



The Expeditionary Times

Proudly serving the finest Expeditionary service members throughout Iraq

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U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Rohr

Iraqi boys and girls enter the Red Tail Morale, Welfare and Recreation center as service members cheer for them during Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The event drew a crowd of more than 120 Iraqi children, many of whom came from an orphanage in the Duluiyah province. The day's events included playing with water balloons, swimming, musical chairs, soccer, and more.

Iraqi Kids Day activities draw crowd

STORY BY
SGT. JESSICA ROHR
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— More than 120 Iraqi children, ranging from five to 12 years of age, took over the Red Tail Morale, Welfare and Recreation center during Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Iraqi Kids Day is a collaborative effort of U.S. military service members and civilians on base to create an avenue for local outreach. The outreach fosters good relationships in the communities surrounding

JBB by allowing the children from local communities the opportunity to interact with U.S. forces in a safe and entertaining environment.

Of the 120 children, many of them came from the orphanage in Duluiyah, Iraq, giving them a well-deserved day of stimulating fun and play time.

The girls entered the building to cheer and laughter while they were paired with female service members as their mentors. The boys followed, receiving their own welcoming roar of applause, as they too were paired up with male service members for the day's events.

"I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to partake in, to help show the Iraqi kids that we are trying to make a difference in their

lives," said Spc. Stacey Hunnell, force generation plans specialist with the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Des Moines, Iowa, native. "It lets [Iraqi children] see that the U.S. military isn't bad. They got to get out and have fun for a day. Not all of them have that opportunity."

The day was filled with many activities for everyone to enjoy. Activities included tossing water balloons, swimming in a small, outdoor pool, musical chairs, soccer, the Guitar Hero videogame, and a magic show.

The children especially loved to dance as service members taught them some American moves; the children also enjoyed the photo booth, where they received a print-

out to take home in remembrance of their special day.

During this month's Iraqi Kids Day, Hallmark Cards sponsored a special station: "Kaleidoscope," an art experience for all ages.

Hallmark's Kaleidoscope kits allowed the children to let their creativity flow. The kits provided a hands-on art experience, filled with coloring paper, crayons, markers, stickers, and more.

"I was actually asked by my plant manager in Topeka, Mr. Tony Frohaska, about what they could do to help out," said Col. Ken Jones, deputy commanding officer of the 103rd ESC, and a Berryton, Kan., native, who works for Hallmark.

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**Touching photos capture Iraqi children
playing and connecting with service
members during Iraqi Kids Day at JBB**

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All people are connected

LT. COL. PAUL DIRKSMEYER
402ND AFSB CHAPLAIN



It's called the "Six Degrees of Separation." It's a theory stating that, through social networking and personal acquaintances, anyone—anyone at all—is only six degrees or "steps" away from anyone else in the civilized world.

In other words, if you start talking to a complete stranger and share some personal information with each other, through the networking of a series of acquaintances you and the stranger will discover that you have a connection through five people or fewer.

Some claim such a theory is utter nonsense and nothing more than urban legend. Personally I'm not so sure. I've had several episodes where the "stranger" with whom I'm speaking on a plane or in an airport and I realize we have some kind of connection through friends of friends of friends and so forth. I've never really counted the steps but I wouldn't be surprised if it occurred in fewer than five.

Case in point: an experience I had recently while waiting for a flight at the helicopter pad in Victory Base Camp, Baghdad. I struck up a conversation with a civilian contractor around my age also waiting for a flight. I asked him the usual questions: How long have you been here? What do you do? Where are you from?

He told me he was from the upper Midwest but grew up and graduated high school at a "little town outside Dallas." After asking him specifically which town, he said, "You probably have never heard of it; it's called Duncanville. I graduated high school there in 1986." I shook his hand and said: "I graduated there in 1976." I then asked him where in Duncanville he grew up. Turns out he grew up down the street and just around the corner where I had lived with my parents. We knew mutual friends and neighbors. Moreover, he married the sister of a guy I graduated high school with.

There, in the middle of VBC late one night, I met an acquaintance with whom I had a connection on so many levels. It's about this time that the phrase "ain't it a small world" comes into play. And this is not the only time such a thing has occurred. Since being here in theater I've run into people who have a connection to my brother, to my parents, and to mutual friends. I

have also run into friends over here who I haven't seen in many years.

Now, whether this was all pure chance, a testimony to the 'Six Degrees' theory, or divine providence from a God with a sense of humor who enjoys teasing His kids with little surprises, I honestly don't know—perhaps all three. But regardless, it is certainly indicative of how tightly woven we all are as part of the human fabric. Our Creator intended this from the onset by design.

Upon the forming of Adam, God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone.' Indeed it is not. We were created to be in community with one another rather than to be in isolation one from the other.

Regardless of one's personal views toward the 'Six Degrees' theory, its premise does warrant our serious consideration in that we are all intricately linked to one another as part of the human family. As poet John Donne wrote: "No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main..." Does this intricate linkage, this relationship we share with one another, mean anything for us? Indeed it does.

Our connection to one another carries with it a great responsibility we all share toward one another. No one in our circle of friends, family, coworkers and assorted acquaintances can suffer without everyone else in that group being affected as well. This is particularly true when someone close to us dies, especially when it's by suicide. It's then that our sense of "connectedness" to one another becomes painfully assaulted and ripped apart. And, sadly, this is an event that has occurred far too often in our Armed Forces recently, heightening our awareness of this growing tragedy.

Rather than offering a lecture on the common risk factors and warning signs of suicidal ideations, and reiterating the obvious about the importance of watchfulness for those likely candidates of suicide, I prefer to emphasize our relationships to one another. We are all truly connected to one another as part of the human family.

Get more connected; get to know your coworkers and those with whom you come into contact throughout the day. Get to know them and let them know you are there for them if and when necessary. Stay connected. No man, or woman, is an island. Again in the words of John Donne: "Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind."

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

103rd ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Mark W. Corson

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Mission Statement: The Expeditionary Times Staff publishes a weekly newspaper with the primary mission of providing command information to all service members, partners, and Families of the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) team and a secondary mission of providing a means for units on Joint Base Balad to disseminate command information to their audiences.

The Weekly Standard: To mail or not to mail?

MAJ. ERIC VERHOEF
103RD ESC DEPUTY IG



You've really got to question what people are thinking sometimes. For instance, who would you try and mail a M203 grenade? They wouldn't be able to shoot it back home because they don't have a M203. Others are a little smarter, but still not too bright. They try and mail a hand grenade home. At least they don't need a special weapon to set it off when they get home. Just pull the pin and watch as the police come to the scene with lights flashing and guns drawn.

Do I have your attention yet? Good, because too often Soldiers try to mail these and many other things the postal system calls "unmailables," and this is an attempt to inform you of what can and cannot be mailed. It is not all-inclusive, but it will give you a good overview.

As the postal saying goes, "Some things are just not meant to be mailed." So what are those things? I am going to use common terms and not the legal terms for simplicity's sake. If you want to mail something that resembles an item listed below, check with your APO for more details. By

the way, trying to mail explosives and weapons is against laws and other Army Regulations—not to mention common sense. Mailing some of the things below can really get you in trouble. Is it really worth your career?

- » Any explosives
- » Switchblades
- » Brass & Ammo
- » Weapons
- » Anything that makes a weapon work*
- » Drugs & Steroids, Drug paraphernalia**
- » Alcohol
- » Meats
- » Plants
- » Sand or Soil
- » Human Remains
- » Any Animal or Insect (dead or alive)
- » Hazardous Materials
- » Powerful magnets***
- » Pyrophoric substances
- » Pornography

* This includes magazines and other parts.

