



143d Transportation Command (FORWARD)

Twists & Turns

Volume Two, Issue 1

August 2006

Special points of interest:

- Commanding Message, pg. 2
- Infantry IFAK Class , pg. 1, 9
- Iraqi Freedom Vet seeks Citizenship, pg. 3
- Soldiers support Humanitarian Mission, pg. 4
- The IG's Corner, pg. 5
- Army Cooks at Arifjan, pg. 5, 11
- Father and Son, pg. 6
- Married Couples; Announcements, pg. 7
- Commander and 1SG pg. 9
- 143D Unit Ministry Team Prayer Breakfast; Featured Shots , pg. 10
- SJA Claims Mission pg. 12
- Welcomed Warriors Pg. 13

Infantry Unit Teaches New IFAK Class

2/127th Infantrymen teach troops new first aid class for improved kit



Clockwise from left:

Staff Sgt. Tyler Gerrits (left), 1st. Lt. Shaun Murphy (right) and Brig. Gen. Keith Thurgood (sitting) review part of the Improved First Aid Kit; Staff Sgt. Gerrits, 1st. Lt. Murphy and combat medics of the 2/127th Infantry taught a class to BG Thurgood and other Soldiers on the Army's latest First Aid Kit-as well as techniques and improvements that they have used.

KUWAIT- Medics of the 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry put to use techniques and tactics picked up during deployment from Special Forces troops, British Soldiers and Navy Seals, to train leaders on the new Army improved first aid kit (IFAK).

Recently, 1st Lt. Shawn Murphy and Staff Sgt. Tyler Gerrits, of the Wisconsin National Guard's 2/127th Infantry, conducted a class to better acquaint leaders with the new kit released to deploying Soldiers. In addition to introducing the kit, they also improvised the kit to encourage efficiency and field-expedience.

"Our battalion medical section has been trying to stay on top of the latest advancements of combat medical care," said Gerrits, "and our training has been very helpful in the treatment of wounds Soldiers may receive in the line of duty."

New additions Army training, include demonstrations of medical techniques, advanced medic care, and combat life-saver skills.

See **CLASS**, pg. 9

Commanding General Message:

'A Renewed Focus on Excellence'

Jet fighters fly in fours, and each four-jet formation has a leader who holds life and death responsibility for the formation. Once in a great while, during a complicated aerial maneuver, an entire formation of four jets will crash. That's because the second, third and fourth jets are "flying the leader's wing," and will follow the number-one jet anywhere – even into the ground. So the leaders must adopt a "think for number four" mindset. What does this mean? Before they make a move, they have to consider how it will affect the other jets in the formation. Leaders would be wise to adopt the same mindset – before making a decision, think of how it will affect operating environment in our organization –all of the "number fours", so to speak. In this light, it is important that every soldier understand my focus on excellence. As the leader goes, so goes the formation. As I've stated, excellence is not a matter of wishing, but a matter of will.



During the month of July we said goodbye to Detachment 16 and welcomed Detachment 18, members of the 336th Transportation Group, the 24th Trans Battalion and the 594th Trans Company. I ask each member of the command to reach out and welcome our new comrades in arms. July is an important month for the command. Not only will virtually every subordinate command RIP/TOA, but we will also begin our surge period....a time that will require constant attention to detail and consistent vigilance. By the end of August all the commanders will also have the opportunity to brief me and staff on their command philosophy unit operations. The focus of these briefings will be how we best accomplish the mission and training, and more specifically, continued training to improve the readiness of each soldier and unit to accomplish our mission. At the center of our discussions will be two important points: 1) We are an Army at war and everything we do is geared towards that end -- our mission. 2) We must think creatively and critically about how we accomplish our mission. Both of these points are founded on the *Warrior Ethos* -- the mindset that we serve the Nation and are both competent in our warrior skills and confident as leaders.

