



THE ARROWHEAD

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TAKING AIM!

36th ID Soldiers, NCOs compete for top prize



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Four Soldiers and four Noncommissioned Officers from the 36th Inf. Div., Division Special Troops Battalion, conducted a three day Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter competition Feb. 25 through Feb. 27 at Contingency Operating Base Basra.



	Commanding General Maj. Gen. Eddy M. Spurgin	<h1>The Arrowhead Staff</h1>			Staff Writers Staff Sgt. Chanelcherie Demello Sgt. David Bryant Sgt. James Benjamin Sgt. Jason Kaneshiro Sgt. Raymond Quintanilla Spc. Eve Iilau	Contributing Writers/Photographers Lt. Col. Enrique Villarreal Cpt. Mark Nettles Sgt. Tommy Kappus David
	Command Sergeant Major Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson Early In Spite of Hell!	PAO Lt. Col. Eric Atkisson Deputy PAO Capt. Brian Melanephy	Cmd. Info OIC 1st Lt. Adam Musil Cmd. Info NCOIC/Editor Sgt. 1st Class Merrion LaSonde Layout and Graphic Design Sgt. Jeremy Spires			

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ARROWHEAD 7 SENDS...

This was an important month for the Soldiers and NCOs of the 36th Infantry Division as we conducted our first NCO of the Quarter competition and inducted some of our new sergeants into the non-commissioned officer corps. I can't say enough about how pleased I was at the esprit de corps during these two events. We truly have some great up-and-coming Soldiers within our ranks.

The face of the battlefield is changing and we need the leaders of tomorrow to not only be tactically and technically proficient, but also versatile in their skill sets and able to do more with less. For example, no longer can medical Soldiers simply know the proper nine-line MEDEVAC procedures or how to tend to a wound. On any mission that same Soldier must be prepared to react to contact and, if necessary, lead Soldiers under small arms fire or through an improvised explosive attack. In USD-S, we have Soldiers on COB Basra training Iraqi Army Soldiers on medical techniques, and at the brigade level we have Soldiers advising and assisting Iraqi forces with border security techniques. For this training to be successful Soldiers must be patient, diligent in their teaching, and loyal to the mission of USD-S. The young Soldiers and NCOs of today shoulder an enormous responsibility.

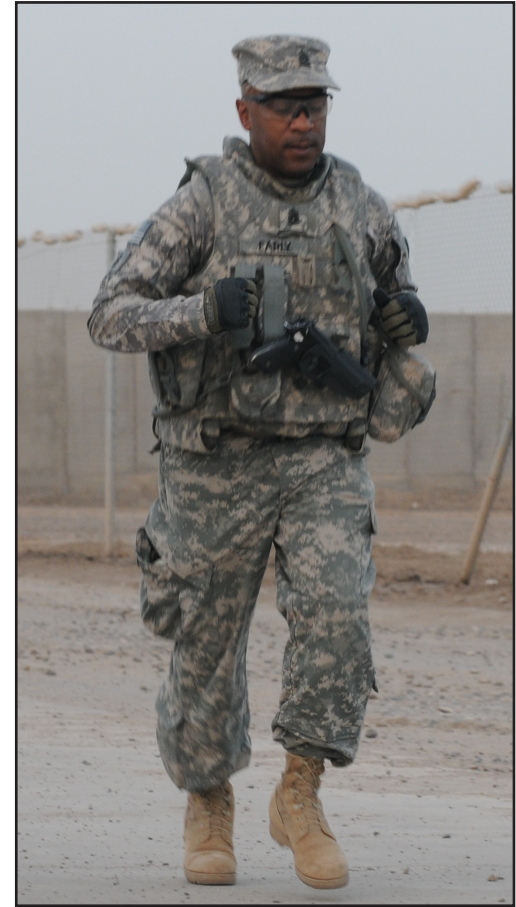
I have been all around our area of operation and I have seen some outstanding work being done by

our Soldiers; however, this is not the time to get complacent. I need all of our Soldiers to continue to develop personally and professionally. There are always opportunities for improvement and to learn more about life or your craft. To our new sergeants, I expect you to be leaders and mentors to the soldiers below you. As a specialist, you were asked to be proficient at your job. As a sergeant, you must be a leader as well. You must be willing to share your experience with your Soldiers and inspire them to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Lastly, you can never give up. In 1985 when I was inducted into the NCO Corps, I never thought of serving as a division command sergeant major. However, as I rose through the ranks I gained more confidence. Whether in your military life or personal life the worst mistake you can make is limiting yourself. You can do anything you set your mind to.

To all the leadership, as you turn through the pages of this magazine you will find a list of the newly promoted Sergeants. It is my hope that you will take some time out of your day and congratulate them on their achievement and help them prepare for the road ahead. If you want to see the future of our great Army you need look no further than the faces of these Soldiers. They will continue to make us proud.

In Spite of Hell!



Wilson Early
Command Sergeant Major
36th Inf. Div., USD-S





Operation Shining Star combines mortars, tanks and infantry maneuvers into live fire exercise.

Story and photos by Sgt. Jeremy Spires
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

BASRAH, Iraq – A green star cluster flared in the night sky, marking the beginning a complex night maneuver by the 14th Iraqi Army Division on the banks of Tea Leaf Island, north of Contingency Operating Base Basra on Feb. 14.

The night's event, called Operation Shining Star, displayed the 14th IA Div.'s combat and security capabilities by combining mortars, tanks and a river crossing into a live-fire exercise.

"Today we are going to view 52nd Brigade, 14th Iraqi Army Division's water crossing exercise," said Maj.

George S. Sellers, an officer in the Iraqi Security Forces Cell for the 36th Inf. Div. "It is a dynamic night river live-fire exercise that is completely planned

"This is truly an epic operation on the part of the 14th Iraqi Army Division."

and executed through the 14th Iraqi Army Planning cell. So we are looking forward to a dynamic exercise utilizing

mortars, river crossing, and T-55 Tanks operated by the Iraqi Army."