** Hookahs are authorized, if unused.

*** Able to cause a compass to deviate at 7 feet or more.

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You may ask, "Are Soldiers being caught?" Well, with the open parcel inspection done at the post office, packages getting X-rayed twice, and the U.S. Customs Service there to greet every package once it reaches the continental U.S., what do you think?

Combat Stress: Laughter is the best medicine

MAJ. LORIE L. FIKE
85TH COMBAT STRESS CONTROL



Last week's article addressed ways to increase your endorphin level. As a refresher, endorphins are the neurotransmitters in our brain that decrease our pain level and help us feel good. Laughter was one method mentioned that helps increase your endorphin level. This week I would like to explore more about laughing and how it can help your overall health.

Experts believe that laughter has many physical, mental and social benefits. Physically, laughter enhances the immune system by decreasing the levels of stress hormones, increasing endorphin levels and increasing infection-fighting antibodies. Laughter releases physical tension and increases blood flow to the heart, which may help protect you from heart attacks.

A study conducted at the University of Maryland Medical Center found that individuals with heart disease were 40%

less likely to laugh at funny situations as opposed to individuals without heart disease. Michael Miller, M.D., director of Preventive Cardiology at the MMC expressed that, in general, individuals with heart disease laughed less and exhibited more anger, even in positive situations.

Laughter can also improve an individual's mental health by easing tension and decreasing anxiety. Laughter can act as a distraction from angry emotions and improve one's mood. It may even help shift one's perspective and allow him or her to see the situation as less threatening or overwhelming.

Laughter also has a social component and many social benefits. Laughter can improve teamwork, diffuse conflict, promote bonding, strengthen relationships, and offer a social connection. Mary Matlin, a political consultant, wrote in her book *Letters to My Daughters*, "Laughter breaks the ice and soothes the soul."

Don't allow the stresses of adulthood to prevent you from experiencing the joys of life laughing. Seek out opportunities to laugh. Watch funny movies, go to a comedy show, read jokes, be around funny people, play games with friends

or engage in leisure activities. Also, don't forget to laugh at yourself. Sometimes we do funny things that embarrass us. We get self-conscious and our egos take over when others are laughing about something we did not intend them to laugh at. We assume they are laughing at us rather than laughing at the situation. You may need to look outside yourself for a moment in order to see the funny side of a situation. Ask yourself, "Would I laugh at my buddy if he just did what I did?" If the answer is "yes" then you need to laugh at yourself. Your ability to laugh may help prevent you from having an angry reaction.

The proverb, "Laughter is the best medicine," may actually be true physically, mentally, and socially. So remember, try to find the funny side of a situation, have a giggling fit, or laugh until your belly hurts. It may actually extend your life or improve your day because, as E.E. Cummings said, "The most wasted of all days is one without laughter."

To explore more about laughter refer to <http://library.thinkquest.org/25500/> or <http://www.umm.edu/features/laughter.htm> or simply type "laughter" into Google.

In-theater promotion recognizes Soldier's hard work



U.S. Army photo by Capt. David Hankins

STORY BY
CW2 RICHARD GUINOTTE
60TH ORDNANCE COMPANY

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq—

Soldiers with the 60th Ordnance Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), had the privilege to witness the battlefield promotion of one of their Soldiers Sept. 1 at the ammunition supply point on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Ryan Rudd, the nuclear, biological, and chemical noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 60th Ord. Co., and a Greenfield, Mass., native, was promoted under the battlefield promotion system. Re-implemented in early 2010, deserving Soldiers who go above and beyond can be meritoriously promoted while deployed in support of combat operations.

According to his leaders and peers, Rudd continually proves himself to be among the best with a long list of job titles, unmatched work ethic, respect, and admiration from all who have the privilege to work with him.

Rudd began the deployment in November 2009 as the company's NBC NCOIC and information management officer. Due to a number of Soldiers in the company redeploying early because of responsible draw-down requirements, Rudd assumed the supply NCOIC duties on top of his already busy schedule.

"Rudd's ability to successfully work multiple jobs simultaneously became apparent quickly," said 1st Lt. Christopher Weyant, executive officer of the 60th Ord Co., and a Colorado Springs, Colo., native. "It's not an easy task to track him down at work, but he has yet to come to me with an unsolved issue or a missed deadline."

Soldiers who work for Rudd have positive things to say as well.

"He has taught me how to be a better Soldier and that hard work does pay off," said Spc. John Karczewski, an administra-

tive clerk with the 60th Ord. Co., and a Pittsburgh native.

Rudd was already a promotable sergeant very close to making the cut-off for promotion. Attending college during this deployment was going to put him close to the maximum number of promotion points.

Sgt. 1st Class Daniels, a headquarters platoon sergeant with the 60th Ord. Co., and a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native, said the battlefield promotion just sped up the inevitable.

"It was only a matter of time before he made the rank through the normal channels," said Daniels. "This is just another competitive avenue for [junior enlisted] Soldiers and NCOs to get promoted based on their work performance."

Weyant explained the competitiveness of the promotion process.

"Rudd was not just given the rank," he said. "He undoubtedly earned it. His name and packet were submitted along with countless other names from other companies within the brigade. Only one of all those individuals gets the promotion per quarter."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Rohr

The Honorable Malcolm O'Neill, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, and Gen. Ann Dunwoody, commanding general of the Army Materiel Command, meet with Brig. Gen. Mark Corson, commanding general of the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Maryville, Mo., native, and his staff at the 103rd ESC Command Center Sept. 26 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gaelen Lowers

The Honorable Malcolm O'Neill, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, shakes hands with Maj. Rachel Humphrey, ordnance branch chief with the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Madison, Ala., native, who was honored with a coin from Gen. Ann Dunwoody, commanding general of the Army Materiel Command, for her contributions to the transition to Operation New Dawn, during Dunwoody's visit to Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Sept. 26.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Rohr

Col. Kent Savre, commander of the 36th Engineer Brigade, and an Edina, Minn., native, escorts Gen. Ann Dunwoody, commanding general of the Army Materiel Command, to her vehicle after receiving a briefing from his staff on their logistical status and the unique materiel requirements she might be able to assist in facilitating, Sept. 26 at the 36th Eng. Bde. Headquarters at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Four-star gets inside look at logistical ops

STORY BY
SGT. JESSICA ROHR
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— The Honorable Malcolm O'Neill, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics and Technology, and Gen. Ann Dunwoody, commanding general of the Army Materiel Command, visited Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Sept. 26 to get an inside, first-hand perspective of the logistical situation in the field.

"We are here to connect the industrial base to the foxhole," said Dunwoody during her speech at the Key Leaders' Luncheon. "This way, we are getting the feedback directly from service members on the ground. This is where to be to hear the truth straight from the field."

Dunwoody and O'Neill talked about their guidance and vision for sustainment in Iraq during the final 14 months ahead, according to Maj. Rachel Humphrey, ordnance branch chief with the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Madison, Ala., native, who was honored with a coin from Dunwoody.

"It was an honor to meet the senior logistician in the Army," said Humphrey. "It's important for the Army's senior leadership to get on the ground here and see for themselves what the current issues and concerns are as we move from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Operation New Dawn."