LTG Gen. Russel L Honoré, Commander, 1st Army identified twelve traits that characterize a soldier that has the Warrior Ethos (those traits necessary to face and defeat (by killing or capturing) the Nation's enemies).

These traits are:

1. The self-discipline to harden one's body and soul through demanding physical training and exertion.
2. The belief that one's word is one's bond and that trust binds men together.
3. The mental toughness to endure, without complaint, the extremes of weather and the lack of sleep and food.
4. The embodiment "to guard my post until properly relieved".
5. The iron will, determination and confidence to overcome all odds, even in seemingly hopeless situations.
6. The relentless desire to be the best, to be a winner, but never at the expense of one's comrades or unit.
7. The uncompromising commitment to be technically and tactically competent, to achieve and exceed the demanding standards; to be combat ready.
8. The inherent selflessness to give your last ounce of water to your soldiers and your buddy; to replace "me" with "we".
9. The unqualified willingness to sacrifice oneself for the mission, the unit or a comrade.
10. The ability to overcome the horrors of battle -- death, wounds, fear -- to cross "the killing ground" under fire, even as the lone survivor: Follow me!
11. To never give up, to never give in, to never be satisfied with anything short of victory.
- 12 To always put the mission, the unit and the country first and oneself second.

At its core, the ethos grounds itself on the refusal to accept failure. We will not fail.

Editor.....1st Lt. Ryan Pace

Twists and Turns is published in the interest of all personnel of the U.S. Army 143D TRANSCOM. It is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is written, edited and published by the Public Affairs Office (FWD), 143D TRANSCOM.

Submit questions, comments, or newsletter submissions at: ryan.j.pace@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

Iraqi Freedom Veteran seeks U.S. Citizenship

Story and photos by 1st Lt. RYAN J. PACE
143rd Transportation Command Public Affairs

KUWAIT- Joliet resident, Spc. Allan Henry, has begun his second tour of duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom; but this time he is also striving to become a U.S. citizen.

He serves as an automated logistical specialist with the U.S. Army Reserve 336th Transportation Group, also headquartered in Joliet but he is a native of St. Christopher Island in the Virgin Islands.

"I'll feel a lot more comfortable serving as an American soldier not just someone with a green card," Henry said, "I chose to serve in the Armed Forces because I wanted to, and honestly I haven't regretted doing it;

I'm very proud of myself and the Army. Henry began his quest for citizenship last fall when he completed his first tour of duty and is now awaiting confirmation. He hopes his citizen



Shortly after the farewell dinner ceremony for SPC Henry and five other Soldiers headed to Iraq, Henry poses for a yearbook photo.

ship will not be an obstacle he has to negotiate, as he turns the page on another deployment.

Henry has pursued citizenship since last fall, following his deployment and is awaiting confirmation. He hopes

"The process of gaining citizenship wasn't bad," Henry said, "I had to remember American history from years ago, Fill out the questionnaire, have my passport photo taken and finger prints processed; Once all questions were answered



Spc. Allan Henry (left) and Col. Larry Smith, 143rd Transportation Command chief of staff. The 336th Transportation Group serves under the 143rd TRANSCOM while deployed.

and checked, my application was sent out for military and FBI processing before it is filed for my personal history."

While citizenship is important to Henry, military service is a family tradition. His sister, Shirley Henry of the Virgin Islands National Guard is also deployed to Iraq and four of his immediate cousins are OIF veterans.

Henry deployed in May and after several weeks of mobilization training in Texas and New Mexico, he arrived in Kuwait en route to Iraq.

"As I return this time, I come knowing what to expect," Henry said.

When not deployed, Henry is a student at Joliet Community College-pursuing an associate's degree in accounting, with plans to also earn a Bachelor's degree. He is employed at Graybar Electric Company in the stock department for the last 6 years and aspires to become a warrant officer in the future, following this deployment and his pending citizenship.

