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386th Air Expeditionary Wing

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Truck commander awarded Purple Heart

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen
386th AEW/PA

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait – Driving convoys across Iraq is a dangerous and risky business when it comes to improvised explosive attacks.

Staff Sgt. Chris Lelm, a truck commander with the 424th Medium Truck Detachment, learned that first hand on Aug. 19, at 1:45 a.m., and because of that he was presented a Purple Heart in ceremony here Sept. 5.

On that fateful evening Sergeant Lelm was the truck commander in the lead vehicle of a convoy heading south about 10 miles north of Bayji, Iraq. He was reading some new information he had just received regarding potentially hot areas when he looked up and saw something on the side of the road.

“As soon as I saw it, it went off,” said Sergeant Lelm. “I grabbed for the (radio) to call in the attack and all of a sudden it felt like someone had karate chopped me.”

At that point Sergeant Lelm realized he had been struck in the neck by shrapnel. With the windows shattered, the vehicle operator Senior Airman Mike Lawrence continued to drive the truck out of harm’s way.”

“As soon as it went off, I just hit the gas,” said Airman Lawrence. “There was blood everywhere and when we got far enough out of the kill zone, we brought the convoy to a stop and I performed (combat life support).”



Air Force/Maj. Tom Crosson

Col. Paul Curlett, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, shakes Staff Sgt. Chris Lelm’s hand after presenting him a Purple Heart during a ceremony Sept. 5.

Also on the scene were Soldiers from gun truck detachment Charlie 1/12. They were escorting the convoy on the mission and they secured the area while also helping Sergeant Lelm.

“I was expecting a little panic, with such a junior enlisted driver, but he performed great,” said Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth Green, gun truck security commander. “It was above and beyond anything I expected.”

Once Sergeant Lelm was stabilized and it was determined he would not need to be medivaced, the convoy pressed on to Forward Operating Base Summerall for further assistance.

“We got him to the (temporary medical center) and got him stitched up, but he still had some broken teeth,” said Tech. Sgt.

Greg Ryan, convoy commander for the mission. “So we had to get him to (Life Support Area) Anaconda where they had a dentist.”

In an amazing twist, the convoy was hit once again on their way to LSA Anaconda by another IED. But luckily this time no one was hurt.

“I was just two trucks back from that one,” Sergeant Lelm said, “so it was a little nerve racking for sure.”

With 40 stitches in his neck and six partially broken teeth fixed, the sergeant and the convoy were ready to finish the mission.

Gathering together at this huge Army outpost for the ceremony, everyone was impressed with how the team reacted under fire.

“I can’t really say how proud

I am of everyone,” Sergeant Ryan said. “No one lost their composure and everyone kept their cool.”

“It was absolutely spot on,” said Chief Master Sergeant Matt Malenic, 424th MTD chief. “Those guys performed exactly as they were trained.”

The presiding officer praised Sergeant Lelm for his courage and everyone with the 586th Expeditionary Mission Support Group that perform this in-lieu off mission everyday for the Army.

“It wasn’t too long ago the Air Force was very comfortable living inside the wire,” said Col. Paul Curlett, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing commander. “But now after being called upon to do ILO missions, we have battlefield Airmen out there with our Army patriots and today we honor one of them.

“This is a tremendous honor and today you should all feel like you’re a part of Air Force history,” he continued. “And Sergeant Lelm is part of that history and has performed very valiantly.”

Sergeant Lelm said he was proud to be part of the convoy mission and his team.

“It’s neat to be one of the first to do this mission,” he said. “My team is great, Sergeant Ryan’s crew is one of the tightest out there, our compatibility is great and everyone knows their job and can handle anything that gets thrown at us.”

"It is what it is"...

Juggling your feelings of acceptance, enthusiasm while deployed to the AOR

Col. Greg Perkinson

386th EMSG commander

Is this your first deployment, or 12th? Were you a volunteer to deploy to the Rock?

Some people accept their deployment orders with open arms. Others are enthusiastic about preparing to deploy, and ensure they take care of themselves and their family. Unfortunately, some 'push back'...they get a profile, or do anything they can to get out of serving in the AOR.