This live-fire exercise demonstrates the ability of the 52nd IA Bde, 14th IA Div.'s ability to plan and execute training for the most difficult combat operation, projecting combat power across a water obstacle.

"We (USD-S) provided a mentor relationship with the 14th IA Division to help in developing the concept of the exercise and then going through some of the planning events that lead up to the execution of the exercise," said Brig. Gen. Len Smith, Deputy Commanding General – Maneuver for the 36th Inf.



ABOVE—Iraqi Soldiers from the 14th Iraq Army Division prepare for Operation Shining Star, an exercise designed to show the combat and security capabilities of the division by combining mortars, tanks and a manned assault river crossing into a live fire exercise. NEXT PAGE— The night sky over Tea Leaf Island in Basrah Province was illuminated with flares during Operation Shining Star.



Div., who was a guest of honor at the event.

The 14th IA Div. had been conducting rehearsals from the platoon and company level all the way up to the battalion and brigade level for weeks to show the Iraqi people that they are committed to making the exercise a success.

“This exercise, more than anything, is to show the Iraqi populace that the Iraqi Army is ready to execute highly complex missions in a safe environment,” said Sellers. “To control live-fire executions while utilizing tanks, mortars as well as infantry movements all succinctly planned and executed. Not since 2003 has the Iraqi Army conducted an exercise of this extent at night, so this is truly an epic operation on the part of the 14th Iraqi Army Division.”

The exercise also culminated more than a year’s worth of advising, training and assisting efforts between

the 14th IA Div. and battalions from United States Division – South. Upon completion of Operation Shining Star, the 14th IA Div. will begin preparing for another, more complex mission, later this year.

“Utilizing this exercise, they will then move onto Operation Lions

“I think they really took to heart a lot of guidance and mentorship that we gave them.”

Leap, which is the next evolutionary step in the Iraqi Army planning processes,” said Sellers. “It is now a joint exercise involving Iraqi Special Operations, Iraqi Navy, Iraqi Aviation, and the command battalion for the 14th Iraqi Army Division; all

in one succinct exercise in Umm Qasr here in USD-South.”

“I think it was great,” remarked Smith on the successful completion of the operation. “I think they really took to heart a lot of guidance and mentorship that we gave them. They were able to do a lot of things that were not normal or traditional in their way of doing things. This military, a lot of their officers were trained under some of the Soviet models from the Cold War days. So what they have been able to do is take those things that they were trained on and then apply what we are teaching them as our model, and they are actually blending the two together to come up with something that is workable for them but is also of a standard that we would recognize in the United States.”



OPERATION SHINING STAR

Photos by Sgt. Jeremy Spires
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office



Iraqi Soldiers from the 14th Iraq Army Division prepare for Operation Shining Star, an exercise designed to show the combat and security capabilities of the division by combining mortars, tanks and a manned assault river crossing into a live-fire exercise. The exercise also culminated more than a year's worth of advising, training and assisting efforts between the 14th IA Div. and battalions from U.S. Division – South.





“This exercise, more than anything, is to show the Iraqi populace that the Iraqi Army is ready to execute highly complex missions in a safe environment,” said Maj. George S. Sellers, an officer in the Iraqi Security Forces Cell for U.S. Div.-South. Upon completion of Operation Shining Star, the 14th IA Div. will begin preparing for another, more complex mission called, Lions Leap, in April.



Soldier's Health

By Maj. Steven Keihl
Texas Military Forces Resiliency Team

I love the Spring! It is a time of renewal, new life, new energy, a fresh start for our earth and an opportunity for ourselves. We can allow the brighter days to bring better attitudes and a perfect opportunity to recommit to resiliency and better mental health! But this is a choice not everyone makes.

Many people believe that the holiday season is the time of year with the highest suicide rates. This is a MYTH! The Center for Disease Control and Prevention reminds us that the holiday season is actually the time of year when there are the least amount of suicides with December as the lowest rate of the year by month.

In fact, the highest suicide rates actually appear during the spring with an additional peak during the Fall. (PAY EXTRA ATTENTION ALL YOU TRAINED PEER-TO-PEER INTERVENTION SPECIALISTS)

Our choice is often based on our focus and our behaviors. We can zero in on all the negative stuff and indulge in self-destructive behaviors or develop a positive outlook and a healthy lifestyle. Here are three tips to help us focus on new life and maintain a healthy and happy perspective:

ONE: Exercise Your Mind

Many of us exercise our bodies to stay physically fit. We stretch, we stress, we lift, we flex, we sweat and we work hard to push our muscles to develop and to chase away all the unwanted fat.

Guess what, your brain needs the same type of exercise! Take the opportunity this spring to begin a new exercise regimen for your brain! Take a class at a college or online (we have tons of educational benefits available to us), read a book, do some crossword

puzzles, play Trivial Pursuit... anything to get us thinking, to challenge and stretch our brain.

Stimulating the brain helps us grow, can improve our self-esteem, and can even help reduce memory loss. So turn off the ridiculous reality TV show, eliminate all the background noise, and find something new get the brainwaves flying!

TWO: Reduce Your Stress

This can be a little bit complicated for many of us. Life can be pretty crazy, hectic, and uncooperative. Most of us fail to realize just how much stress we are actually dealing with.

The Holmes & Rahe Stress Scale is an instrument the Resiliency Team uses during Peer-to-Peer training (if you want a copy, just ask). Many people are surprised to learn that their current stress level places them in a category with elevated risk of illness or worse.

We learn to shoulder and some times ignore the stress in our world, but it has a cumulative impact on our entire being. It wears away at us even when we fail to acknowledge it. Stress can impact our mood, memory, immune system, etc.

Bottom line, it is not a good idea to just ignore stress... especially when there are methods to reduce, mitigate, or even eliminate stress.

Too many of us just simply plan too much, work too many hours, spend too much time with the pedal to the metal... it will eventually lead to problems, maybe serious ones.

My first recommendation is to take a look at your calendar. Look over the next week. How much time do you have scheduled to take care of yourself? Maybe you need to drop a few things and reduce your schedule. Here is a

simple one... take a LUNCH BREAK.


