keeping up with technology at the s

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

Isaac Asimov once said “there is but a single light of science and to brighten it anywhere is to brighten it everywhere.” This statement has been taken to mean many things since its first utterance, but its truth, no matter what the context is made possible by one thing, communication.

In this ever changing world of technology the Signal University at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, provides the knowledge necessary to keep troops up-to-date. The

communication of ideas becomes quicker as technology advances and is the catalyst for the advancement of modern thought.

Communication has evolved over time from the Pony Express to the telegraph and from the telephone to the Internet. As technology and techniques advance, the Signal University provides the classes to keep personnel trained.

“We are here to provide sustainment training for the warfighter,” said Master Sgt. Eric Cuffee, the Third Army/U.S. Army Central Signal University noncommissioned officer in charge.

The training is open to any servicemember or civilian in an Information Management Officer position or related positions, not just Signal Corps Soldiers, said Cuffee.

“Some of the Soldiers in these positions have never had the proper training,” Cuffee said.

The various classes provided by the Signal University cover every aspect of communications. Microsoft and CISCO training are available as well as classes on fiber optics.

The Signal University has come a long way since it was called the Coalition Forces Land Component



The instructor of the Microsoft Office Suite class assists a student at the Signal University on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

speed of light

Command University four years ago at Camp Doha, Kuwait, said Augusta, Ga. native 2nd Lt. Christopher J. Campbell, the logistics officer-in-charge for the 335th Signal Command (Theater). Servicemembers and civilians come from all over the area of operations to participate in the classes.

“From student feedback we get that it isn’t only an asset for the Soldier, but an asset for the entire unit,” Cuffee said.

In the civilian sector these classes can cost \$4,000 to \$10,000, not including the cost of certification. The Signal University provides these classes for free. The only thing the individual has to pay for is the certification cost.

Each week-long class has a certification test which is worth 10 promotion points once completed, said Campbell. For now the certification tests are available in Kuwait City and will soon be available in the Signal University building.

“Almost all the certifications pay for themselves if you’re in the field,” Campbell said.



Staff Sgt. Roger Maphis, 385th Signal Company, checks the end of his cord for any cracks or imperfections at a Signal University class on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

The assembling of mobile training teams is another project of the Signal University that is in the works. These teams are to provide

this specialized training in remote areas. Two instructors with hard-cased training equipment will be sent to train servicemembers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

All the classes provided by the Signal University can be of great value to civilians and servicemembers.

“The classes are not that difficult and can prove very lucrative,” said Christian Ross, a tactical satellite system operator maintainer and student of the fiber optics class.

Training personnel in Third Army/USARCENT to perform their jobs properly and to keep them up to date on the latest in technology is the basic mission of the Signal University.

“This is all about learning the tools and how to use them effectively across the military and civilian sector,” Campbell said. 



A student of the fiber optics class at the Signal University on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, threads the hair-thin glass through a small hole.

First Army puts "Soldiers first"

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

Servicemembers deploying to Iraq are usually familiar with the Third Army/U.S. Army Central training facilities at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

They participate in the most up-to-date training exercises available in everything from military operations in urban terrain to counter improvised explosive device training.

The trainers who teach these courses and prepare troops for operations up north are the Soldiers of First Army.

"We're here to train and we train 24 hours a day," said Capt. Robert J. Hill, officer in charge of First Army operational direct support team and a native of Cincinnati, Ohio.

First Army's motto "train like you are going to fight," summarizes their mission here.

"Everybody needs training," said Sgt. 1st Class David W. Sanchez, an instructor.

"There is no such thing as too much training."

Since its inception under the command of Gen. John H. Pershing, First

Army has been all about training. In the continental United States, First Army is responsible for the training and mobilization of National Guard and Reserve forces.

First Army supplies instructors to Third Army/USARCENT to train servicemembers in the mandatory training they need to be combat ready, Hill said.

All the trainers are handpicked by Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, commanding general of First Army, to become professionals at training troops.

The First Army instructors get hands-on training and experience in Iraq prior to instructing the courses. With the experience they gain up north the Soldiers of First Army become the professionals and subject-matter experts needed to truly prepare troops for the trials and stresses of the combat zone, Hill said.

The tactics and procedures used in combat constantly change as does the training provided at Buehring. The courses are updated weekly to keep up with the changes in tactics to counter new threats, said Sanchez.

"It's very realistic training," said Sgt. Manuel E. Vasquez, a humvee egress assistance trainer instructor. "I

wish we had that training when I was in Iraq."

As well as training the servicemembers, the Soldiers of First Army have also had a hand in the setup of some of the training areas such as the new dismounted improvised explosive device course. The course, which is set up to mimic a rural and an urban environment is the brainchild of Sanchez. Sanchez took care of most of the arrangements required to set up this new training area.