Soldiers Answer Call of Humanitarian Mission



Soldiers, Sailors and workers gather in front of an open container, following completion of humanitarian relief support mission in retro yard at Camp Arifjan.
Photos and Story by 1st Lt. Ryan J. Pace

Free Wheelchair Mission Donation:

5 Containers loaded with over 2000 wheelchairs left camp Arifjan for delivery to Baghdad and subsequent distribution to the Iraqi people.

Thanks again to Free Wheelchair Mission for their donation, the wheelchairs were loaded up by soldiers, sailors and workers in the retro yard on a hot Saturday morning in July for shipment to the Humanitarian Operations Center in Kuwait.

The Humanitarian Ops Center looks forward to helping more in the future with planned operational missions and further generous donations and support from all.

“SERVICEMEMBER OF THE WEEK WINNERS”



Petty Officer Pavlovich, stands flanked by Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Shultz (left) and Brig. Gen. Thurgood (right) following a coining and luncheon for his outstanding work.

Staff Sgt. Damideux (left) shakes hands and receives a coin from Brig. Gen. Thurgood, before attending a luncheon with the 143D Transcom Commander.



Sgt. Collazo (left) and Sgt. Combs stack boxes of wheels on pallets for movement to the container yard and shipment to Iraq.



Spec. Cranston (left), Spec. Baker (middle) and Sgt. Chester stack boxes of wheelchair framing into containers for shipment and distribution.



Detachment 18's young enlisted detail break for water and a quick picture in the pallet-filled retro yard.

The IG's Corner: "Show Me the...Award!"

"Show me the money! Show me the money!" ...We all remember the Cuba Gooding, Jr. quote from the movie *Jerry Maguire*. In the movie, Gooding wants to be awarded a big NFL contract even though his performance was undeserving. Gooding believed he deserved the reward even though he played soft on the field and was not a good locker room teammate. Gooding finally gets the big contract but only after he improves his performance on and off the field.

If you are new to Theater and found yourself thinking about what individual achievement award you may receive...**DON'T!** The decision to award an individual and as to which award are both subjective decisions (AR 600-8-22, Para 3-1). Remember, individual decorations are not an entitlement and are not authorized if the soldier is flagged for the overweight program.

The best thing you can do is to perform on and off the field. On the field / on the road, perform your unit's mission to the utmost of your ability. That includes leading from the front, taking the hard assignment, and maintaining your professional bearing at all times. Off the field in garrison, perform like a 100% soldier in physical fitness, mentoring, and attitude.

MAJ John Mathson
Principal Inspector General
143rd TRANSCOM (FWD)



Army Cooks Share Recipe for Safe Meals

Photos and Story by 1st Lt. Ryan J. Pace
143D Transportation Command (FWD)

Kuwait – Army cooks stationed in Kuwait focus on serving safe meals to troops.

Army cooks of the 143D Transportation Command feed approximately 2,000 soldiers per meal and supervise over a total of 120 third-country nationals filling the dining facilities with up to 800 patrons at a time. Not an easy job, in addition to often switching shifts to work elsewhere or perform basic soldier tasks as well.

"We interact more with people," said Spc. Eric Harris, "this is a supervisory position."

Duties mostly include security, supervision and support to ensure safe and nutritious meals at all times. All cooks also have to transition from being soldiers to cooks and ultimately supervisors, as they sometimes manage an entire dining facility with an average of 45 or more third-country national cooks to one soldier.

"You can work with 2 people staffed, but the bottom line is that we need a headcount and a manager to run operations," said Staff Sgt. Mary McClinnahan.

Another mission that is stressed is security and control of the facilities, as many people enter and exit daily and without the efforts of Army cooks, there would be a high risk for safety and health risks. Many cooks also take trips to Iraq on convoys to continue their mission with others up north and rotate out, so they have an understanding of the meaning of security and the importance of maintaining it.

In speaking with a few soldiers of the 143D TC, of 243rd Engineering Company of Baltimore, Maryland—the focus of every deployed cook is simple; Focus on safety at all times.