Sitting at your desk and inhaling a microwaved burger while typing and answering the phone is a really bad idea. Thirty minutes away from the madness makes a huge difference. You can even pack your own lunch and eat some fresh veggies and fruits instead of a greasy burger.

Stress can also be managed by engaging in stress reduction behaviors like the use of deep breathing or muscle tension and relaxation exercises. Cut back on caffeine, nicotine, energy drinks, and other stimulants that can exasperate stress. Take a bath, go for a walk, write in a journal, learn to meditate... there are a million ways to reduce stress!

If you need help, give us a call. We would love to help!

THREE: Reduce Your Alcohol Intake Spring signals more outdoor activities to include BBQ and beer! Too many people significantly increase their alcohol in take during the spring months. And remember, alcohol is a DEPRESSANT! Alcohol also impairs our thinking and our activity. Too much alcohol often leads to really stupid choices and clumsy behaviors.

The truth is, if the only way you can enjoy yourself is under the influence, you have a PROBLEM and you should seriously consider getting some help. Be especially careful to completely avoid self-medication.

In other words, when you feel bad, sad, depressed or stressed, avoid using alcohol as your coping mechanism. This is almost a sure fire way to find yourself in a mess somewhere down the line! 

Chaplain's Corner

Resilient in the face of adversity

By CH (LT. Col) J. Craig Combs
36th Inf. Div. Chaplain, USD-S

What do you do? How do you do it? What is your technique or method?


These are questions that are often asked of those of us who have deployed before or gone through hard times or are seen by others to be resilient in the face of adversity. Most of us have either asked or been asked similar questions. What is your answer, or what are some of the answers you have heard? Do they really work? Do they really help you deal with the unavoidable and unexpected and even tragic circumstances that come your way?

Each person has to find what works for them. In my last article, I mentioned one way or technique. That was to understand and believe that difficult circumstances, like a combat deployment or a broken relationship or dealing with a difficult job or boss, can often provide an opportunity for growth. The key is attitude. If we focus on the difficulties and the negative aspects, it will drag us down and can defeat us. But if we see these circumstances as opportunities or challenges that can

help us grow and lead us to a place of more maturity and a greater perspective on life, there is a greater potential that it will make us stronger and a more vibrant person.

For me, I have to say that the only way I have found to gain this positive perspective or attitude, and truly believe and maintain it, is the hope and strength I have found in my faith in God. Others may have found different ways, but this is the one that truly works for me. From the loss of my first grandparent, to the loss of my mother; from the repossession of our house, to the threats of bill collectors; from my first combat deployment, to this one, the only way I can smile and sleep in peace and have hope and assurance that I will get through it all, is knowing that God loves me and wants what is best for me.

I will leave you with three of my favorite verses (*right*) that speak to this truth:

For God and Country! In Spite of Hell! 

James 1:2-5—“Consider *it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*”

Romans 8:28—“*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*”

Jeremiah 29:11-13—“*For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.*”

A Life Worth Saving: One Soldier's Road to God

Story and photos by Sgt. David A. Bryant
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

BASRAH, Iraq – It was a clear, sunny February day. A breeze was blowing through the open window of her apartment; the closet had finally been cleaned earlier in the week and the small study Bible her best friend had given her when she was 12 was laying on the nightstand.

That was when Spc. Kelly L. Lee sat down on the floor next to her bed, placed the razor against her wrist and said, “God, if you’re there, you better let me know because I’m going to come meet you.”

“I was at such a point of self-loathing; that’s why I got out the razor blade,” the 27-year-old Dallas native said. “I had my own place, a good job and a wonderful fiancé at the time. All the pieces of the puzzle were there, but something was missing. That missing piece was the life I didn’t have.”

And life had not always been great for Lee, she said. A self-proclaimed Army brat, the fiery redhead grew up in an unstable home filled with drug and alcohol abuse. Her parents were divorced by the time she was 12 and her mother had been in and out of jail since Lee was 9 years old.

As she sat with the blade against her wrist, a breeze blew the small Bible onto the floor and opened to Psalm 34. As she began to read, a verse leapt out at her: “I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

“I didn’t get saved the ‘traditional’ way by being preached to or talking to a minister or anything like that,” Lee said. “You can’t deny a face-to-face meeting with God like that, though. I cried out and he heard me.”

Like most youth, Lee had been searching for an “identity” before she was saved. It was during her search that she first began to express herself through body art by getting her astrological sign, Leo, tattooed on each of her hands.

“I loved being able to express who I am through body artwork,” she said. “When I came to know Christ and his love for me, that translated into the tattoos I have now.”

The artwork now covers her entire left arm in what is known as a “sleeve,” and Lee uses them as part of her “personal ministry.”

“When people ask what they mean, it gives me a chance to express myself and tell my story,” she said.

From the depths of despair, she looked to a razor blade for salvation and instead found a calling, Lee added. “It was all he said; to be prepared. About a year and a half later, he laid on my heart: ‘Army.’ I prayed about it for about eight months, asking, ‘Is this really what you want me to do?’”

She asked for advice from her father, who had already lived the life of a Soldier. She considered the life of her father’s best friend, an Army warrant officer killed in action in Iraq in 2008. She embraced the support of her husband, Josh.

In 2007 she followed her calling and enlisted in the Texas Army National Guard as a chaplain’s assistant, adding another chapter to her life story encompassed by the artwork covering her arm.

“I love having her as my assistant; she’s one of the finest chaplain’s assistants I’ve ever known, and we’re fortunate to have her with us on this deployment,” said Capt. Benjie Bender, 36th Infantry deputy division chaplain.



The chaplain’s assistant for the deputy division chaplain, Spc. Kelly L. Lee grew up in a household of drugs, alcoholism and crime. She was on the brink of suicide when an answered prayer turned her life around. Always an individual, Lee tells the story of her life before and after being saved through body artwork, with a full “sleeve” on her left arm and plans to complete another “sleeve” on her right. The tattoos on her lower arm were completed by Clint Cummings of Sparrows Tattoo, Mansfield, Texas, and those on her upper arm by John Chancy of Fineline Tattoo in Mesquite, Texas.