Once the instructors complete their tour and return to the United States they bring the experience they gained during deployment with them. This provides the Army National Guard and Reserve with experienced instructors to train and mobilize.

The feedback from the servicemembers who participate in the course has been nothing but positive, Hill said.

"We get rave reviews from the Soldiers who got the training," Hill said.

First Army's training professionals have been preparing troops for combat since 2003 and will continue to do so as long as there is a need for highly trained warfighters, Hill said. 



U.S. Army Photo

A Soldier uses the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000 to keep his skills up to snuff and stay ready for combat. First Army Soldiers operate and maintain the EST 2000, which allows servicemembers the most realistic training available.



Photo by Sgt. Jacob A. McDonald

(Left) Soldiers with the 3rd Infantry Division make their way through a building suspected of harboring insurgents during Military Operations in Urban Terrain training at the MOUT site at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.



Photo by Pfc. Christopher T. Grammer

A convoy rolls down the road during convoy improvised explosive device training. Instructors with First Army provide most of the training at Buehring.



Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum

Soldiers with the 1st Cavalry Division clear a room during MOUT training. First Army's instructors at Camp Buehring train service-members how to operate in an urban environment and prepare them for operations in Iraq.

Food services Soldiers serve up festive holiday meals

*Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Anishka Calder
1st TSC Public Affairs*

The Christmas season can be a trying time for servicemembers deployed overseas who have to deal with being away from Family during the holidays. To counter that, personnel on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, were treated to a hearty Christmas meal, Dec. 25, to help get their minds off the deployment.

The dining facilities went to great lengths to ensure that this meal was one to remember. The planning that went into each meal is reflective on the type of displays set up, all the work that went into decorating the DFACs, and more importantly, the quality and quantity of food that was available to the servicemembers and civilians on Christmas day.

More than 280 pounds of steamship round, 200 pounds of smoked turkey, 440 pounds of ham, 880 pounds of prime ribs and 880 pounds of whole turkey were ordered by Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly A. Jones, a food service supervisor from the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), for the Zone 2 DFAC.

There was a wide array of side dishes including seasoned dressing, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, corn bread, corn on the cob, green

bean almondtine, candied yams, turnip greens, assorted gravies and cranberry sauce. The desserts included an assortment of cakes and pies, egg nog and sweets, Jones said.

Contractors eased the amount of work brought on by the holiday season on the eight Soldiers who are assigned to the Zone 2 DFAC. They did everything from food preparation to decorating of DFAC.

"We start prepping the decorations three weeks before Christmas. Most of the items, such as carvings out of vegetables and butter and the display statues, are done by the contractors who work in the DFAC," said Sgt. Dirk Hennigan, a food service supervisor from the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater). "The contractors are also responsible for the food preparations, but they work under our close supervision. The night before the holiday is always the longest night for us. It's an all-night thing, and usually the hardest stretch of the 36-hour food preparation."

Each of the three DFACs on Camp Arifjan serves an estimated 5,000 meals on a daily basis. Special care goes into preparing food for the wide variety of people eating at the DFACs, ensuring that each person's health is catered to.

"Our job is very important. We have to make sure that everybody's meal is balanced," said Hennigan, 36, and

a native of Courage, S.C. "You have some people who are on different types of diets, so we ensure that the foods are cooked without seasonings. We have seasonings available in the dining area so that each individual can season the food to their desired taste."

The dining facilities not only provide meals to the patrons who come in the DFACs on a daily basis, but they also provide food to hospital patients on the camp and military personnel in confinement, Hennigan said.

Jones, a native of St. Louis, reflected on what it was like during her deployment in support of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm as a food service specialist.

"Back then we didn't have a Christmas meal in the Gulf War," Jones said. "Just having food was Christmas."

Servicemembers and civilians partaking of the Christmas meal had a chance to enjoy the traditional Christmas meal that they would eat back home, but for Hennigan, it was a joy to help prepare the meal and see the positive response from those who ate it.

He said that Christmas dinner was a blast even though it took a while to prepare, and that it was rewarding to see each person enjoying the Christmas meal.

"I'm feeding someone's mother, father, son and daughter," Hennigan said. "Because this is a military Family and they come here to eat, we put our best out to ensure they feel at home as much as possible."

Staff Sgt. Anthony Osbourn, an automated logistics supervisor from the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), said the Christmas meal brought back memories of what it was like to eat Christmas dinner back home with his Family.

"The Christmas dinner was well-prepared," said Osbourn, 37, a native of Mobile, Ala. "It made me miss home, especially the dressing. The dressing in the mess hall is always good, it always reminds me of home. The cooks did an outstanding job and I hope they keep up the good work." 



Carvings out of fruits, vegetables and butter are displayed at a dining facility at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Dec. 25 during the Christmas dinner for service members deployed to Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Time for
a little...