Well, now that you are here ... how's it going? Do you accept your living conditions, work environment, and the host of opportunities you have here to improve yourself ... or are you 'pushing back' at every opportunity? Do you accept and understand the Arabian culture, customs and courtesies? If you find yourself 'pushing back'... try this: accept where you are—here and now. You'll find great things happen when you accept your present circumstances. Then, extend past that basic-level of acceptance...and develop enthusiasm.

It is time for a pulse check. If you accepted where you are...are you also willing (and able) to turn it up a notch and be enthusiastic about your time here? Having an enthusiastic attitude makes a good thing better...even contagious. If there's something you don't like about your life right now, what are you doing to improve it? Accepting your current circumstance doesn't mean you shouldn't 'raise the bar' and make it better for yourself (or others).

People 'push back' for different reasons. They might be having a bad day (or just 'moment'). If you notice yourself resisting where you are, and

what you're doing, what can you do about it? Start with acceptance. The Zen expression: "it is what it is" captures the essence of acceptance. I recently heard one of our senior Air Force leaders use the term during a visit here ... and think it's a good fit for me right now. This leader is competent, cares about people in the unit and has good character...it makes me want to follow him. It helps that I accept my role as a follower. If you are in competition with the boss, it doesn't make you a very good follower does it? Accept your role...better yet, enthusiastically follow.

What about leadership? Do you accept your leadership role, or are you resisting it? Dr Steven Covey said: "leadership = vision + discipline + passion + conscience." Passion is a key component of this basic equation. I describe passion as the fire in your belly. Are you leading enthusiastically? Great leaders motivate their followers. Are you motivated? Are your followers? Accepting your role is the starting point in being highly effective as a leader. If you aren't enthusiastic about leading or following, work to align your inner purpose (why am I here) and your outer purpose (what am I doing right now).

I am here supporting the Global War on Terrorism as part of my oath of office; and to keep my family safe. At the Rock, "It is what it is." I accept where I am; am enthusiastic about my outer purpose; and am going to continue to raise the bar. Are you working to improve yourself in mind, body and/or spirit? Here at "the rock" we have great opportunities and programs to help you find a sense of balance. For me, exploring my inner purpose is a life-long pursuit; and finding meaning and purpose in life is one of my keys to cultivating enthusiasm. Will you do the same?

"Who ya' wanna be?"



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Airmen given 80,000 ways to keep cool

Wal-Mart donates cases of freeze pops to deployed troops

Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen
386th AEW/PA

Airmen here are always looking for ways to stay cool during the dog days of the desert summer and recently they received about 80,000 ways to do that.

On Aug. 24, 800 cases of freeze pops landed on the flightline here via a C-130 Hercules from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas.

The two pallets of donated freeze pops did not just end up in the cargo area of the aircraft by chance. It took a lot of coordination by quite a few people to get them to the end of their journey.

The story starts with Jabo Floyd, general manager of the Wal-Mart distribution center in Bentonville, Ark., who is good friends with Master Sgt. Joey York, 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron first sergeant.

Mr. Floyd informed Sergeant York that he and Wal-Mart wanted to make a donation to the troops of the Rock. They wanted to donate some freeze pops to keep the troops cool while working serving their country.

After getting the proper approvals and clearances, Sergeant York gave Mr. Floyd the go ahead for the donation. However, the freeze pops journey was just beginning. Shipping costs were incredibly high, so Sergeant York and Master Sgt. Roy Clayton, 386th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron first sergeant, racked their brains to come up with a plan.

"(The maintenance superintendent) brought up the fact that we were going to be doing an aircraft swap at Dyess very soon and maybe they could bring them over," Sergeant York said. "So then we had to figure out how to get them there."

Once again Mr. Floyd and Wal-Mart came up big for the troops. Through some regular shipments they got the freeze pops loaded and transferred to a store site in Abilene, Texas, which is



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Joey York, 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron first sergeant, hands out freeze pops to Soldiers heading downrange to Iraq.

near Dyess. Now all that had to happen was get the merchandise on the aircraft.

"From there, the men and women of Dyess pulled together to make this happen," said Chief Master Sgt. Clement McGrath, 386th Expeditionary Maintenance Group superintendent. "Second Lieutenant Daryl Cesal, from the 317th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, cut through the logistical issues and got the freeze pops on our iron movement. Without his efforts the freezer pops would still be there."