"Soldier's take ownership over the safety of soldiers and it all starts with washing your hands," said Sgt. Ocentia Gordon, "Safety is in our hands."



143D Transcom Cooks and contract workers gather for a group photo following a busy breakfast shift in Zone VI at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

Like Father, Like Son for Florida Soldiers in Kuwait

Story and photo by 1st Lt. Ryan J. Pace
143D Transcom (FWD) Public Affairs Officer

Kuwait – Staff Sgt. John Collazo, and his son, Sgt. Jonathan Collazo were able to spend a day together during their concurrent deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Staff Sgt. Collazo, of Bonita Springs, Florida, is currently serving in Iraq with the 651st MP Company of Florida's National Guard. He also returns to combat service for his second tour, following a tour in Vietnam in 1971.

Staying in touch with his son, the two coordinated a meeting on a hot afternoon, to spend some time catching up and prepare for another deployment in the family.

"It's great to see him," said Collazo Sr., "Hopefully we'll meet again soon."

Sgt. Collazo, of Orlando, Florida serves in Air Operations with the 143rd Transportation Command in Kuwait. He is serving his first tour of duty in Kuwait as a newly promoted Sergeant.

In speaking with Sgt. Collazo he hinted on his father's influence on his military career.

"There's many reasons why I joined," said Collazo, "but mostly because of my father and the opportunities that the Army offered me after high school."

The last time the Collazo's met was during Staff Sgt. Collazo's two-week leave of duty in Puerto Rico. Staff Sgt. Collazo also is originally from Arecibo, Puerto Rico, where the Collazo family is from.

In speaking with the Collazo's, they also hint on the similarities between the two during their military careers. For Staff Sgt. Collazo, he mobilized out of Fort Bliss, Texas in 1971-headed to Vietnam to serve his country. Some 35 years later, his son now follows the same path as he has mobilized out of Fort Bliss, to serve his country in Kuwait.

Staff Sgt. Collazo served on active duty during the 1970's, before a break in service, and returned as a guardsman in 1995. When not on Army duty, he also works as a social worker with the abuse and neglect department for the state of Florida, assisting senior citizens and nursing homes.



Staff Sgt. Jonathan Collazo and Sgt. Jonathan Collazo take a moment to pose for a father-son picture together during their brief meeting in Kuwait.

Sgt. Collazo joined the Army Reserves in 2003 and currently works as an IT specialist and independent contractor, as well as, attending Valencia Community College full-time as a Computer Science major.

Once back home, the two have plans to continue to practice boxing, play football, go fishing and skydive, but will share another common bond as U.S. Army Veterans and part of a long family legacy of military service.

Spc. Baker and Sgt. Collazo compete in a recent hotdog eating contest.

MWR—JULY06



OLD SOLDIERS' NEVER DIE; SAFETY SEZ: YOUNG ONES DO!!



Humpty the Safety Camel
Official Mascot of the
143d TRANSCOM
Safety Office

In Kuwait: If a Soldier is Killed or Injured, It Will Likely Be Vehicle Related (NTV/ Military Wheeled) & These Contributing Factors:

- SPEEDING & Aggressive Driving
- Lack of Experience & Inappropriate Reactions to Hazards

HUMPY Sez: Slow Down! Wear Seat Belts, Be Safe & Smart

"Don't Get Nixed in '06"

#35

Married Couples Reflect on Deployment

1st Lt. Ryan J. Pace

As detachment 16 looks back on completing their deployment, so do two memorable married couples on the battlefield, on an unforgettable year in their lives.

Sgt. First Class Heriberto Concepcion and Staff Sgt. Tanisha Concepcion, of Orlando, Florida, recall their experiences at Kuwait Naval Base and Camp Arifjan with confidence and appreciation.

"This experience has strengthened our relationship," said Mr. Concepcion, "but this will also be an adjustment when we return- to life as a married couple again."