R&R in Qatar

Story and photo by
Dustin Senger
ASG–Qatar Public Affairs

The U.S. Central Command Rest and Recuperation Pass Program provides troops a brief respite from military operations throughout the command's area of responsibility.

The program is located in Qatar, an Islamic gulf state peninsula, protruding from Saudi Arabia's eastern coastline.

Area Support Group–Qatar executes the program from Camp As Sayliyah.

Numerous on and off-post opportunities are offered to USCENTCOM war fighters. On-post activities at Camp As Sayliyah provide plenty of recreation and relaxation outlets. Off-post activities create cultural opportunities for servicemembers to obtain a new perspective into Middle Eastern civilization.

"I have been in Iraq with a weapon and a constant threat," said Pfc. Ian Ramsey from Lexington, Ky. "Out here we don't have to worry about it. I'm glad to see Arabic people and how they live, without the danger."

Qatar is a safe and prosperous Arab society. The country has taken many steps over recent years to become better known as a modern educational and Islamic cultural venue within the Gulf countries.

"Souq" is an Arabic word for the shopping and trading establishments. Souq Waqif is one of the oldest shopping and trading areas in Doha, Qatar's capital and most prosperous city.

Newly renovated, the massive maze-like complex takes visitors through various shopping, intellectual and artistic experiences. It is well known for its dried spices and herbs of various colors and aromas.



Spc. Mark Perrenoud, from Redlands, Calif., looks at a three-dimensional illustration at a shopping area in Doha, Qatar, Dec. 8. Perrenoud left Iraq to participate in the U.S. Central Command Rest and Recuperation Pass Program at Camp As Sayliyah, providing a brief respite for war fighters throughout southwest Asia.

Fabrics and clothing are offered for immediate sale or with custom tailoring. Antiques and replicas are available for appreciation and purchase. Children can enjoy rides on a donkey, equipped with an old Arabic saddle and travel pouches.

"The mall trips are a standard westernized opportunity," said Sgt. Ricky Dumas from West Jordan, Utah. "Souq Waqif is a Middle Eastern cultural experience. There were a lot of hand-crafted things that we depend on machines to manufacture – and many of the men were working hard without basic luxuries, like air conditioning."

As the night falls on Souq Waqif, the streets light up in a warmly-lit Arabic ambience. People come from around Doha to enjoy the indoor and outdoor restaurants, rich in culture in themselves.

A Moroccan restaurant provides traditional décor and cuisines, consistent with the Arabic country in North Africa.

"I've never had a Moroccan dinner before," Dumas said. "I loved it – I'd go back again. I also enjoyed the restaurant's outdoor scenery."

Troops are proudly serving their country in contingency operations throughout southwest Asia. For many, it is their first experience in a peaceful Arabic society – one without war and insurgency.

The rest and recuperation program in Qatar recharges war fighter spirits while presenting a better cultural understanding. The servicemembers return to military operations feeling recharged with a greater hope and respect for Arab culture. 

Mortuary Affairs Soldiers say good-bye to one of their own

Story and photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Paul Tuttle
1st TSC Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Members of the 54th Quartermaster Company (Mortuary Affairs), 1st Sustainment Command (Theater), said good-bye to one of their own at a memorial service here, Dec. 15.

Staff Sgt. Gregory L. Elam died from a non-combat related incident during a physical training run, Dec. 11.

“This is hard. This is so very hard,” Staff Sgt. Jennifer Sweet, a mortuary affairs liaison officer to the U.S. National Support Element, told the assembly of personnel gathered at the Kandahar Airfield chapel. “Wednesday morning, we sent a hero home – one of us. He was our co-worker, fellow NCO, mentor, friend and brother.”

Elam, the mortuary affairs collection point team leader for the 54th QC (MA) from Fort Lee, Va., deployed to Afghanistan in June 2007 to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

The 39 year-old Columbus, Ga.,-native entered service in the U.S. Army in 1986 as a Bradley Fighting Vehicle mechanic. He left active duty after several years to further his education, and joined the Army Reserve after becoming a chaplain’s assistant.

After Sept. 11, 2001, he left the Reserve and reentered active duty as a mortuary affairs specialist. In August 2006, he joined the 54th as a squad leader and platoon sergeant.

Lt. Col. Kailon Dickens, commander of Logistics Task Force 82 of the U.S. National Support Element at Kandahar said that Elam was a passionate, caring professional.

“How did he touch so many of us?” he asked. “Because he and his team were responsible for providing dignity, reverence and respect” when processing and evacuating the remains of 46 coalition personnel and numerous Afghan security forces personnel and citizens during Elam’s tenure.