“The quality of a chaplain’s deployment often depends on the quality of the assistant. She and the other chaplain’s assistants are making all the difference on this deployment.”

The story of how Lee was saved is not a common occurrence, said Bender, a 39-year-old native of Evansville, Ind., now a resident of Dallas. “Many times I’ve heard people say that coincidence is God’s way of working anonymously.

God has many ways of reaching out to people; for (Lee) it happened to be a breeze.”

In fact, said Bender, reading the Bible is much less painful than getting a tattoo.

“If you’re seeking God, he’s easy to find,” Bender said. “You don’t need to test him the way it happened with Lee; he’s always there to answer if you’re willing to listen.”

For anyone who has met Lee, it can be difficult to reconcile the cheerful, smiling chaplain’s assistant they know with the darker, suicidal person she once was.

“Her story is amazing,” said Bender. “It shows God’s interest in all of us; how he can take someone’s life with all the mess it’s in and make something beautiful out of it.”

When not serving on active duty orders with the Guard, Lee manages a Sonic drive-in restaurant and is a full-time student in her junior year at Dallas Baptist University, where she is working on her bachelor’s degree in Christian studies.

“I joined (the Guard) to be an assistant with the goal of becoming a chaplain myself,” Lee said. “I love this country and I love God. The chaplain motto is Latin for ‘God and Country,’ so I couldn’t resist having that for a tattoo.”

“She’s amazing; she’s someone who can’t help but wear her ‘faith on her sleeve’ as it were,” said Bender. Chaplain’s assistants do their jobs “for a variety of reasons. It’s rare to have one who has the calling, the compassion she does for the Soldiers.”

Lee’s love of tattoos makes it easy for her to fit in with the rough-and-ready life of Soldiers. “I feel really comfortable being here doing what I’m doing. I think God prepared me mentally for what I would be doing here.”

What she does is take care of the spiritual well being of Soldiers and reach out to those who need

it, regardless of what their faith is or if they claim no religion at all, she said.

“For a civilian, it may be a little difficult to put that ‘evangelist’ away, but the Chaplain Corps prepares us well to understand the ramifications proselytizing could have in a foreign nation,” added Lee. “I feel blessed to be a part of a division staff and I take seriously this opportunity for me in my career to have a pivotal role in the lives of our seven-thousand-plus Soldiers in (United States Division-South).”

Her first deployment has been busy, she said, between the long hours at the office and even more long hours keeping up with her college education. Although her work is never done, she said being deployed is easier on her than it is for her husband.

“It’s difficult for him because he has no military experience whatsoever, so (the deployment) has been a world-changer for us,” Lee said. “He supports me, though.”

Military life certainly suits Lee, said Bender. “She can clear a room with t h e

best of them and put the ‘hurt’ on in combatives. And she is an excellent shot with the rifle.”

“She’s very thoughtful and a joy to work with,” Bender added. “I hope she pursues her ministry as a chaplain, although I have mixed feelings about that. We will gain her as a chaplain, but we lose her as an assistant.”

Despite all the challenges Lee has faced in her life, she said she has every intention of carrying on full-throttle.

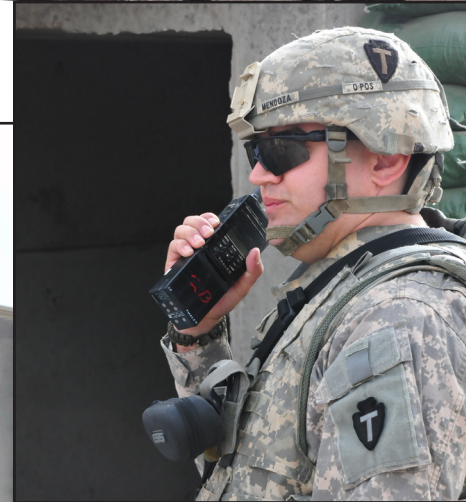
“People ask me, ‘If you could go back and change anything, would you do it?’” she said. “I would have to say no, because all of it happened for a reason. It has made me (who) I am today.”

“I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”
—Psalm 34:4



SOLDIER AND NCO OF THE QUARTER





Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Merrion LaSonde and Sgt. Jeremy Spires
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

From pen strokes to rear-neck chokes: 36 ID Soldiers prove they have what it takes to be first

Story and photos by Sgt. Jeremy Spires
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA, Iraq – Four Soldiers and four noncommissioned officers from the 36th Inf. Div., Special Troops Battalion conducted a three-day Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter competition Feb. 25 through Feb. 27 at Contingency Operating Base Basra.

Spc. Juan Deniz and Staff Sgt. Luis Barronzamora dominated the competition and walked away with the much sought after titles. As Soldier of the Quarter and NCO of the Quarter, respectively, they will now move on to the U.S. Division – South Soldier and

NCO of the Year competition scheduled for later this year.

Barronzamora, Staff Sgt. Jason Perdue, Sgt. Scott Evans and Sgt. James Naven represented the NCOs. Deniz, Spc. Julio Cruz, Spc. Jesus Enriquez and Spc. John Mendoza represented the Soldiers.

The Soldiers and NCOs were selected by their units to participate in a competition designed to test them mentally and physically; from their ability answer questions related to the Army and current events, to the rigors of a 10-kilometer road march and even hand-written essays.

“The competition is a very grueling event and being deployed we are able

to have more assets to conduct more events,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Todd Richardson, the DSTB command sergeant major. “Normally, your Soldier and NCO of the Quarter competitions are just an appearance board, an Army Physical Fitness Test and that may be about it. We were lucky enough to have our own range here on (COB) Basra and fire (weapons), and do a lot of the same tasks that you don’t see till you reach the state level or regional competitions.”

Throughout the weekend, the Soldiers and NCOs competed in a number of exhausting tests of physical and mental strength. The judges altered the standard qualification range by

“We had a number of events that were both physically and mentally challenging.”