While Tanisha was at Kuwait Naval Base for the first half of her deployment, Heriberto worked at Camp Arifjan. Although the two were apart, they did manage to see each other once a month; For most soldiers deployed, the average is much longer between time with loved ones, but the Concepcions recall it as a unique experience, nonetheless.

The two recall it as a difficult time in adjusting back to friendship and co-worker relations, rather than husband and wife.

"This confirms our marriage, as we don't need to explain what life was like here," said Mrs. Concepcion, "and we developed an understanding of our friendship."

Heriberto and Tanisha were both employed in the personnel section. Heriberto was an administrative assistant and Tanisha worked in personnel actions. They also have an 11 year-old daughter at home and are excited to see her upon return.

Future plans for the young couple consist of a month long vacation and time to focus on their new life and having more children. While Heriberto returns to his job as an active-duty reservist, Tanisha will continue her civilian career and reserve duties.

See COUPLES, pg. 13

Have an interesting mission or story that you feel should be in the next Twists & Turns or home town newspaper?

Contact your unit PAO or the 143rd Transcom (FWD) PAO, 1st Lt. Ryan J. Pace, to submit your pictures and/or stories for review at: ryan.j.pace@arifjan.arcent.army.mil or call DSN 786-3157



The Reese's and Concepcion's gather for a DET 16 couples photo.



Mr. and Mrs. Concepcion smile for a last photo following a final DET 16 awards ceremony in early July.

Announcements

Congratulations to our Command Sergeant Major, Michael Shultz, on the birth of his third child.



Mrs. Denise Shultz gave birth to a baby girl-Grace Kathleen Shultz, 6 lbs., 1 oz., in Tampa Bay, Florida on July 26th, 2006.

Good Luck to the following Detachment 18 soldiers going up for Promotion board in late July for the following advancements:

Sgt. McDermott to Staff Sergeant.

Spc. Torres to Sergeant.

Spc. McCullough to Sergeant.

Spc. Peterson to Sergeant.

Good Job on your efforts and keep it up!

Congratulations to Captain Morgret on his recent news of promotion to the rank of Major.



Cpt. Morgret recently relocated to his duty station in Iraq with other soldiers of the 336th Transportation Group, but should be receiving his promotion ceremony and new rank very soon in early August.



21 July 06

COMBAT PATCH COMBAT PATCH CEREMONY

DET 18

**"Movement Brings
Victory!"**



COMMANDER & 1SG CORNER



Soldiers of the 143D TRANSCOM (FWD):

The HHC has a new tentative home. We are located in 506, across the hallway from G1.

We have an information board which will contain the following; monthly training and events schedule, policies, and MWR information; The unit MWR team is planning future events so that we will have the opportunity to get together as a team. I hope each of you can attend. In addition we are planning to conduct off-post MWR trips in the near future.

If you have not already turned in a leave request please turn them. The HHC needs to review these as soon as possible in order to ensure everyone gets a chance to complete this great opportunity. Remember dates are closer than they appear; don't let your date pass you by! Keep in mind that some adjustments may be required so that we don't go over our 10% allotment.



UNIT SAFETY PROGRAM

The Unit Safety Officer is 1LT McKinnon. The HHC Safety Team is developing a unit safety program. The tasks associated with this program are:

Hands-on Training

100% HEAT (HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer) trained personnel
100% ASDT (Army Safety Drivers Training) trained personnel

Online <https://safetylms.army.mil>

Accident Avoidance Course (100% completion prior to taking R and R Leave)

Composite Risk Management Course (All Officers and NCOs)

Commanders Safety Course (CDR, 1SG, CSM and all OICs and NCOICs)

Stay focused! Don't quit! Remember your families at home! Take care of each other! Live the Army Values and Soldiers Creed!

See CLASS, pg. 1

To compliment the revamp of first aid buddy training, the new kit comes equipped with a vehicle lifesaving kit, warrior aid and litter kit, and the Talon II Litter.



Staff Sgt. Tyler Gerrits unveils one of many pouches on the new improved first aid kit during his class.