After the luncheon held in their honor, O'Neill and Dunwoody stopped for briefings with the 103rd ESC and the 36th Engineer Brigade to receive an overview of their logistical stability. Much of the discussion focused on what the Army Materiel Command can do to help facilitate the mission for Soldiers on ground.

"Gen. Dunwoody is truly committed to assisting deployed units with all of our unique materiel requirements," said Col. Kent Savre, commander of the 36th Eng. Bde., and an Edina, Minn., native. "As engineers, we have specialized route clearance and construction equipment that has evolved through the last eight years to counter the improvised explosive device threat. The Army Materiel Command's assistance with the fielding of new technologies, in-theater maintenance support and home-station servicing of left-behind equipment, is critical to our successful mission accomplishment."

A tour of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade's platforms at JBB followed the meetings with 103rd ESC and

36th Eng. Bde. The honorary guests were taken through the Assured Mobility Systems Route Clearance Regional Support Center, Stryker Regional Support Area, Life Cycle Extension for the Rough Terrain Container Handler, and the RG-33 independent suspension system upgrade under the Joint Program Office Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle. Each platform provides maintenance support for their assigned military vehicles.

O'Neill and Dunwoody took a look at how the 402nd AFSB managed the responsible drawdown of equipment while sustaining the war fighters.

Their visit ended with a goodbye greeting by Maj. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, and a Chicago, Ill., native, along with a few Soldiers.

"First, I would like to say how proud I am of the Acquisition, Logistics and Technology community...for getting us to this opportunity for New Dawn," said Dunwoody. "There has been a huge undertaking that has been below the radar screen to get to where we are, down to 50,000 [troops], and retrograding millions of pieces of equipment out of this theater responsibly so we can reset it and prepare for the next 10 to 15 years."

Laundry team provides clean clothes, comfort

STORY AND PHOTO BY
1ST LT. MICHAEL SHEAR
540TH QUARTERMASTER COMPANY

JOINT SECURITY STATION HEIDER,



Iraq— Joint Security Station Heider, Iraq, is about as small and remote as a Forward Operating Base gets. With fewer than 200

Soldiers, there are no permanent laundry facilities here. That's where a shower, laundry and cleaning repair (SLCR) team comes in.

The SLCR team, from 540th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), consists of five Soldiers, who provide laundry support to the base using the Laundry Advanced System. The LADS is a self-powered, transportable laundry system consisting of two separate large drums, each drum capable of washing and drying 25 bags of clothes in the same cycle. The system is mounted on a flatbed trailer along with a generator, fuel pod and storage container.

Due to its remote location, laundry support is an essential service to the Soldiers who live and work at JSS Heider.

"Our mission spares Soldiers from dealing with laundry, which allows them more time to focus on their missions and [military operational specialty]-related operations," said Staff Sgt. Jamel Khabeer, SLCR team leader with the 540th QM Co., and a Virginia Beach, Va., native.

Capt. Tyonne Carter, commander of the 540th QM Co., and a Columbia, Md., native, explained the importance of the SLCR team



Staff Sgt. Jamel Khabeer, shower, laundry and cleaning repair team leader with the 540th Quartermaster Company (Field Service), 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), places laundry bags inside the Laundry Advanced System for cleaning at Joint Security Station Heider, Iraq.

providing a service that many people take for granted. "Soldiers are able to return from a convoy, drop off laundry and have clean clothes 24 hours later."

While washing clothes may not be the most glamorous job, it is certainly imperative to the combat mission in northern Iraq.

"Our service boosts morale and contributes to the overall health and welfare of Soldiers," said Carter. "Soldiers here at JSS Heider will certainly agree that pulling on a

fresh pair of [the Army Combat Uniform] is a great start to a new day."

Many of the comforts taken for granted at larger bases, such as fast food, movie theaters, post exchanges (PX), and gyms are a distant memory for the team.

"Not being able to get to the PX to buy personal hygiene items is challenging," said Spc. Latara Daniels, a LADS operator with the 540th QM Co., and a Syracuse, N.Y., native.

"We have to find ways to stretch out the supplies we have, and find new ways to get supplies transported here to JSS Heider," Khabeer added.

Despite its challenges, the 540th Quartermaster Company SLCR team has found their mission to be very rewarding. In addition, because of its small size, the residents at JSS Heider have become a very close-knit group.

"Meeting new people is the best part of the job," said Daniels.

Soldiers learn new skill sets, start new mission



Spc. Jimmy Davis, a fueler with the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and an Anderson, Ind., native, refuels a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter while two other Soldiers with the 512th QM Co. assist.

STORY AND PHOTO BY
2ND LT. BLAIR GRIMES
512TH QUARTERMASTER COMPANY

FORWARD OPERATING BASE COBRA, Iraq— The 512th Quartermaster Company has hit another milestone in their deployment: the end of the Forward Arming and Refueling Point (FARP) mission at Forward Operating Base Cobra, Iraq.

Soldiers with the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), out of Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., trained at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, at the FARP site for two weeks, and then traveled to Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, to train for an additional two weeks. They began the actual mission in mid-June, a little more than a month after their arrival in country.

"When we were at Speicher, we were able to get more involved with the process, and eventually we were able to take over the mission for a week," said 1st Lt. Josh Kuster, operations officer-in-charge with the 512th QM Co., and a Selinsgrove, Pa., native. "We learned a lot during our time there." He added that, even though most of the Soldiers' primary military occupational specialties are as water treatment specialists, they quickly adapted to fueling operations, and were even able to grasp the ammunition aspects to effectively support all helicopters operating in the vicinity of FOB Cobra.

"We refueled three different types of birds: Blackhawks, Kiowas, and Chinooks—and each bird used a different nozzle," said Spc. Jimmy Davis, a fueler with the 512th QM Co., and an Anderson, Ind., native. "Other than that, the job was fairly uncomplicated." He added that the jump from a water treatment specialist to a fueler was easier than expected because fuelers use much less equipment.

The mission consisted of quickly and safely refueling any air assets that come into FOB Cobra, said Kuster. The team refueled approximately five helicopters a day, but since the schedule often varied, the team ran 24-hour operations.

"There were schedules for some of the flights, but Kiowas were always unscheduled and would often come in unexpected," said Kuster. "Over the past five months, we refueled close to 500 helicopters, using 65,000 gallons of fuel."

The team will return to JBB shortly after they hand over operations to the incoming unit.

Stars visit JBB for handshakes, photos

STORY AND PHOTO BY
PVT. ZACHARY ZUBER
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— Former major league baseball pitcher Randy Johnson, actor Dennis Haysbert, and actor Robert Patrick, visited service members during a handshake tour Sept. 26-27 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

The United Services Organization sponsored the tour, which brought the three stars to JBB's main USO, as well as to the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Command Center and several other locations on the base.

"It's fantastic, it's not every day that you get to meet a big celebrity, especially here," said Sgt. Chris Dalthorp, personnel accountability/casualty liaison team noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 103rd ESC, and a Nevada, Iowa, native. "It's really nice that they were able to take the time and come out here to show their support."

The guys on tour felt it was just as great to get the opportunity to spend time with the service members serving at JBB.

"I know it's a difficult job here, and we are just here to help boost morale for the troops," said Haysbert, who starred in TV shows "The Unit" and "24." "I know they get a thrill out of seeing celebrities and just anyone who comes to see them. So I feel like I've done my job."

One 103rd ESC Soldier had a more personal reason to meet the visitors, Haysbert, in particular.