LEFT—Spc. John Mendoza, Spc. Juan Deniz, Spc. Julio Cruz and Spc. Jesus Enriquez stand upon the Resiliency Campus stage on Feb. 27 along with their sponsors during the award ceremony for the Soldier and NCO of the Quarter. Deniz was awarded 1st place in the competition and will represent the division in the USD-S Soldier and NCO of the Quarter competition scheduled for later this year. RIGHT—NCO of the Quarter competitors Staff Sgt. Luis Barronzamora, Sgt. James Naven, Sgt. Scott Evans and Staff Sgt. Jason Perdue (not shown) await the results from the Soldier and NCO of the Quarter competitions. Barronzamora, who was awarded the title of NCO of the Quarter, will join Spc. Deniz in representing the division later this year.

“There was a lot of esprit de corps out there and a lot of good competition.”



LEFT— Spc. Juan Deniz, a native of San Antonio, wins the title of Soldier of the Quarter. This years competition is the first of its kind for the 36th Inf. Div. in Iraq. Back in Texas, Soldiers of the Texas Army National Guard are conducting a similar event on the same weekend.



RIGHT — Staff Sgt. Luis Barronzamora will represent the 36th Inf. Div. later this year in the USD-S Soldier and NCO of the Quarter competition. Barronzamora dominated the 3-day long competition and walked away with the title of NCO of the Quarter. He will join fellow Soldier, Spc. Juan Deniz, in competing to bring the title of USD-S Soldier and NCO of the Quarter back to the division later this year.

having the participants do a “stress range”.

The event was designed to push the competitors by having them sprint 20 meters in full protective gear, take up a stable firing position, and then fire on a 300-meter target. The Soldiers and NCOs conducted this event four times. Each iteration was scored based on the time it took them to complete each circuit and the number of hits on the target.

“I had a rough weekend,” said Barronzamora, a Company B “Ghostrider” and force protection NCO. “We had a number of events that were both physically and mentally challenging..”

Although the competitors were noticeably exhausted after the “stress range” and the APFT, they still had a full list of events to complete the competition, including common

tasks and techniques testing, army combatives and a mystery event.

“The mystery event was archery,” said Spc. Juan Deniz, Soldier of the Quarter representative for B Co. and an Intelligence Analyst for the division. “I have never done (archery) before, but I came in second.”

The weekend culminated with a contest made up of chokeholds, arm bars and twist and turns designed to dominate an opponent, an Army Combatives tournament.

“Combatives is always fun and exciting and the Soldiers seem to really get into it,” said Richardson, who had a seat ringside to watch the “fight.”


Not all Soldiers found the Combatives tournament an easy event.

“I have never been one for combatives,” said Barronzamora. “I never really got into it.

I have had

five days of training and had some pretty strong opponents. Evans was pretty strong,” he said. During the match, Evans had managed to get Barronzamora into an arm bar and forced him to tap out.

Soon after the Soldier and NCOs gathered their breath, they were marched on stage to find out who would walk away with the titles of Soldier of the Quarter and NCO of the Quarter.

“Over the last 72 hours, we held a Soldier and NCO of the Quarter competition with 8 events,” said Richardson at the end of the night. “They did well. The morale of the Soldiers and NCOs who competed is very high. There was a lot of esprit de corps out there and a lot of good competition.” 



36th Inf. Div. Non-commissioned

- Sgt. Emeterio Amaya*
- Sgt. Faustino Amaya*
- Sgt. James Benjamin*
- Sgt. Matthew Boyd*
- Sgt. Rogenishia Carr*
- Sgt. Bernard Charnoski*
- Sgt. Katherine Danielson*
- Sgt. Valerie Grumbles*
- Sgt. Jennifer Ignarro*
- Sgt. Ahmed Jawad*
- Sgt. Desiree Lau*
- Sgt. Eva Loera*
- Sgt. Nicole Martinez*
- Sgt. Andrew Perry*
- Sgt. Willie Robinson*
- Sgt. Kimberly Rodriguez*
- Sgt. Jeremy Spires*
- Sgt. Cassandra Story*
- Sgt. Albert Valasquez*
- Sgt. Shawnte Villegas*
- Sgt. Elliot Wheeler*
- Sgt. Richard Zavala*



Twenty-two Non-commissioned Officers from U.S. Div.-South join the ranks of the NCO Corps, better known as the "backbone of the Army", during an induction ceremony on Contingency Operating Base Basra on Mar. 5.

Photo by Sgt. Tommy Kappus
305th MPAD, USD-S Public Affairs Office

ed Officer Induction Ceremony



Soldiers pass the time by sharpening their skills

Story and photos by Capt. Mark Nettles
Company F, 1st Bn., 68th Armor Reg., 3rd AAB, 4th Inf. Div.

CONTIGENCY OPERATING BASE BASRA—While being deployed for the last 11 months, Soldiers of Company F, 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, have discovered hobbies and skills that have benefited the unit, fellow Soldiers and families back home.

Many Soldiers spend their time off in the gym or in front of a game console, but the Soldiers of Company F have found some constructive ways to spend the deployment.

After deploying last March, Pvt. Benjamin D. Corson, an armament repair specialist, was assigned as the repair and utilities specialist, building, repairing and maintaining the

battalion's working and living areas.

This position has allowed him to pass his first deployment very quickly. "I get in the zone and the hours quickly disappear," said Corson about carpentry, his favorite hobby.

The 25-year-old has built many things for the unit to include a morale, welfare and recreation theater that seats 45, a fully-functioning wood shop, wooden sniper shades for the company's vehicles, display cases, covered walkways, and a podium. Corson is most proud of an Iraqi weapons display case in the battalion headquarters.

"I made something professional out of plywood and wood glue," he said. "I was always taught quality first, even if it takes extra time."

The Land-O-Lakes, Fla., native loves carpentry and began his trade at age nine under the tutelage of his father. Even though his job as the battalion carpenter is ending soon, Corson looks forward to expanding his carpentry skills after returning to Fort Carson, Colo.