While tactical combat casualty care is the focus of the unit, most soldiers do not have the training or equipment to perform vital life-saving tasks; the new class and kit should greatly increase the chances of saving lives-when it matter most.

New additions Army training, include demonstrations of medical techniques, advanced medical care, and combat lifesaver skills. To compliment the revamp of first aid buddy training, the new kit comes

equipped with a vehicle lifesaving kit, warrior aid and litter kit, and the Talon II Litter.

When asked about current IFAK bags, Murphy said, "Medics carry different bags, but this allows for a median that will be resolute and efficient; allowing the soldier to perform self aid and buddy aid immediately at the point of wounding."

Brig. Gen. Keith Thurgood, commander of the 143rd Transcom (FWD), recently visited the guardsmen for instruction on the new product and provided words of confidence on the new kit. "Every Soldier, Sailor, Airmen and member of the Coast Guard in the command should not only have the IFAK but know how to use it." said Thurgood, "We can save life and limb and control massive hemorrhaging."

Given the training and experience that has shone throughout the deployment, these classes pave the way for the future of Army Medicine and make for better combat soldiers.



Soldiers of the 143D Transcom take a photo before completion of Army Safe Driver Training.

Clockwise from left:

1st Lt. Pace, Private Waldhart, Staff Sgt. Damideux, and Cpt. Parnell.

Prayer Breakfast for Soldiers, Dr. Stu Weber Huge Success

1st Lt. Ryan J. Pace



"Prayer Breakfast"

Dr. Stu Weber

Pastor
Good Shepherd
Community Church

Vietnam Veteran

2 OLC

PROMISE KEEPER
UNLEASHED
RELEASING THE RAW POWER OF YOUR HEART

When: Thurs, 13 JUL 06
Where: Zone 1 DFAC
Time: 0630 "Go through serving line prior to"
Musical selections by Arifjan Gospel Choir

Support the Soldiers
of Iraq

Author

"If my people who are
called by my name, will
humble themselves and
pray and seek my face
and turn from their
wicked ways, then will I
have mercy from heaven and
will forgive their sin and
will heal their land."

A prayer breakfast, sponsored by the ASG-Kuwait, was held featuring renowned best-selling author and Community Pastor, Dr. Stu Weber, on the morning of July 13th in the Zone One Dining Facility, to offer praise, support and words of wisdom to soldiers at Camp Arifjan.

Dr. Weber, a decorated U.S. Army Vietnam War veteran and Green Beret, had a lot of spiritual guidance to offer and self-experience to disclose during a captivating speech accompanied by a talented choir and uplifting music.

In attendance for event, was the 143D Transcom Chaplain with summarizing words on his powerful speech: "The bottom line of the message was all about the bond that battle buddies share; It is a bond that only warriors can know," said COL (CH) Garthwait, "We all need someone who will accept us, affirm us and hold us accountable- good principles of mentorship only on a different plane"



Sp. Andrew McCullough (left), Dr. Stu Weber (middle), and Col. Stanley Garthwait pause for a photo at Zone 1 DFAC, following Dr. Weber's Prayer Breakfast Service.

Featured SHOTS

336th TG Soldiers' Farewell



143D Transcom (FWD)'s Detachment 18 said farewell to attached members from the 336th Transportation Group in a June ceremony at Zone VI Dining Facility.

From top left clockwise:

Sp. Henry, Sp. Peterson, Sgt. McDermott, SSG Bailey and Cpt. Morgret sit across from each other awaiting to be coined and honored for their hard work.



Departing Soldiers of the 336 Transportation Group receive coins and appreciation for their support during a short ceremony in Zone VI with fellow soldiers.

10K FUN RUN



A group of individuals pose for a photo at the finish line, as well as several clips of 143D Transcom participants of a recent 10K fun run. The run was sponsored by Atlanta Constitution Peachtree-Journal and held at Camp Arifjan, as the kick-off event for a day of commemoration and activities for all on the 4th of July holiday.