"My grandmother, who is 93, just loves him," said Maj. Sherrell Murray, force generation officer, 103rd ESC, and an N.C. native. "Every time he comes on the TV the whole family just jokes that that's her boyfriend. It's just great to see celebrities supporting us and making the commitment to come over here."

This was the first trip for Johnson, who won a World Series ring with the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2001. It has been an interesting and rewarding experience, said Johnson.

"I've wanted to do this in the past and just haven't had the opportunity," said Johnson. "This whole experience has been overwhelming, to come in for the first time and introduce myself to the Soldiers, and hear their stories."

Service members were able to get photos and autographs to remember this visit. The tour stops have given the three men memories for long after they go home.



Sgt. Chris Dalthorp, personnel accountability/casualty liaison team noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Nevada, Iowa, native, shakes hands with Dennis Haysbert during the movie and television star's United Services Organization tour of Iraq Sept. 27 at the 103rd ESC Command Center on Joint Base Balad.

"I just left the hospital, where I was bowling with the doctors, and went from that levity to seeing a Soldier come in who needed treatment," said Patrick, who starred in "The Unit" and several movies, including "Flags of Our Fathers." "It's a very humbling experience to come over here, and I'm just thrilled that they've given me the opportunity to do it."

Grueling workout program whips troops into shape

STORY BY
1ST LT. DANIEL REEP
15TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE

ADDER, Iraq— For the last month, Soldiers with the 15th Transportation Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), stationed at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq, have been taking part in a high-intensity cardio/core training exercise program known as "Insanity."

What is Insanity?

"It's bananas, y'all," said Staff Sgt. Lackresia Wright, a truckmaster with the 15th Trans. Co., and a Tampa, Fla., native.

Insanity is exactly as it's named—an intense, cardio-driven workout that is not meant for the mentally or physically weak. It was made for those who want to make a change in their strength, health, or appearance as long as they possess the drive, motivation, will, and determination.

"It's a good workout," said Capt. Stacey Jelks, commander of the 15th Trans. Co., and a Bloomington, Ill., native. "I'm constantly challenged every day I do it. I definitely see the results."

The workouts take between 30 to 40 minutes each, and consist of a blend of cardio, plyometrics, and resistance training.

"It is a very intense workout and it takes a lot of heart to complete," said Sgt. Dustin Moyer, a human resources noncommis-

sioned officer with the 15th Trans Co., and a Clayton, Okla., native.

The program is an eight-week workout regimen consisting of six cardio-intense workouts per week, with one day of stretching and cardio recovery. The current program will end in just over a month, but for now, the Soldiers with the 15th Trans Co. continue to get up every morning and work out with the command group, who insists on leading the workout from the front.

"We are now completing the first phase of the program and will be heading into phase two in about a week, which adds another grueling 15 to 30 minutes of time onto each workout," said Moyer.

Before the company heads into phase two, they look back on the first week of the program, when even the most athletic would leave the morning workout aching, barely able to walk the next day. Now, motivated to get results and finish what they started, the 15th Trans. Co. "Roadwarriors" are feeling strong enough to push through.

"It could be that we are getting stronger or that we are just getting used to the program, but personally, I believe that the motivation comes from our leadership who are there every morning doing the program with us," said Wright.

On any given day, the Soldiers with 15th Trans Co. can expect to see their leadership up front, sweating and actively participating in the program.

"When you walk in and see your whole chain of command there and motivated, it makes you feel good about yourself and makes you want to give that much more," said Moyer.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Charles Bathea

Soldiers with the 15th Transportation Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), engage in the "Insanity" workout program Sept. 11 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Catchpenny performs tenth tour in Iraq

STORY AND PHOTO BY
PVT. ZACHARY ZUBER
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— Though Catchpenny started small with their first album “Chance For a Lifetime” in December 2005, their popularity has grown greatly, and they performed for service members on Sept. 22 at the Sustainer Theater at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

With a fast tempo, plenty of crowd involvement, and a mix of covers and custom tunes, the band provided an exciting show.

“It was great they had a great mix of original tunes and covers that everybody knew,” said Capt. Benjamin Johnston, assistant S3 with the 36th Engineer Brigade. “The crowd interaction at the end was pretty cool, getting everybody up to sing a song about America.”

The gig at JBB was part of the band’s tenth tour of the country, and they have experienced quite a bit along the way. After so many tours, the band has some interesting stories to tell about their experiences in Iraq.

“We came over the first time in August 2008, and then almost every other month for about a year or so,” said Christian Schauf, singer and guitarist for the band. “We had one day where we had a surface-to-air missile, a car bomb, and mortar all on our way from one spot to the next, and it was pretty nerve-wracking.”

That has not discouraged their desire to provide entertainment for troops throughout Iraq. However, after the first couple of tours, they saw the need for shows at smaller bases that bands couldn’t get to because they carried too much equipment, said Schauf.



Catchpenny performs a show for service members during the band’s tenth tour of Iraq on Sept. 22 at the Sustainer Theater at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

“Cody, our sound man, helped us design a system that would fit in Blackhawks, so that we could make it to the smaller bases where they just don’t get anything like that,” said Schauf. “That was really our mission for

a long time, to go to those bases and play shows.”

They get the same value from all the shows they play, regardless of crowd size.

“We have felt really good about doing

this, and always have had a great response,” said Schauf. “We’re not some name that everybody knows, but when someone comes up and says they really enjoyed it, I really feel good about it.”

Senior leader revisits memories, inducts NCOs

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. GAELN LOWERS
3RD SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq—

Coming home means different things to different people. For Command Sgt. Maj. Clifton Johnson, command sergeant major of the 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and Lima, Ohio, native, the opportunity to come home was “an honor and a privilege.”

“There’s no place I would rather be than here with the 26th,” said Johnson at the 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division’s noncommissioned officer induction ceremony. “As a command sergeant major, to come back and speak at an NCO induction ceremony at the first battalion that you led into combat, that’s pretty exciting to me.”

Johnson spoke to 17 “Challenger” Soldiers Sept. 17 at Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq, during their induction ceremony, focusing on the importance of becoming an NCO and what the NCO Corps means.

“As leaders, we want newly promoted noncommissioned officers to realize that it is a huge step,” he said. “It’s not just a promotion. Now those Soldiers are joining the time-honored corps, the backbone of the Army, the trainer of all Soldiers, regardless of their rank.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Pegues, command sergeant major of the 26th BSB, and a Thomasville, N.C., native, echoed Johnson’s sentiments about the NCO Corps.

“It’s an Army tradition,” he said. “This is so newly promoted sergeants can understand the values and history of being a noncommissioned officer.”

Many Soldiers said it is a great honor to be inducted into the Corps of the Noncommissioned Officers. Some, like Sgt. Christopher Allen, an armorer with Company B, 26th BSB, and a New Port Richey, Fla., native, were in the battalion when Johnson was their command sergeant major. Allen said it was an added bonus to have him there to see him cross that threshold into the NCO Corps.

“It’s a great honor,” he said. “I remember he used to call us ‘stud’ every time he would see us. To see him up there inducting me as an NCO means a lot to me. He smiled when he saw me up there on the stage.”

That smile was one of remembrance, said Johnson.

“When he first got to the 26th, he was a [private second class],” said Johnson of Allen. “I ran into several Soldiers who were privates when I was a battalion [command sergeant major], and to see them become noncommissioned officers is huge. It also feels good to know that you might have sparked something back in them. It’s pretty awesome to see.”

Johnson stated that, wherever he goes in the United States Army, the 26th BSB will always hold a special place in his heart.