"I'm working on getting a contractor license for Colorado



and do construction business on the weekends," said Corson. "My dream is to one day own a custom furniture business."

Corson isn't the only Soldier who is using this deployment to fulfill a dream. Sgt. Ricki French, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle system maintainer, wants to change his military occupational specialty more to his liking.

When the company's MOS-trained welder was transferred, French became the welder by default and has enjoyed the job.

The native of Louisville, Ill., has been fixing equipment and welding since he was 14, working on the neighbor's corn and soybean farm. French finds value in being able to weld and create things with metal.

"Stuff costs too much to let someone else fix it. I get to make something out of nothing," he said with a grin.

Despite rain, clouds of flies or



ABOVE—Sgt. Ricki French outlines where he will emplace a code-lock on a metal security door for the tactical operations center. ABOVE RIGHT—French tack-welds sections of metal together in the shop on COB Basra that will be used to create Silver Lion Battalion crest. NEXT PAGE—Members of Company F, 1st Bn., 68th Armor Reg., 3rd AAB, 4th Inf. Div., inspect sheet metal designs of the battalion crest.

130-degree days, the mechanic-turned-welder loves his work. “I have fun out there,” he said.

The 27-year-old is usually found in the battalion motor pool fabrication shop, a facility he helped build, bent over a piece of metal in a pair of soot-stained coveralls. His work for the battalion is needed most when the project is either too expensive or unique to buy.

While in Iraq, French has built flagpoles, security doors, gates, equipment racks, fences, BBQ grills, and repaired dozens of damaged vehicles and containers. But French’s real skill as a welder really shines through in some of his more unusual projects.

The welder made 12-inch-high copies of the Silver Lion’s battalion crest out of plate steel. The crests were created as gifts for the Iraqi police and military.

“I am most proud of the unit crests,” said French. “I want people to look at them and appreciate how difficult they were to build. It’s something I love to do and surprisingly, I’m good at it.”

While some Soldiers were honing skills as a part of their deployed duties, others were spending their down time developing other unique hobbies.

Spc. Adam Rivera, a petroleum specialist, did not mean to develop a new hobby when he was teleconferencing with his 3-year-old son A.J. a few months ago.

“My son likes superheroes,” said the Union City, N.J., native, “Superman and Wolverine.”

While teleconferencing, Rivera drew his son a picture of a superhero with an M4 rifle. His son promptly asked his father for that superhero for Christmas. The idea was planted and Rivera went to work transforming the drawing into




workable blueprints. According to the Rivera, it took five days to design on his computer.

Rivera sent the computer renderings to a company in New York City and had a six-inch plastic action figure with movable arms and legs built. The entire project cost \$35 to mold, cast and paint the action figure.

A.J. opened the present on Christmas

Day and received “daddy’s toy.” “He forgot about the rest of his toys,” said Rivera. “My son has a toy nobody else has.”

But this Soldier’s work as a toy maker is not complete. “I’m already working on a bad guy for my son. I am helping my son feel unique and special,” he said. 



One World

Hammurabi's Code: Recorded history's first written law

Stories by "David"
36th Inf. Div. Interpreter, USD-S Public Affairs Office

Hammurabi's code is the oldest and first written code of laws in recorded history. Hammurabi, which means in Akkadian Language, "the kinsman is a healer," was the sixth king of Babylon of the First Babylonian Dynasty from 1792 BC to 1750 BC, and extended Babylon's control over Mesopotamia by winning a series of wars against neighboring kingdoms.


Hammurabi created the code for the protection of the weak and poor from the powerful and the poor from the rich. The carving on the stone on which the code is written depicts Hammurabi receiving the divine laws from the sun god, Shamash, the god most often associated with justice.

That stone was unearthed in 1901 by French archaeologists at what is now Khuzestan, Iran (ancient Susa, Elam). The code had been taken as plunder by the Elamite king Shutruk-Nahhunte in the 12th century B.C. The Code is inscribed in the Akkadian language (using cuneiform script) on a diorite stele in the shape of a huge index finger (7.4 ft. tall), carved into the stele, today on display in the Louvre, in Paris.

The Code consists of 282 laws that describe regulations for legal procedure; fix rates on services performed in most branches of commerce, and describes property rights, personal injury, and penalties for false testimony and accusations. It has no laws regarding religion.