CSM PIECES

Det 18 is off and running. There was no crawl or walk! From the time we arrived at Home Station in Orlando until Boots on Ground, Det 18 has shown they have what it takes....The Best of the Best! During our training-up at Fort Bliss Texas, I had the privilege to pin the following Soldiers and welcome them to the NCO Corps: SGT Herman Betancourt, SGT Jonathan Collazo, and SGT Aaron Combs. I wish their families and loved ones were there to share in this great event, but I see many more Opportunities for these Great Warriors in the future.

CSM Mike Schultz

Command Sergeant Major

143d TRANSCOM (FWD)

See COOKS, pg. 5



Clockwise from Left:

Staff Sgt. Mary McClinnahan, Sgt. 1st Class Rufus Trader, Sgt. Ocentia Gordon and Spc. Eric Harris

The diligence of the cooks to maintain this safety awareness is not only within the dining facility but also with the soldiers that eat there. Safety is vital to each meal that is served; sample trays are stationed daily to monitor the food and cleanliness starts with each soldier before they enter the facility.

"Zero percent of soldiers have been sick-in fact, in 27 years in the food industry, I have never had a patron get sick," boasts McClinnahan. "The main thing is the food industry is-you have got to be clean."

Words of wisdom are not taken lightly from Staff Sgt. McClinnahan either, since she actually owns her own restaurant in Johnstown, Penn. named, 'Mary's Home Cooking'. When asked her favorite dish, "Lasagna is my favorite," says McClinnahan, "with 10 different cheeses and sour cream to build the flavor." She plans to finish her tour shortly and open up a second restaurant in North Carolina upon return home.

KNB FEATURES



Maj. Radford Cox sinks a ball during a recent Camp Patriot 9-ball Pool Tournament at Kuwait Naval Base in which he finished in third place above 22 other players.



Cpt. Jerod Bond (Right), Maj. Cox (middle) and 1st Sgt. Richard Anderson pause for a recent photo aboard the Motor Vessel Virginian at KNB.



Staff Judge Advocates Serve in Iraqi Claims Mission

Story by 1st Lt. Ryan Pace, photos by Maj. Patrick Leduc



Maj. Patrick Leduc reviews SJA paperwork to local Iraqis during a grievance claims mission.

Kuwait- Seven days a week, hundreds of vehicles move north and south across the Kuwait border in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Once across the Kuwait-Iraq border, convoys pass a small border town. Approximately 20,000 Iraqi's call similar border towns home; in the course of doing missions, accidents occur involving local residents and our convoy missions.

The U.S. Army provides Iraqi citizens the opportunity to present claims seeking reimbursement for loss of property or for physical injury. In order to facilitate these claims, the Army appoints Judge Advocates to serve as foreign claims commissioners. The Judge Advocate General's Corps Army claims service mission is to supervise, process, investigate, adjudicate, and negotiate the settlement of non-contractual claims worldwide on behalf of and against the Army.

Maj. Patrick Leduc, Staff Judge Advocate (Forward) for the 143D Transportation Command, reflects on his recent foreign claims mission in Iraq.

"The premise of the mission is to attempt to provide some relief for meritorious claims to Iraqi civilians who have suffered a loss either physically or financially caused by U.S. military operations," said Leduc, "In doing so, we provide both assistance and credibility to Iraqi local authorities by adjudicating meritorious claims, and provide some relief to those Iraqi citizens who have suffered a loss due to no fault of their own."

The 143d Transportation Command Foreign Claims Commission provides claims service for certain municipalities in southern Iraq. In providing this service, judge advocates from the 143d Transportation Command meet with Iraqi civilians who wish to assert a claim seeking reimbursement for property loss or physical injury.

It is inherently the job of a Judge Advocate to try and make things right. They assist in the building of local government institutions by promoting the concept that Iraqi citizens should rely upon the rule of law to seek a redress for their grievance. By providing a way for individual Iraqis to redress their grievances, the Judge Advocate assists in establishing a way for citizens to seek relief, and in so doing, helps to avoid harsh feelings that might result.