"Getting the freeze pops on the aircraft was no easy task," Lieutenant Cesal said. "We had to use one of our own pallets, forklift, sign out cargo straps, pick up the pops via government vehicle, build the pallet with limited experience, weigh it and then drop it off."

"Once we finally accomplished this we attempted to drop it off but ... the pallet was busted," he continued. "We had to completely break down the first pallet and move the pops over to the new one."

Finally, (they) were loaded on the aircraft and shipped."

The freeze pops arrived at their destination with a note that simply said, "POP ICE – Thanks to our troops for all that you are doing, from Wal-Mart Stores Inc."

Everyone involved with the effort was glad they could help out to make it happen.

"The teamwork was simply awesome," Chief McGrath said. "No one person could have made this happen as it was a total team effort. It was a pleasure to be part of a team that makes life better for the troops."

"It was a team effort the whole way," Sergeant York said. "The folks at Wal-Mart were very supportive, very gracious and really wanted to help the troops out."

"I used to get them one box at a time and give them out," Sergeant Clayton said, "but this is really taking it to the next level."

Helpful hints for newcomers from civil engineering

Entomology

Newcomers to the Rock will soon find they are not alone here.

Leaving food around attracts insects and small animals. Snakes and other reptiles that inhabit the area are not pets. Once they enter a building they become pests.

Also, leaving bay doors open is not a good way to keep pests out. This is especially important since bird migrations are upon us. And feeding wildlife is not a good way to keep it off base.

Air Conditioning

Tent City:

1. Do not attempt to adjust the control panel (Thermostat) on the ECU (Air Conditioning Unit).

2. Problems that are common to the air supply:

a. Do not cut additional holes in the air plenum that run across the ceiling of the tent.

b. Do not manipulate air flow in the tent by creating homemade air ducts to your individual living space.

c. Do not hang clothing or other objects from the air plenum.

3. Problems that are common to the air return:

a. Do not block the vent at the rear of the tent that returns air back to the ECU.

b. Keep objects such as pillows or bedding away from air return vent.

c. Be sure to sweep the floors in the tent to help to prevent objects or dust and sand from being drawn into the ECU.

4. Keep tent flaps closed on the doors and windows to maintain the temperature in the air conditioned space.

Trailers:

Be sure to place temperature settings on the control panel or thermostat to a middle position. Set the window unit's temperature setting at about 12 for comfort cooling. Setting the temperature control too low will cause the system to freeze up during periods of high humidity.

Dorms:

For a comfortable room temperature, set the thermostat at about 20 degrees Celsius (equals 68 degrees Fahrenheit). If you find your unit is leaking, report the leak to the Self Help Desk (442-2929) as soon as possible.

1. Be sure to clean the filter regularly to prevent overheating or freezing of the unit caused by dirt and debris.

a. Carefully remove the filter from the air conditioning unit.

b. Clean the filter by shaking it outdoors. Then, take the filter to a water source and carefully rinse away any dirt residue. Please be careful not to wash debris into the drain.

c. Shake out excess water from the filter and replace it in the unit. It is permissible to place the filter back into the unit while it is still damp.

2. Keep the base of the air conditioning unit clear of obstructions that may interrupt the air flow.

3. Do not remove the cover, instead remove the filter only.

4. Clean the filter weekly to ensure proper unit operation.

Electric

Be conscious of what you are plugging in:

Voltage is not the same in every facility.

Tent city has 120v and needs a transformers to step voltage up to 240v

Trailers, Dorms and most facilities are 240v /require transformer for 120v

Do not over load power strips.

Plumbing

Do not throw anything other than toilet paper in toilets. Towels and feminine products will and have clogged the sewers.

The drains run slow, and typically are smaller than what we are use to at home. Water pressure is low on purpose, and fluctuates depending on the base's and host nation usage.

Coffee drinkers and tobacco chewers, don't dump grounds or spit chew in the sinks or toilets. The sinks in particular will clog up easily.

Please limit showers to 4 minutes. We are replacing three or four shower hoses a day – mainly due to excessive use.

HTNR

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Champions



Air Force/Maj. Tom Crosson

Col. Paul Curlett, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, stands with members of the 386th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron after presenting them with the Commander's Cup as the all-sports intramural champions. The 386th ESFS ran away from the competition, claiming the softball, dodgeball and volleyball titles as well as finishing second in basketball



Remembering 9-11



STORIED HISTORY

Airmen of the Rock are part of great lineage, tradition of excellence

Airmen deployed with the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing are part of a great lineage that dates back more than 50 years.