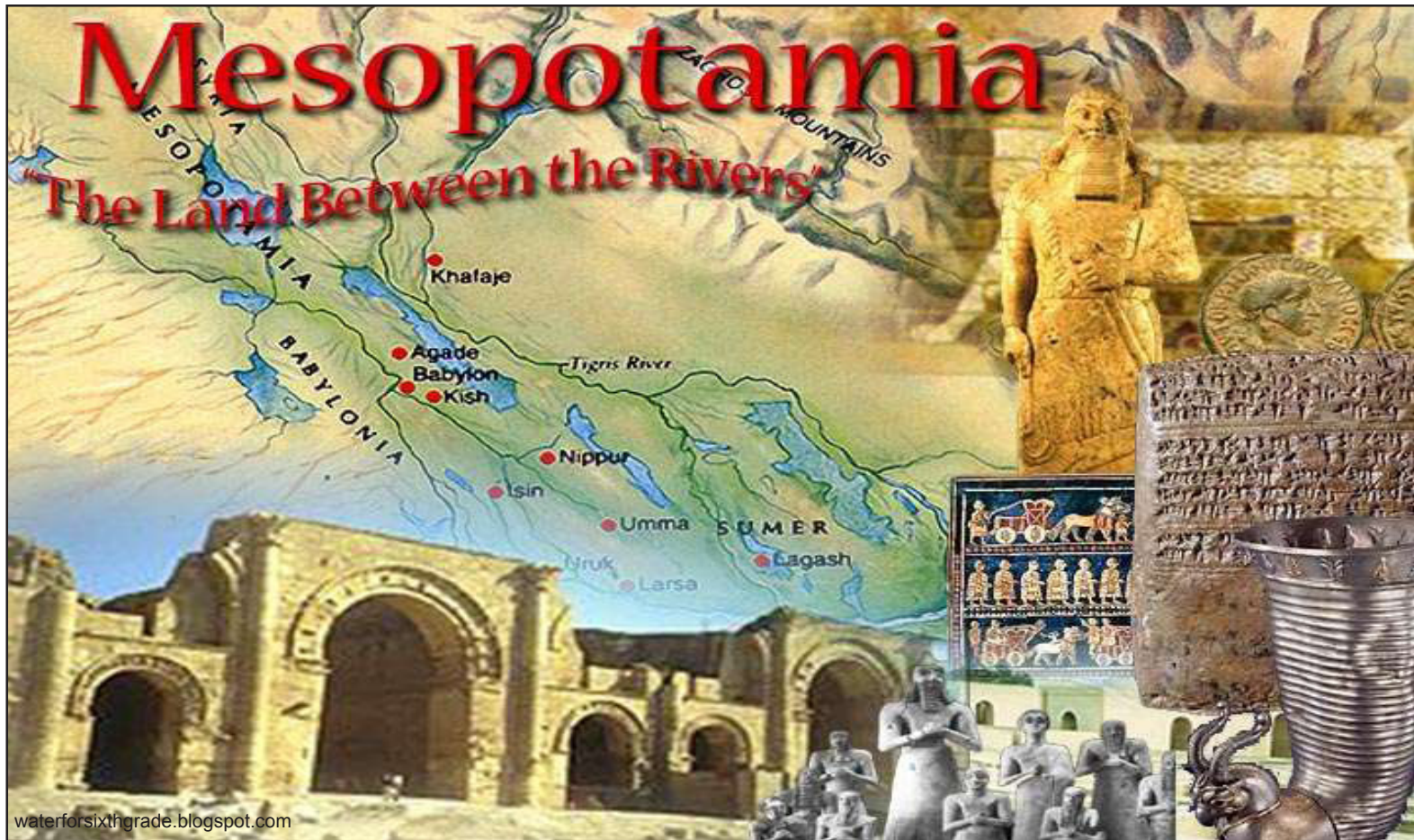
The Code of Hammurabi is significant because its creation allowed men, women, slaves, and all others to read and understand the laws that governed their lives in Babylon. It is unique in that laws of other civilizations were not written down, and thus could be manipulated to suite the rulers that dictated them.

The Code is particularly just for its time. Although it follows the practice of "an eye for an eye," it does not allow for vigilante justice, but rather demands a trial by judges.

The code is also one of the earliest examples of the idea of presumption of innocence, and it also suggests that both the accused and accuser have the opportunity to provide evidence. It symbolizes not only the emergence of justice in the minds of men, but also man's rise above ignorance and barbarism toward the peaceful and just societies still pursued today. 



hightrees.ie



The word “Mesopotamia” is in origin a Greek name, and it means “land between the rivers.” The Aramaic name is Beth-Nahrain, and it’s meaning is “House of Two Rivers.” In Arabic, it is called Bilad Al-Rafidayn.

Mesopotamia was the alluvial plain lying between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, composing parts of today’s Iraq and Syria. More commonly, the term includes these river plains in totality as well as the surrounding lowland territories bounded by the Arabian Desert to the west and south, the Gulf to the southeast, the Zagros Mountains to the east and the Caucasus Mountains to the north.

Some of the best farmland is in the narrow strip of land between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, which is why many different civilizations and empires developed and thrived in this small region. First came the Sumerians, who were replaced in turn by the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

Writings in Uruk (modern Warka) are among the earliest known in the world, giving Mesopotamia a reputation of being the “Cradle of Civilization,” as some academic circles regard it as the point of origin for a number of the oldest civilizations recorded in history.

In addition to developing the plows and irrigation canals, Mesopotamia developed the first form of mathematics, astronomy, and complex architecture. Mesopotamians were probably the first people to use the wheel.

It is thought that Mesopotamia was the place of the legendary Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden is described in the Book of Genesis as being the place where the first man (Adam) and the first woman (Eve) lived after God created them. In Qurna District, north of Basrah where the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers meet to form Shatt al Arab, there is now what is called the “Holy Tree of Adam,” which symbolizes the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden.

The origin of the term “Eden,” which in Hebrew means “delight,” may be from the Akkadian word edinu, which itself is derived from the Sumerian term EDIN, which means “plain” or “steppe,” so the connection between the words may be coincidental, although this word is known to have been used by the Sumerians to refer to Mesopotamia as the “valley of Edin,” meaning the fertile lands between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. 🇹🇲

One People



A Moment in History ... The Alamo

By Lt. Col. Enrique Villarreal
36th Inf. Div. Command Historian

This year marks the 175th anniversary of the Battle of the Alamo.

The myth and legend of the Alamo constitute the most celebrated military engagement in Texas history, capturing the imagination of people around the world. For many Americans and most Texans, the battle has become a symbol of patriotic sacrifice.

To understand the battle one must appreciate its strategic context in the Texas Revolution. In December 1835 a Federalist Army made up of Texan immigrants, American volunteers, and their Tejano allies, under the command of Stephen F. Austin, captured the town of San Antonio de B exar (now known as San Antonio) from a Centralized Mexican Army force. With that victory, a majority of the Texan volunteers of the “Army of the People” left service and returned to their families.

At this time in history, two main roads led into Texas from the Mexican interior. The first was the Atascosito Road, which stretched from Matamoros on the Rio Grande northward through San Patricio, Goliad, Victoria, and finally into the heart of Stephen F. Austin’s colony.

The second was the Old San Antonio Road, whose path crossed the Rio Grande at Paso de Francia (the San Antonio Crossing) and wound northeastward through San Antonio de B exar, Bastrop, Nacogdoches, San Augustine, and across the Sabine River into Louisiana.

Two forts blocked these approaches into Texas: Presidio La Bah a (Nuestra Se ora de Loreto Presidio) at Goliad and the Alamo at San Antonio under the command of Lt. Col. William Travis. Each installation functioned as a frontier picket guard, ready to alert the Texas settlements of an enemy advance.