“I used to tell them that they are the greatest brigade support battalion in the United States Army,” he remembered. “Then to go into combat and have them prove it. Not only did I think they were, but during [Operation Iraqi Freedom III], they proved they were. They have no other choice but to hold a special place in my heart.”



Command Sgt. Maj. Clifton Johnson, command sergeant major of the 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Lima, Ohio, native, shakes hands with Sgt. Christopher Allen, an armorer with Company B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and a New Port Richey, Fla., native, inducting him into the 26th BSB’s noncommissioned officer induction ceremony Sept. 17 at Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Angel Wallace



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Angel Wallace
A local Iraqi boy shows his skills on the beanbag toss with his mentor, Capt. Paul Lee, S-6 for the 14th Movement Control Battalion, and a New York native, during Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

KIDS DAY cont. from page 1

“Knowing we have access to so many paper products and that we did the Kaleidoscope event years ago in Topeka, I thought we might have some of the old projects left over. [Frohaska] liked it so much that he turned this over to our corporate office, and everything happened fairly quickly after that.”

Iraqi Kids Day started two years ago as a medical outreach program teaching how to treat and prevent burns, as the base saw an influx of children with burns. With the help of Maj. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, and a Chicago, Ill., native, it has evolved into a once-a-month, daylong event of fun interaction for Iraqi children.

A U.S. Department of State representative said, “It’s to show that we are not the bad guys. We have a lot of people on base that don’t get to interact with the Iraqis, and a lot of Iraqis don’t get to interact with the Americans. The only time they get to see them is in ‘full battle rattle’ [protective gear]. Now you have a chance for the Iraqis to come on base and interact with the Americans, and see how friendly we are and how we are helping them.”

At the end of the day, each child was sent home with a book bag filled with school supplies to help them stay on the right track.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Rohr
Spc. Stacey Hunnell, force generation plans specialist with the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Des Moines, Iowa, native, colors with We’am, a local Iraqi child, during Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

RIGHT: A sister and brother pose for the camera during Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at the Red Tail Morale, Welfare and Recreation center at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. More than 120 local Iraqi children, along with service members from JBB, participated in the day's events.

LEFT: a local Iraqi boy gives his best effort to kick a soccer ball and score for his team at Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Other events that the children participated in included throwing water balloons, swimming, dancing and more.

BELOW: An Iraqi Army Soldier plays with children from the local community as part of Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 that the Red Tail Morale, Welfare and Recreation center at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. More than 120 local children came to JBB, many of whom were from an orphanage in Duluiyah, and participated with service members in various activities including throwing water balloons, swimming in a small, outdoor pool, playing soccer, the Guitar Hero video-game, and more.



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Angel Wallace



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Angel Wallace

ABOVE: A local Iraqi boy participating receives a music lesson from volunteer Mr. Edward Ebel, an information assurance network engineer with United States Forces-Iraq, during his visit to Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at the Red Tail Morale, Welfare and Recreation center at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

RIGHT: Master Sgt. Carol Whitmore, medical operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 103rd ESC, sits with one of the Iraqi girls who participated in Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at the Red Tail Morale, Welfare and Recreation center at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. More than 120 local Iraqi children participated with service members in various games and activities throughout the day.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessica Rohr



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Angel Wallace

Soldiers emerge victorious at Fight Night

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC. GLEN BAKER
224TH SUSTAINMENT BRIGADE

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE



ADDER, Iraq— Three Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), emerged victorious in the mixed martial arts “Fight Night” event Sept. 18 at Memorial Hall on Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Spc. Tony Chien, Army direct ordering specialist with HHC, 224th Sust. Bde., and a Long Beach, Calif., native; Spc. Michael Ferguson, signal support systems specialist with HHC, 224th Sust. Bde., and an Inglewood, Calif., native; and Spc. Christopher Stafford, intelligence analyst with HHC, 224th Sust. Bde., and a Buena Park, Calif., native, discussed strategy as well as the training involved to help them win their matches.

“I worked on striking, wrestling, and jiu-jitsu,” said Chien. His fight ended with a rear choke hold in the second round.

He also said that he ate a healthy diet. “I stayed away from processed food like white bread and pasta; I eat a lot of wheat bread, fruits and vegetables,” he said.

Prior to his bout, he described his fight strategy. “I will keep my distance, throw jabs” he said. “I’m planning to wrestle him to the ground, gain my position, and ground and pound.”

Ferguson, who won his match in the first round by technical knockout, described how he trained for the fight.

“It was a lot of punches,” said Ferguson. “Stick and move. Jab. It was a lot of ground work and hard work.”

Stafford, who also won his match in the first round by technical knockout, used a similar strategy.

“I want to stay up and just box with the guy – keep my distance – use my legs,” said Stafford. He also did vigorous workouts to help his stamina.

“I worked on my cardio,” he said. “I did jump rope, spinning, and circuit workouts.”

Spc. Marco Alamillo, medical logistics noncommissioned officer-in-charge with HHC, 224th Sust. Bde., and a Redlands, Calif., native; Maj. Robert Matthews, commodities officer-in-charge with HHC, 224th Sust. Bde., and a Sacramento, Calif., native; and Sgt. Raymond Solis, an ammunition supply sergeant with HHC, 224th Sust. Bde., and a San Diego, Calif., native, also participated in the event.

Alamillo, who fought all three rounds with his opponent, described how he trained for the fight.

“I did the same [as my last fight], just a lot more sparring sessions,” said Alamillo. “That’s how I got this busted up nose and black eyes.”

He said that he, too, ate a healthy diet. “I ate chicken, beef, pasta, rice, salad and vegetables,” said Alamillo. “I stay away from all temptation junk food.”

Alamillo added that he was less nervous going into this fight than his last one. “I’m used to the crowd now,” he said.



Maj. Robert Matthews, commodities officer-in-charge with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Sacramento, Calif., native, punches his opponent during Fight Night Sept. 18 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

Matthews, who also fought all three rounds with his opponent, described how he trained for his fight. “I worked out at the gym five days a week with Master Sgt. Cutler and Sgt. 1st Class Oliveros,” he said. “We went through some [submission] drills, punching bags and pads.”

He described his fight strategy. “My strategy is to strike first and try not to go to the ground,” said Matthews. “My strength is stand-up.”

Solis, who body-slammed his opponent down to the mat in the first round, described his training regimen. “I trained in the gym five days per week, sometimes five times per day,” Solis said. “I cut down on my weight and became more flexible.”

The three Soldiers with HHC, 224th Sust. Bde. who trained all six fighters include Master Sgt. Steve Cutler, logistics readiness NCOIC and a Paso Robles, Calif., native; Sgt. 1st Class Oliveros, routing identification code geographical NCOIC and a Sun

Valley, Calif., native; and Staff Sgt. Enrick Reyes, the commander’s driver, and a San Diego native. Oliveros focused on stand-up fighting, Cutler emphasized ground fighting, and Reyes concentrated on jiu-jitsu techniques.

Cutler described what the trainers did differently from the July Fight Night to train the fighters. “We emphasized a lot on striking, and getting and maintaining position on the ground,” he said. “We tweaked our training slightly by doing this, but we pretty much stuck to our program. We really kept it simple as far as ground work [and] focused on different ways to control from the ground, which did help Stafford as well as the other fighters.”

Sgt. 1st Class Oliveros really worked hard with the guys on their stand up, and as you saw, it paid off. Myself and Staff Sgt. Reyes kept them focused on their ground game for maintaining control... We saw that the guys really focused and listened to us from the

corner, which enabled them to capitalize on their opponents’ mistakes.”