Without the mediation of a Judge Advocate, what often has the potential to develop are some individuals seeking to take out their frustrations in the form of retaliation against U.S. troops or convoy missions. Additionally, Judge Advocates help to develop stronger relationships with the Iraqi people and help to build their governmental institutions.

On average, approximately half of the claims result in some form of monetary relief to the claimant. But some claims are denied on the basis of combat activities, time limitations, or lack of evidence to determine what happen. During the last mission, several claims were received.

In addition to receiving claims, nearly a dozen other claims were resolved.

In receiving the claims, the Iraqi citizen meets with the individual Judge Advocate in order to ensure that all relevant information is presented. The use of interpreters is an important part of the process. Those claims are then processed, and reviewed by the claims commission before returning back to inform the individual claimant of the outcome. In those cases where claims are denied, Army Humanitarian Assistance personnel who provide support to claims mission may be able to offer alternative forms of support.



Maj. Leduc and fellow SJA members wait outside for clearance to enter a building in Iraq before conducting a recent mission.

Recent Publication in the Orlando Sentinel Newspaper:

Welcomed Warriors

Story by Sandra Pedicini
Sentinel Staff Writer

July 10, 2006

The symbols honor the citizen-soldier's military service: an American flag in a wood display case, a commemorative coin with the words "Global War on Terrorism," a yellow flag -- emblazoned with an eagle -- reading, "Welcome Home Warrior Citizen."

About 35 Army reservists received the welcome-back awards in a ceremony Sunday at Southport Community Park near Orlando International Airport.

"I think it really shows that we as the Army Reserve recognize your sacrifice, what you've done -- to leave your job, leave your family," Army Lt. Col. Robert Irick said.

Irick, who returned home this spring after working with reservists assigned to the 143rd Transportation Command, received one of the awards.

The soldiers, all assigned to an Orlando Reserve center, serve in several different units. Many returned home more than a year ago, shortly after Congress approved the award for every Army reservist who served in the current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The reservists honored Sunday -- among 70,000 to receive the awards nationwide -- were safely back in those homes and jobs after serving in areas that have become increasingly violent. At least 112 Floridians have died in the Iraq war, which started in March 2003.

Dressed in fatigues, the reservists received their awards with salutes, handshakes and pictures, their entrances onstage announced by the quick rat-a-tat-tat of drums.

"It's a nice reward for a job well done after being deployed for a year," Capt. Michael J. Newton of the 520th Transportation Company Detachment said. Newton, an Osceola County corrections officer, spent a year away from home. He was stationed at Tallil Air Base in Iraq.

Between the special award for Army reservists and greater public appreciation for people in the military, Irick said, it's good to see today's soldiers getting more recognition than some in past conflicts.

Operation Desert Storm, the first Iraq war in 1991, was over in a matter of weeks, while the current conflict is in its fourth year. That means, Irick said, that many more reservists and their families are affected this time around.

See COUPLES, pg. 7

Sgt. First Class Priscilla Reese and Staff Sgt. David Reese, of Butler, Pennsylvania shared the experience with the Concepcions, though they worked a lot closer to one another at Camp Arifjan, during their tour of duty.



Sgt. First Class Priscilla Reese and Staff Sgt. David Reese smile for a photo after DET 16's final award ceremony in early July.

Sharing views on their year in Kuwait, the Reese's pointed out that the experience was both weird and challenging.

"Being deployed as a couple was difficult; and working together as friends was an experience most would not understand," said Mr. Reese.

David worked as movement supervisor, while Priscilla served in the personnel section in human resources. The two currently have no children, but plan to move upon return, buy a new house and start a family.

David will return to his job as an active duty reservist, while Priscilla continues her profession as a federal employee. In addition, the two saved their deployment vacation time for return to settle into their new home, foregoing the opportunity during the deployment, with plans to take time off when they return as well.