On February 23 Santa Anna sent a courier to demand the Alamo’s surrender. Travis replied by firing one of the mission’s cannon. There could be no mistaking such a concise response. Flying a red flag and playing the El Deg uello bugle call, Santa Anna signaled that no quarter would be given to the defenders. Centralist artillerymen set about knocking down the walls. Bottled up inside the fort, the Texans had only one hope; that reinforcements would break the siege.

On March 5, Santa Anna announced an assault for the following day. This sudden declaration stunned his officers. The enemy’s walls were crumbling. No Texan relief column had appeared. When the provisions ran out, surrender would remain the rebels’ only option. There was simply no valid military justification for the costly attack on a stronghold bristling with cannons. But ignoring these reasonable objections, Santa Anna stubbornly insisted on storming the Alamo.

A little after midnight on the morning of March 6, Santa Anna ordered his men to surround the Alamo and attack from all sides. Once they completed a circle facing the fort and were confident no one could escape, the Mexican army advanced with almost 1,800 troops.

The Texas Fort rapidly fired rifles and artillery into the oncoming horde. As dawn broke, ladders were placed against the walls of the Alamo. The Mexican Army attempted to enter the fort, but was driven back by the stern defenders within.


The Mexican Army regrouped and on their third attempt they successfully breached the walls of the Alamo, forcing most of the defenders to withdraw into interior buildings.

As the Mexicans entered the Alamo,

brutal hand-to-hand fighting erupted throughout the former Roman Catholic mission until most of the garrison was killed. Those who survived the onslaught and penetrated the offensive lines were slain by the Mexican cavalry.

The next morning, less than 24 hours since the siege began, the Alamo was littered with battered and bloodied corpses of Texas patriots. By 6:30 a.m. on March 6, the battle for the Alamo was over.

It is rumored that between five and seven Texans may have surrendered; if so, Santa Anna had them executed. A number of eyewitness accounts reported between 182 and 257 defenders died, while 400–600 of Santa Anna’s men were killed or wounded in the assault.

The defenders of the Alamo willingly placed themselves in harm’s way to protect their country. Death was a risk they accepted, but it was never their aim. The battle of the Alamo remains an inspiring moment in Texas history. The sacrifice of Travis and his command animated the rest of Texas and kindled a righteous wrath that swept the Mexicans off the field at San Jacinto. Since 1836, Americans on battlefields over the globe have responded to the exhortation, “Remember the Alamo!” 



36th Inf. Div. Hall of Hero's

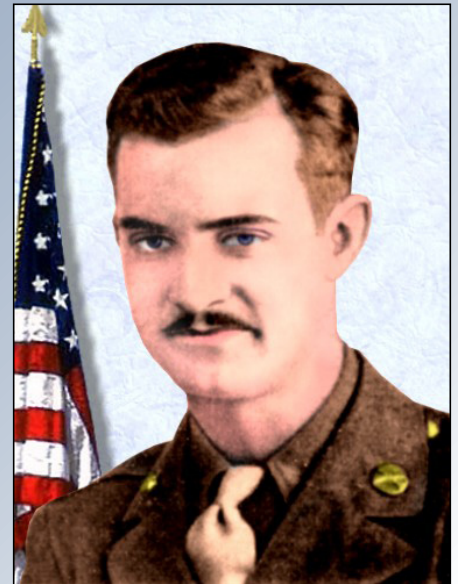


MORRIS E. CAIN, TECHNICAL SERGEANT, COMPANY E, 143RD INFANTRY, 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

He led his platoon against powerful German forces during the struggle to enlarge the bridgehead across the Moder River. With great daring and aggressiveness he spearheaded the platoon in killing 10 enemy soldiers, capturing 12 more and securing its objective near an important road junction. Although heavy concentrations of artillery, mortar, and self-propelled gunfire raked the area, he moved about among his men during the day, exhorting them, to great efforts and encouraging them to stand firm. He carried ammunition and maintained contact with the company command post, exposing himself to deadly enemy fire. At nightfall the enemy barrage became more intense and tanks entered the fray to cover foot troops while they bombarded our positions with grenades and rockets. As buildings were blasted

by the Germans, the Americans fell back from house to house. Sergeant Crain deployed another platoon which had been sent to his support and then rushed through murderous tank and small-arms fire to the foremost house, which was being defended by five of his men. With the enemy attacking from an adjoining room and a tank firing point-blank at the house, he ordered the men to withdraw while he remained in the face of almost certain death to hold the position. Although shells were crashing through the walls and bullets were hitting all around him, he held his ground and with accurate fire from his sub-machine gun killed three Germans. He was killed when the building was destroyed by the enemy. Sergeant Crain's outstanding valor and intrepid leadership enabled his platoon to organize a new defense, repel the

attack and preserve the hard-won bridgehead.



Photos courtesy of Lt. Col. Enrique Villarreal
36th Inf. Div. Command Historian



SILVESTRE S. HERRERA, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS, COMPANY E, 142ND INFANTRY, 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

He advanced with a platoon along a wooded road until stopped by heavy enemy machinegun fire. As the rest of the unit took cover, he made a one-man frontal assault on a strongpoint and captured eight enemy soldiers. When the platoon resumed its advance and was subjected to fire from a second emplacement beyond an extensive minefield, Pvt. Herrera again moved forward, disregarding the danger of exploding mines, to attack the position. He stepped on a mine and had both feet severed; but, despite intense pain and unchecked loss of blood, he pinned down the enemy with accurate rifle fire while a friendly squad captured the enemy gun by skirting the minefield and rushing in from the flank. The magnificent courage, extraordinary heroism, and willing self-sacrifice displayed by Pvt. Herrera resulted in the capture of two enemy strongpoints and the taking of eight prisoners.

ARROWHEAD 6



A mural painted by Sgt. Scott Sharpe adorns the door leading into the office of the commander for the 36th Inf. Div. and U.S. Div. -South, Maj. Gen. Eddy Spurgin. Sharpe has completed a number of murals throughout the division's main operations building. (Photo by Sgt. Jeremy Spires, 36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office)