Oliveros described how Stafford and the other fighters improved upon their skills. “[Their] ground game developed much more, but most important of all, [they] remained calm and stayed focused,” he said. “All the guys just did what we trained them in and gave a superb performance.”

He added that the training will continue to evolve as they look toward the next round of bouts.

“I think the ground game seems to be the preferred choice, so that would be the area of concentration for the fighters,” said Oliveros. “For the November fights, hopefully some new blood will step up to the challenge.”

He also had a special message for Fight Night fans.

“Thanks to those who came out to support these young guys,” said Oliveros. “It builds their confidence when the crowd is there to cheer them on.”

Repair shop keeps unit's eyes, ears fully functional

STORY BY
1ST LT. MICHELLE HART
298TH SUPPORT MAINTENANCE COMPANY

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq— Soldiers with the 298th Support Maintenance Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), communications and electronics shop focus their efforts to ensure Soldiers are ready for critical missions.

The section is divided into two major shops: night vision device repair and communication repair. Both teams concentrate their service to ensure that the eyes and ears on convoys and other critical missions are fully operational.

The night vision device repair section diagnoses and repairs most night vision devices, and performs annual services on them. They even fabricated a dark room to better diagnose and protect the light-sensitive components of the devices.

"The high resolution/low resolution testing is more accurate in a dark room, and it does not impact other operations in the shop," said Spc. Eric Hall, a computer detection system

repair technician with the 298th SMC, and a Trion, Ga., native.

Spc. Jarraill Dodson, a computer detection system repair technician, and a Fort Worth, Texas, native said that vision is a "key asset" to mission success, so the team's job in the repair shop is important. "We repair and/or replace all faults. The night vision devices have lots of small pieces that can break easily."

The night vision device repair team not only repair small pieces, but also everything from battery housings to broken knobs, ensuring the devices are safe. Additionally, they purge the devices with nitrogen gas.

"Purging protects the internal components and keeps [the devices] running," said Spc. James Weldon, a computer detection system repair technician with the 298th SMC, and a Gainesville, Ga., native.

The communication repair section focuses on any type of communication equipment from Single Channel Ground to Air Radio Systems (SINCGARS), to headsets and vehicle intercommunication (VIC) systems. The section sees many different types of equipment, including six versions of SINCGARS and multiple radio software. They use automated test equipment to diagnose and determine the root causes of any problem.

The company offers a headset exchange program, which allows units with broken headsets to walk into the shop and exchange the broken headset with a refurbished one. Units can have their communication systems operational within a few minutes.

"Many customers think the whole system is messed up, but it could just be one headset," said Spc. Donovan L. Manguba-Glover, a radio and communications security repair technician with the 298th SMC, and a Wahiawa, Hawaii, native.

The section also provides convoy support. Any type of communication issue can be assessed by the section and over 80 percent of the time repaired within a few hours. They ensure that antennas are emplaced for maximum effectiveness without impacting the mission.

The tedious job of ensuring the communications system in a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle is critical, as errors in the wiring or plugs could cause the entire system to malfunction.

"We make sure the job gets done before the mission," said Spc. William B. Adams, a computer detection system repair technician with the 298th SMC, and an Atlanta native. "If you come in and tell us you have a mission in four hours, we don't stop working until the job is complete."

Platoon sergeant shares experience, leads Soldiers

STORY BY
SPC. STEVEN ARTIM
319TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Ronnie Patrick

Staff Sgt. John Young, a platoon sergeant with the 319th Transportation Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Columbus, Ohio, native, shares his knowledge and experience with his Soldiers Aug. 5 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq— Soldiers with the 319th Transportation Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), are in the midst of their first deployment, while several others are two and three-time veterans who bring valuable experience to the unit.

Staff Sgt. John Young, a platoon sergeant with the 319th Trans Co, and a Columbus, Ohio, native, initially began his military career in the United States Marine Corps, before transferring to the Army Reserves. He serves as a juvenile counselor in his civilian career. Young is a two-time veteran who brings his previous deployment experience to his platoon and unit.

"My job on the civilian side has helped me a lot during the course of my Army career," said Young. "It's helped me to become a better mentor and leader throughout my years of being an NCO [noncommissioned officer]."

He recalls his first deployment during the initial push into Iraq, and explained how the environment has improved dramatically over the years since then. His first deployment was also with the 319th Trans Co.

"A lot of the things we're concerned about now in Iraq weren't an issue then," he said. "For example, IEDs [improvised explosive devices] were not as common as they are now. But things have definitely changed for the better; the Iraqi Army and police have stepped up tremendously since the last time I was here."

Force protection team maintains base, Soldier safety

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. JORGE ANAYA
40TH QUARTERMASTER COMPANY



Pfc. James Windham, a force protection team member with the 319th Transportation Company, 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), guides a vehicle approaching a checkpoint Sept. 13 at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq— Soldiers with various units, including the 110th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 224th Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), work day and night inspecting every convoy and each piece of equipment that comes through the Entry Control Point at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq.

The Soldiers inspect convoys and their drivers to ensure the safety of everyone located within COB Adder. Thus, they are the first line of defense for the base. The force protection team is comprised of

Soldiers from different units under the 110th CSSB, and is managed by the 224th Sust. Bde. The ECP is manned and operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"I enjoy working here because I am aware of the impact my job has in providing security for everyone," said Pfc. James Windham, a FP team member with the 319th Transportation Company, and a Fort Meyers, Fla., native. "Force Protection, regardless of where you are, should never be taken lightly. One's actions can affect the life of others almost directly, which is why we are required to complete additional training."

Windham said that the FP team is also supported by the "Securing Our Country" security force. They assist with processing drivers and passengers of large convoys.

"Many of the convoys that come through can have as many as 90 vehicles at one time," said Spc. Cory Fagyas, a FP team member with the 15th Transportation Company,

110th CSSB, and a Buffalo, N.Y., native. "With so many vehicles, it is difficult to keep everything under control and processed in a timely manner. Without their [the security force's] help, we would be out here all night, non-stop, processing trucks and personnel."

Fagyas said that the teamwork between the Soldiers and the security force provides more coverage during search operations.

"We are vigilant, whether it is by using our electronic tracking systems or manual methods," said Staff Sgt. Joaquin Mendiola, FP noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 40th Quartermaster Company, 110th CSSB, and a Sinajana, Guam, native. "By tracking every convoy, I am afforded a chance to lay forth a plan on how to process a large convoy. We provide the first line of security before they can come in to the base. While everyone works and sleeps, we are here performing our duty to the fullest to ensure everybody's safety."



Save money on electronics by searching the Net

SGT. 1ST CLASS RAY CALEF
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



Over the last couple of months, this column has discussed many electronic devices that Soldiers use here and when they are stateside, and offered different choices that appeal to a wide audience.

This week, I want to focus on how to get the best possible price for certain products, as well as how to search for them on the Internet, and the best way to make an informed choice based off those searches.

I will give my own examples first, which will show you how I went about my search and what choices I made: i.e., buying extended warranty or repair options, when I found what I was looking for.

A few years ago, I wanted to purchase another HD television. The area my wife has banished me to, the basement, has had a 50-inch Sony HD LCD rear projection TV since 2006. This has been a fantastic TV, by the way.

My wife wanted to go with a flat screen upstairs, something not quite as big, and not as thick as the rear projections, which are typically 12-14 inches deep. Since we were happy with Sony, who makes only LCD televisions, I looked into a 40-inch LCD model.