Dickens, a native of Williamsport, Pa., recalled eating lunch with Elam a



Lt. Col. Sherri L. Bosley (left), commander of the 1st Sustainment Command (Theater) Special Troops Battalion, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy L. Rutherford, command sergeant major of the 1st TSC STB, pay tribute to Staff Sgt. Gregory L. Elam at his memorial display in the chapel at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, Dec. 15.

week prior to Elam’s death.

“I asked him why he became a mortuary affairs specialist,” he said. “And he (Elam) said, ‘because I love taking care of people who have made the ultimate sacrifice.’”

Sweet, from Tyler, Texas, told the assembly that their job as mortuary affairs personnel is often difficult.

“We hide our emotions and take care of our fallen,” she said. “Once it is over and done and they are on their way home, then we talk about it behind closed doors. I know that Wednesday morning, you were proud of the way you were honored. It’s the least we could do for you.”

Elam’s first sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Shawn Harris, from Moultrie, Ga., told the assembly of coalition personnel that Elam’s loss was something he didn’t expect.

“When I came over here as the first sergeant, I knew I was going back home with everybody,” he said. “But never did I imagine I would be one short. But in my eyes, I’m still going back with 54 Soldiers, because even though Staff Sergeant Elam is not physically here, he will always be with us in our hearts, spiritually.”

Sgt. Sara Maze, of Kerman, Calif., assistant mortuary affairs team leader, recalled Elam’s fondness for cars and sunsets.

“I know that he is now in a better place, with his son right beside him, and with a great deal and variety of hot rods and cars,” she said, referring to Elam’s son, whom he lost while the boy was a small child. She concluded her remarks by reciting the British author, David Harris’ poem, “Just Beyond the Sunset.”

Pfc. James Berman, of Leesburg, Va., and Pfc. Cory Jacks, of Marion, Ind., members of the 54th, each spoke of the mentorship and friendship shared with Elam.

First Sgt. Christine Tedder, of Fayetteville, N.C., called the final roll and three volleys of rifle salutes echoed through the chapel followed by the somber notes of Taps.

Soldiers, from the commanding general of Combined Joint Logistics Task Force 82, Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, to the youngest private there, rendered honors at the end of the service.

All presented slow, reverent final salutes and some placed tokens of tribute on the display of a helmet, rifle, boots and dog tags. Soldiers somberly placed coins, unit patches or flags ripped from their shoulders on the display.

Elam was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal and the NATO Medal posthumously.

He is survived by his mother, wife, daughters and a step-daughter. 

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. POSTER CONTEST

The highest degree of...



Brotherhood

**- all poster entries will be
displayed at the observance -**

**1ST, 2ND, 3RD
Place winners will
receive prizes at the
MLK Observance on
16 January 2008**

**Submit by 8 JAN 2008 to the ASG - KU EO
OFFICE BLDG 216, Zone 1 RM 152**

**Why I
serve:**

Sgt. Alicia Templeton
1175th Transportation Company
Personnel NCO



The Jacksonville, Tenn., native explains why she chose to join the military.

"My sister and I joined JROTC in high school and we wanted to do something for ourselves. She couldn't join the Army so I went ahead and joined."

Just One Question...

"What is your New Year's Resolution for 2008?"



"To make master chief. Do my courses and put my packet together."

Senior Chief Petty Officer Mary Zullo
NAVELSG
Training non-commissioned officer
Flower Park, N.Y.



"Get home to see my wife."

Maj. Odell Miller
CDDOC
Senior Marine representative
San Antonio



"Lose weight."

Staff Sgt. Daisha Oliver
386th Expeditionary Mission Support Group
Staff non-commissioned officer
New York



"To be a better person. I want to be more giving and less vocal."

Sgt. 1st Class Kimberly A. Jones
HHC, 1st TSC
Prisoner Service Branch
Columbia, S.C.



"Stop cussing."

Pfc. Matthew Flores
HHC, 1st TSC
Food service specialist
San Francisco

What's happening around Kuwait ...



Photo illustration by Sgt. 1st Class Reeba Critser

Lt. Gen. James J. Lovelace, commanding general of Third Army/U.S. Army Central, cuts a cake with Soldiers at a Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, dining facility to celebrate Christmas in theater. Lovelace spent the entire day visiting servicemembers at various dining facilities in Kuwait.

***It's the most wonderful
time of the year***



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reeba Critser

(Above and below) Dining facilities throughout Kuwait dressed up their areas in honor of Christmas. The contractors who work there decorated the facility using food items such as butter, icing, pineapples, watermelon and pumpkins to help servicemembers get festive.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reeba Critser

(Below) Lt. Gen. James J. Lovelace, commanding general of Third Army/U.S. Army Central, motivates servicemembers present to run or walk the Dashing Through the Sand 5K Christmas fun run at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Dec. 25.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reeba Critser

Servicemembers brave the cold to run the Dashing Through the Sand 5K Christmas fun run at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Dec. 25.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Reeba Critser