

# ANACONDA TIMES

DECEMBER 27, 2006

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA

## Underwoodmania

**Soldiers fill Sustainer Theater for 50-minutes of rock, country**

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## THROUGH OUR EYES

**Catch a glimpse of the holiday spirit of 13th SC(E) Soldiers around LSAA**

**Page 15**

Vol. 3, Issue 52

# SMA visits troops

*"The logistics Soldiers are the backbone of this operation."*  
- Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston



Installers use a make-shift device attached to a forklift to easily install the news doors on a M1114 at the installation facility on LSA Anaconda.

## M1114 upgraded armor installs in full swing for U.S. forces

by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell

**Anaconda Times Editor**

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq--Army Materiel Command is setting up shops across Iraq to meet the large demand for the latest safety addition to the M1114, the new Objective Fragmentation 5 (OF5K) door and side panel add-on armor kit.

The armored kits, which are the newest upgrades to Humvees, help better protect servicemembers from explosive devices and other hazards on the battlefield.

The new armor enhancements offer the troops many features not available until now. Spring-loaded and counter-weighted windows allow the Soldier to roll the 100-pound window up and down with ease, said Lt. Col. Frederick Dennison of Radcliff, Ky., commander of the 1st Battalion, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade.

The improved Gunner's Protective Kit (O-GPK) enhances the gunner's protection, visibility, and maneuverability within the turret, according to Ted Rhoades, a civilian logistics planner from Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

**See, UPGRADES, Page 11**



Photo by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

## Please tell me why I signed up for this?

Capt. Stacie Hepler, Maj. Cynthia Lerch, and Capt. Narvo Robinson, all assigned to the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) are covered with whip cream as their battalion commander, Lt. Col. Brian Brindley poses for cameras after his officers volunteered for a "pie-in-the-face" fundraiser.

## "I live the Army Values."

I am Staff Sgt. Michael Grabowski, from Fort Carson, Colo.  
3rd Medical Command >> Combat Medic Instructor





# Waiting til the *last* minute... *again*

story and photos by Sgt. Gary A. Witte



Staff Sgt. Jennifer B. Olson, a postal clerk with the 11th Postal Platoon under the 22nd Personnel Services Battalion and the 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group, helps a customer.

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** – They could knock on wood, cross their fingers, or hunt for a rabbit's foot, but mostly they just hoped. Because really, holiday hopes were all the procrastinators had that their packages would arrive home before Christmas.

With the deadline for timely mailing almost 10 days past, customers still lined up at the east side post office with boxes filled with gifts.

Spc. Pete J. O'Brien of Woodstown, N.J., a cavalry scout with 5th Squadron, 117th Cavalry Regiment, filled out an address label in red and green ink.

The nearby teddy bear, wearing a Santa hat and a Philadelphia Phillies shirt, was being mailed to his girlfriend, Jenna.

"I'm a pretty last-minute guy," he said. "I'm hoping it will make it in time."

O'Brien said he and his girlfriend agreed to exchange only one small gift

each for Christmas and save the bigger gift-giving when he gets home. She, of course, had sent his gift two days ago.

"She's less of a slacker than I am," he said.

The base post offices remain busy throughout the year, but the Christmas season multiplies the traffic. In the past month, the base has handled 1.5 million pounds, or 94,000 individual pieces, of ingoing and outgoing mail, Postal Superintendent Master Sgt. Cedric Palmore of Memphis, Tenn., said.

"A lot of people wait until the last week," Palmore said, noting that more customers started coming in after the Dec. 4 priority mail deadline.

To accommodate their time-challenged customers, members of the 11th Postal Company under the 22nd Personnel Services Battalion and the 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group even set up at one of the base recreation centers one afternoon to help get the mail out before the deadline.

East side Postmaster Tech Sgt. Victor S. Negron of Queens, N.Y., said the

command even tries to push more flights out to help get last-minute mail home before the holiday.

"We completely understand," Negron said of the late mailings. "We still do our best to get it there."

In another effort to accommodate customers for the season, the office left out a box of free wrapping paper, which was used up within a few days.

Sgt. Lawrence R. Davidson of Syracuse N.Y., a heavy equipment operation supervisor for the 15th Engineer Company, said he doesn't normally wait until the last minute, but was extremely busy.

"It was Thanksgiving," Davidson said. "I put my head down, and then it was Christmas."

In his box, he placed a CD of photos, a sweater for his wife Shannon, and a DVD of himself wishing his family a Merry Christmas. He had already sent his Christmas cards and received his Christmas present from his wife.

"I'm crossing my fingers and hoping it won't be (late)," Davidson said.



Spc. Pete J. O'Brien of Woodstown, N.J., a cavalry scout with the 5th squadron, 117th Cavalry Regiment, prepares to send his girlfriend her Christmas present. The two agreed to send a small gift now and celebrate the season in full when he gets home.



At right, Capt. Willie Morgan of Augusta, Ga., personnel officer for the 324th Signal Battalion, packs presents for his wife and her family after having them inspected by Senior Airman Keith A. Becker of Chicago Ill., a postal clerk with the 11th Postal Platoon under the 22nd Personnel Services Battalion and the 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group.