I utilized Amazon in the beginning to get an idea of price and to garner feedback on the models I was interested in. This is a good beginning point, especially since they have just about everything you could be looking for to begin with. The Sony model I was looking at retailed for \$1,349.99. I then copied the exact nomenclature of the model on Amazon's site and pasted it in Google.

A number of different sellers and resellers appeared, Nextag being a popular site. From there, we chose a site that had the cheapest offering out of about 15 different sellers. They were selling the same TV for \$1,049.99. The warranty was the same, so the only thing I was concerned with was repair. If I would have bought this TV from Best Buy, I could take the TV back to them if I had any issues with the TV. Not so when ordering from a reseller in Virginia. I called the 800 number to ask them about this and they offered me a one-year extended repair warranty, different from a regular parts warranty, which meant they would have Sony parts and technicians come to my home to work on it.

My concern was how much that would cost. Total cost quoted to me? \$199. I did the math. I was still saving \$100 by purchasing my product this way, with all the benefits of a local purchase. The kicker for me was when the representative told me I would have had to ship the TV on my dime if I didn't want the extra protection, which would have cost me more than what I shelled out for the repair warranty.

From that experience, I thought we could look at a product featured in this column in August. One of the products featured was a Canon PowerShot SX201S 12.1 Megapixel camera. It retails at \$345 on Amazon.

The first screen that popped out from a Google search was this:

Shopping Results for Canon PowerShot SX201S 12.1 Megapixel camera. Clicking on that link brought me to a page with different sellers. The first one I looked at said \$307, it had 965 reviews to help with finding out about the product from other folks, and additional sellers, from Wal Mart to Overstock.com. 212 different sellers, as a matter of fact. Many with free shipping and no tax. Seller ratings are available to assist as well.

Amazon's price is pretty competitive, but I found the same camera on ShopDigitalCorp.com for \$318, free shipping and no tax. So you can save close to 30 dollars in this transaction, allowing you to buy a high-capacity digital card. The deals are out there, it just takes a little time and effort to get them.

Correction

A photograph published in the September 29 issue of the paper, depicting the Arizona Cardinals cheerleaders' visit to Joint Base Balad, Iraq, incorrectly attributed the photograph to Spc. Lukas McWhorter. The photograph was taken by Spc. Adrian Muehe, Expeditionary Times Staff.

The Expeditionary Times welcomes comments, suggestions and/or complaints about errors that warrant corrections.

Please e-mail any questions or comments to:
expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil

Word on the Street

If you could have a superpower, which one would you choose?



"I wanna be able to shoot mass quantities of popcorn from my hands, so that no one has to wake me up on a down day to use my microwave for popcorn."

Spc. Andrew Gulley, transportation coordinator with the 60th Ordnance Company, 3rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Jacksonville, Fla. native



"If I could have one super power it would be to be able to steal people's talents, because I want to be able to be good at everything."

Sgt. Jessica Heintz, operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 60th Ordnance Company, 3rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Detroit native



"I would be a jumper, so every day I could teleport back home, see my kids, and come back without anyone ever knowing the difference."

Sgt. Stephen Cosby, storage noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 60th Ordnance Company, 3rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and an Oceanside, Calif., native

THEATER PERSPECTIVES

“...We will, God willing, be able to overcome the difficulties, challenges and problems, and complete the construction of the institutions of state for a free, democratic Iraq.”

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, thanking his Shiite allies for the support that will likely hand him another term as prime minister

“Iraqi forces have proven their competency, and with cooperation of our forces, they succeeded to reduce the rate of armed operations in Mosul.”

Col. Charles Sexton, commander of U.S. Forces in Ninewa province, on armed operations in Mosul reducing by 87 percent

“Iraq has continued to make good progress in rebuilding key economic institutions...”

Naoyuki Shinohara, International Monetary Fund deputy managing director, speaking in connection to more than 740 million dollars being released to Iraq as part of the second installment of a 24-month loan

“There is a risk over time of developing a cadre of military leaders that politically, culturally and geographically have less and less in common with the people they have sworn to defend.”

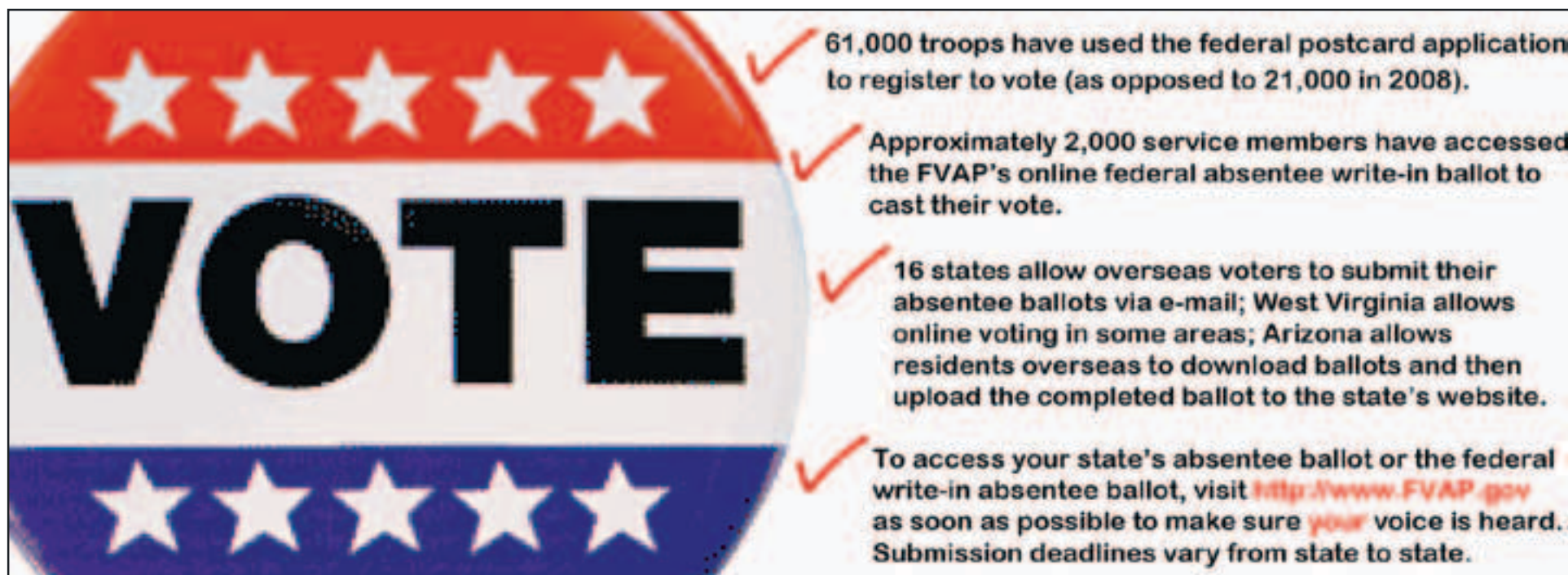
Defense Secretary Robert Gates in a speech at Duke University

“The new Iraq will not budge to foreign pressures...they want to decide their own future...”