Just as the first servicemembers in the 386th played an important role in World War II, so do today's Airmen in Operation's Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

As the wing's mission continues to constantly change and evolve, it's history will forever be part of Air Force lore.

The following is a brief history on the wing and the base where it now calls home.

Wing Lineage

While the 386th AEW was not activated until 2002, it actually traces its roots back to the 386th Bombardment Group of the Army Air Forces.

The 386th BG (Medium) was activated Dec. 1, 1942, at MacDill Field, Fla. Although in existence only a few days less than three years, the men of the 386th attained the most outstanding record of all B-26 groups in the European theater of operations in terms of number of successful sorties flown, tonnage of bombs dispatched and enemy aircraft

destroyed while maintaining the highest bombing accuracy score.

More than three thousand men saw service with the 386th during those three years of World War II, flying 409 missions. One hundred ninety-three men made the supreme sacrifice.

The B-26's remained the primary airframe for the unit until its conversion to A-26's shortly after the Ardennes campaign in 1945.

The unit was redesignated as the 386th BG (Light) in June 1945 and was inactivated on Nov. 7, 1945.

In 1998, in preparation for Operation Desert Fox, the 9th Air Expeditionary Group stood up here at the Rock and in 2001 was redesignated as the 386th Air Expeditionary Group.

In 2002 the 386th AEW stood up and remains in place today. The wing has a diverse mission that canvases the entire U.S. Central Command AOR. It is the primary aerial hub for OIF and provides airlift support for OEF as well as the Horn of Africa.

The 386th AEW is comprised of more than 3,400 Airmen from more than 130 guard, reserve and active duty installations. More than 1,300 of the Airmen

serve outside the wire with the 586th Expeditionary Mission Support Group. They provide security at the largest Theater Internment Facility in Iraq and serve as convoy drivers.

History of the Rock

Ground breaking for what is now commonly known as the Rock, first started in 1974. Five years later on June 1, 1979, the base first opened its doors and began operations.

SA-330 *Pumas* and SA-341 *Gazelles*, French made helicopters, were commonly flown in and out of the air base during its first year in existence.

In 1980 the host nation ramped up its arsenal with the arrival of the *Mirage*, a supersonic fighter aircraft, also made by the French. The base was home to quite a few fighter squadrons and was also a training base for pilots.

The Rock remained much the same throughout the 1980s until 1990 when it was invaded by Iraq.

Following a cease fire agreement on March 3, 1991, a small number of Air Force personnel arrived at the base. These Airmen monitored air traffic in the southern no-fly zone.



Things remained constant around the base until the 74th Air Control Squadron arrived in August 1995 to set up and operate a radar site. It was the only source of a 24-hour air picture in-theater as part of Vigilant Sentinel.

Exactly one year later, the 74th ACS personnel deployed once again to base, this time for 120 days in support of Operation's Southern Watch and Desert Strike.

After tensions in the region flared once again in late 1997, coalition forces started massing at the Rock. When the buildup renewed in November 1998, prior to Operation Desert Fox, the base doubled in size to a population of 1,500.

The 9th Air Expeditionary Group provided air surveillance and control through that same radar site, while a fleet of C-130 *Hercules* provided theater airlift and, if necessary, combat search and rescue and aeromedical evacuation for Operation Southern Watch forces. The 9th AEG brought all those functions under one umbrella.

Back then life on the Rock was austere, even by the standards of Southwest Asia's deployed locations. Many Air Force people at other bases lived and worked in permanent buildings, but the Rock was almost entirely a tent city, with very few actual buildings. Most "buildings" were Quonset-shaped, foldable general purpose structures.

During the summer of 2001, Air Force troops from all over the world were called to participate in Operation Southern Watch's AEF 6, also called the 386th Air Expeditionary Group. The deployment put them 39 miles from the border of Iraq, the closest Air Force base to that country.

From the late spring to early fall, the active duty troops were joined by members of the guard and reserve. Although from different divisions of the same service, they personified the "seamless air force" concept.

AEF 8 came to a hot start under the desert sun when members of the 729th ACS arrived here in August 2001. There was a two-thirds changeover of base personnel due to AEF 8 rotations. Approximately one-third of the members assigned to the 729th ACS deployed to the Rock assuming duties as the 386th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron for the next 90 days.