Hoshiyar Zebari, Iraq's foreign minister, on breaking Iraq deadlock

CASTING VOTES FROM OVERSEAS

This year is looking hopeful for service members who wish to cast their votes by submitting absentee ballots from overseas. According to Bob Carey, director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program, service members have already begun to submit their ballots, and it is only a few days into the absentee voting season. The main reason why this year is looking promising is that the FVAP has focused more on ensuring absentee ballots make it to service members in time for them to fill out the paperwork and send it back; express mail and more online submission options have helped expedite the process. Officials are going to great lengths to allow overseas troops' voices to be heard, and the progress is already showing.



- ✓ 61,000 troops have used the federal postcard application to register to vote (as opposed to 21,000 in 2008).
- ✓ Approximately 2,000 service members have accessed the FVAP's online federal absentee write-in ballot to cast their vote.
- ✓ 16 states allow overseas voters to submit their absentee ballots via e-mail; West Virginia allows online voting in some areas; Arizona allows residents overseas to download ballots and then upload the completed ballot to the state's website.
- ✓ To access your state's absentee ballot or the federal write-in absentee ballot, visit <http://www.FVAP.gov> as soon as possible to make sure **your** voice is heard. Submission deadlines vary from state to state.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

'The Sports Lounge': College conference matchups

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS RAY CALEF
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



in the division.

While it means big money on gate receipts for the Bowl Conference Championship schools, and to a lesser extent, the non-BCS schools, it has left us with some less-than-intriguing matchups in the first four weeks.

Fact of the matter is, teams want the money. You may have guaranteed money if you play on the road, but it is nothing like home games, at least for the BCS schools. Home and home matchups, where one school hosts another one year and travels the next season, will dwindle as teams figure out that better recruiting and bowl games can be had, even if a team goes 2-6 in their conference yet completes a perfect 4-0 non-conference season.

This is thanks to the NCAA allowing teams who win six games to be bowl-eligible, of course. So, be prepared to see more Purdue vs. Liberty matchups in the coming years.

Thankfully, the non-conference is over except for a few

games here and there going forward, and conference play goes into full swing this weekend. Some great matchups that come to mind immediately are Stanford at Oregon, Florida at Alabama, and Penn State at Iowa, in games among ranked opponents. More on those matchups in a bit.

Texas was the only top-ten team to lose last week—an inexplicable drubbing at the hands of an unranked UCLA team in Austin. They turned the ball over way too much, which is a recipe for disaster. Another good matchup last week pitted the defending national champion Crimson Tide against Ryan Mallet-led Arkansas.

The Hogs led by 10 points at halftime, and were taking it to Alabama and Nick Saban. Then, apparently, the Tide woke up from their halftime slumber and outscored Arkansas 20-3 in the second half. They made NFL prospect Mallet look very human and un-Mallet-like in the process.

Iowa bounced back with an expected 45-0 drubbing of Ball State. They face a less-than-impressive Penn State squad that lost a few weeks ago, 24-3 at Tuscaloosa against 'Bama.

Penn State has a freshman quarterback starting his first Big Ten game on the road, at night, in front of 70,570 Kinnick Stadium fans. Kirk Ferentz has had Joe Paterno's number like no other coach has against him. I'm picking the Hawks, provided they don't have special team's gaffes like

they did against Arizona. Let's say 24-10.

Let me make one thing clear. I am not a Florida fan. I think Urban Meyer is a bit too much.

That being said, I especially don't like Nick Saban. Something has to give in my dislike here.

The game is in Tuscaloosa, so I will have to go with Alabama, as much as it pains me. Florida's defense still has not impressed me, and I think 'Bama has too many weapons for the Gators. Let me caveat: I would pick the Gators if this were in Gainesville. It will be very close, something like 23-20.

I think the Stanford-Oregon matchup could be the best of the bunch. Oregon's defense was exposed as they gave up nearly 600 yards to Arizona State. While they have a tremendous offense, they should have lost to the Sun Devils. So, against my better judgment, I am picking Stanford in a shootout.

Stanford has been very impressive so far, and destroyed a not-so-good Notre Dame squad last week. Still, they did what they were supposed to. In spite of this being in Autzen Stadium in Eugene, the toughest place to play in college football, I am picking Stanford 41-34.

Upset pick of the week: Indiana, a 10-point underdog to Michigan, pulls through unexpectedly and wins in Bloomington 35-34.

'The Town' successfully clarifies complex plot

BY PVT. ZACHARY ZUBER
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



this was pretty surprising, with complex characters, and a twisting turning plot.

The film does a great job of mixing the action of bank jobs with the slower pace needed to show why the audience can relate to the people involved. It runs a little slow during the first half hour or so, but after it takes the time to develop characters, it keeps a good pace.

"The Town" is a movie full of Ben Affleck. He directs, writes and stars in the film as Doug, or Dougie to his friends. I want to start by saying I have never been a fan of just about everything he does, but

"The Town" focuses on Doug, and how he falls in love with Claire, a woman that his crew kidnapped during a robbery. Their new found love is constantly threatened by Doug's nosy and unstable best friend, James, played by Jeremy Renner. If that's not enough, there is also FBI agent Adam, chasing him down, and drug-addicted ex-girlfriend Krista, who also happens to be James' sister.

If that seems a little complicated, well, it is. The fact that the film does a good job of mixing these character elements makes it interesting. The way all these things are brought together makes the movie pretty good.

As the plot builds, all the challenges that come with being a bank robber trying to love a girl who you kidnapped while dealing with an ex that says she has your kid and an FBI agent that knows you did it, (aaaahhhh, took a deep breath

for that one) suddenly clash all at once.

Hopefully, after that mess, you understand just how much there is to "The Town." It all comes together very well with just the right mix of emotional development and high-tension robberies.

The movie has a lot of moving parts, and none of them turn out quite like you would expect. There is only one aspect that I really didn't like: the accents.

I realize this is set in Boston, but there were a few times where it seemed like I had to strain to hear what the actors were talking about.

As a whole, this was a good movie. I enjoyed watching all the events unfold, and it was good at maintaining the element of surprise the whole way through.

My verdict: 7/10.

PVT MURPHY'S LAW



Wednesday October 06
1700 The Switch (PG-13)
2000 Scott Pilgrim vs. The Wolf (PG-13)

Thursday October 07
1700 Legends of the Guardians (G) 1st Run
2000 Eat Pray Love (PG-13)

Friday October 08
1800 Vampires Suck (PG-13)
2100 The Social Network (PG-13) 1st Run

Saturday October 09
1400 Nanny McPhee Returns (PG)
1700 The Social Network (PG-13) 1st Run
2000 Vampires Suck (PG-13)
2400 The Social Network (PG-13) 1st Run

Sunday October 10
1400 The Social Network (PG-13) 1st Run
1700 Lottery Ticket (PG-13)
2000 Vampires Suck (PG-13)



U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Jessica Rohr
Maj. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, and a Chicago, Ill., native, along with Soldiers, salute Gen. Ann Dunwoody, commanding general of the Army Materiel Command, as her helicopter takes off Sept. 26 at the airfield at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



U.S. Army Photo by 2nd Lt. Blair Grimes
ABOVE: Spc. Jimmy Davis, a fueler with the 512th Quartermaster Company, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and an Anderson, Ind., native, refuels a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter while two other Soldiers with the 512th QM Co. assist.

Pfc. Emilee Norris, operations section administrator with the 103rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), dances with an Iraqi girl as a mentor during Iraqi Kids Day Sept. 25 at the Red Tail Morale, Welfare and Recreation center at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. More than 120 local Iraqi children visited JBB to interact with service members through various activities and games, including water balloon-throwing, swimming, soccer, dancing, and more.



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Angel Wallace