The humble beginnings of the Rock can be seen in this aerial photograph. Airmen first arrived here in 1991 to support Operation Southern Watch.

During this time the Rock supported OEF missions and continues doing so today.

In 2002 the Rock saw the 386th AEG transform to the 386th AEW, while the base's main focus shifted with the beginning of OIF.

Since then the base has hosted quite a few coalition partners in addition to the U.S. One large group included members of the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force.

And following the start of OIF the base saw the arrival of the Australian Defence Force. These servicemembers provide logistical support for their countrymen down range.

The Rock is also part of Japanese military history. The Japan Air Self Defense Force arrived here in 2003, which is the first time they have deployed to a combat zone since their formation in 1954.

The base is also home to members of the Republic of Korea Air Force. They first arrived here in 2004 and provide support to members of the ROK Army, which are deployed to Erbil, Iraq.

While the Rock's appearance and mission has changed drastically since its opening in 1979, it will remain an important installation for the host nation as well as their visitors.

- Information compiled from host nation history book, wing historical documents and www.globalsecurity.org.

Rock Historical Timeline

- 1974 - Construction begins
- June 1, 1979 - The base opens its doors and begins operations
- Nov. 30, 1979 - SA-330 *Pumas* and SA-341 *Gazelles*, French made helicopters, arrive on station
- Feb. 25, 1980 - A fleet of *Mirages*, a supersonic fighter aircraft, arrive at the Rock
- Aug. 8, 1990 - Iraq invades
- March 3, 1991 - Cease fire agreement signed. A small number of Air Force personnel arrive at the base to monitor air traffic in the southern no-fly zone
- Nov. 1998 - The base's population doubles in size leading up to Operation Desert Fox
- 2000 - First hardened facilities constructed on base
- Oct. 7, 2001 - Operation Enduring Freedom begins
- 2002 - The 386th Air Expeditionary Wing stands up
- March 22, 2003 - Operation Iraqi Freedom kicks off
- December 2003 - Japan Air Self Defense Force arrive for their first combat zone deployment
- Oct. 12, 2004 - Members of the Republic of Korea Air Forces arrive

386th Air Expeditionary Wing Rock Solid Warriors



**Staff Sgt.
Jason Levasseur**

43d Expeditionary Electronic Combat Squadron

Communications Security Responsible Officer
and Systems Administrator

Home base: Davis Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

How do you support the mission here? My primary responsibility is to ensure that our EC-130H aircraft can talk to the coordinating agents on the ground. In addition, I am responsible for my squadron's computer networking capability to include NIPR, SIPR and JWICS.

How many times have you deployed and what makes this one unique? This is my fifth deployment. I've been to Afghanistan, Korea, twice to Qatar and now here. This deployment differs significantly from my other deployments because I work directly with the aircrews. It is interesting to have such hands on contact with the mission. I sit in on mission briefs and have a better understanding of my unit's operational goals.

How does your job differ in a deployed environment versus home base? My job back home is the same day to day. Here in theater I've quickly learned that not only am I responsible for my traditional computer job, I'm also responsible for anything that could be tied to communications from cell phones to satellite radios! Another big difference here is the urgency behind my day to day responsibilities. If someone's computer goes down back home, they can take an early lunch. Here, we can't afford to cancel a mission. In addition, working with the EC-130H communication systems provides me with more direct contact supporting the war on terrorism than I would have back home.



**Staff Sgt.
Tyrone Williams**

386th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron

Material Handling
and Equipment Mechanic

Home base: Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

How do you support the mission here? I repair and maintain eight aircraft cargo loaders, and Material Handling 10K forklifts which have an instrumental part in the base mission. Moving cargo and munitions up range.

How many times have you deployed and what makes this one unique? I am no stranger to the AOR, this is my seventh deployment, the environment may have changed but the heat is the same. This is my first deployment to have dormitories and a real bed; in the past I had to sleep in tents with cots, and makeshift foam mattresses.

How does your job differ in a deployed environment versus home base? The job is basically the same; the only difference is the 10 fold workload. The extreme heat here causes many problems with the loaders, so maintenance is constantly required to maintain the 95-100% mission complete rate you see on the dining facility board.