## ANACONDA TIMES

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Contact Sgt. Gary A. Witte at [gary.witte@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:gary.witte@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

### 13th SC(E) Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Michael J. Terry

#### Chief of the Anaconda Consolidated Press Center

Maj. Jay Adams  
[jay.adams@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:jay.adams@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

#### 210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment Commander

Maj. Kirk Slaughter  
[kirk.slaughter@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:kirk.slaughter@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

#### Print OIC

Capt. Perry Jarmon  
[perry.jarmon@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:perry.jarmon@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

#### Editor

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell  
[mark.bell@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:mark.bell@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

#### Copy Editor

Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown  
[alexandra.brown@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:alexandra.brown@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

#### Staff Writers

Sgt. Gary A. Witte  
[gary.witte@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:gary.witte@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)  
Sgt. KaRonda Fleming  
[karonda.fleming@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:karonda.fleming@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)  
Sgt. Kevin McSwain  
[kevin.mcswain@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:kevin.mcswain@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)  
Sgt. Joel F. Gibson  
[joel.f.gibson@us.army.mil](mailto:joel.f.gibson@us.army.mil)  
Spc. Amanda Solitario  
[amanda.solitario@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:amanda.solitario@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

#### Contributing Public Affairs Offices

332 Air Expeditionary Wing  
36th Combat Aviation Brigade  
402nd Army Field Support Brigade  
411 Engineer Brigade  
164th Corps Support Group  
657th Area Support Group

1/34 Brigade Combat Team  
45th Sustainment Brigade  
82nd Sustainment Brigade  
593rd Corps Support Group  
15th Sustainment Brigade



# Preston says Army is ready for 2007

## Why is the logistics Soldier an important ingredient to success for American forces around the world?

For all of our support and combat service support Soldiers out there, they are really the backbone of the operations that we do over here.

We say in the Army that the non-commissioned officer is the backbone of the Army, well the logistics Soldiers are the backbone of this operation.

We couldn't do what we are doing over here as an Army or as a nation for all the services if it weren't for Anaconda and the linkage with all the combat service support Soldiers over here.

## What defines the American Soldier as we go into 2007?

I would say in 2007, as you look at all of the Soldiers across the board, Soldiers today are pentathletes.

They are multi-skilled, and we are asking Soldiers today to do some incredible things. In some cases, we have artillery Soldiers doing convoy security or security around a forward operation base.

We have military police doing nontraditional security with detainees and the list goes on.

So, when you look at what Soldiers are doing across Iraq and Afghanistan, they are doing some really incredible things.

## Today's Army depends heavily on National Guard and Reserve forces for operational needs, has the Army moved from barriers that separate active-duty and citizen Soldiers?

Yes, After the attacks of 911, we are more joint and combined now than we have ever been.

When you look at the Army specifically, Active, Guard and Reserve, it is one fight and

we made it a point to break down those barriers and perceptions that there is a difference.

If it wasn't for the patch the Soldiers wear, we wouldn't be able to tell if they were Active, Guard or Reserve.

## What is Army Strong to you and what does it really mean?

As we look at Army Strong across the force, it really defines all Soldiers whether it is Active, Guard or Reserve, regardless of the career field occupational specialty. All of our Soldiers are doing incredible things. When we define Army Strong it is really tied to the Soldier's Creed and our Warrior Ethos and the Warrior Ethos has been our Ethos for 231 years.

## What advice would you give Soldiers who are considering to make the Army a life-long career?

Right now, we are an Army at war,

supporting a nation at war. We have more than 230,000 Soldiers currently deployed to over 70 countries around the world.

We have Soldiers that we are asking to do some really incredible things and in some cases, we are asking them to deploy away from their families frequently.

They are spending a year in combat, then coming home for about a year and then going back to combat for a year.

Historically, as an Army, we have done a magnificent job at working ourselves out of a job, And when I listen to the combatant commanders General Abizaid and General Casey, they talk about the success and progress we have made over here and they talk about the way ahead.

I believe we are going to have progress.

As we continue to work ourselves out of a job as we have done in other deployments, you will see that we will increase the predictability and stability for Soldiers and their families.



Photo by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown  
Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Fountain, the 13th SC(E) command sergeant major and other sergeants major from LSA Anaconda welcome Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston, Multi-National Force - Iraq Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey J. Mellinger, and Multi-National Force Corps-Iraq Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola.

## What is your new year's resolution and why?



Spc. Jesse Strege

"I won't take my family or home for granted anymore."



Sgt. Ryan Nilson

"Assure that my Soldiers and I make it home safely."



Sgt. 1st Class Zachary E. Miller

"To spend more time with my family."



Spc. Christel Muniz

"Clear the slate and start all over again."





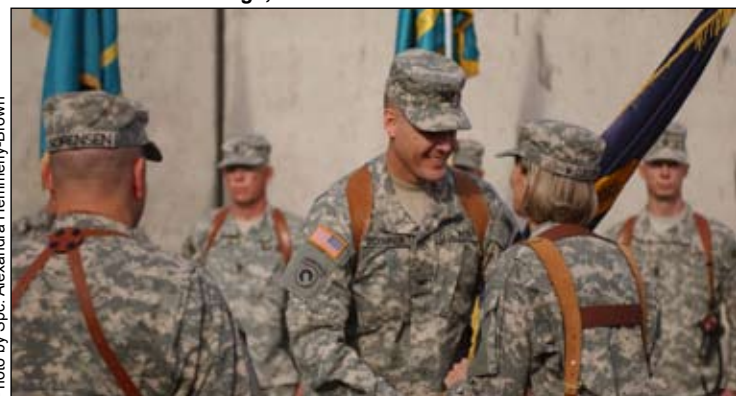
Col. George Sorensen of Redmond, Wash., the new commander of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade-Iraq addresses his new troops in a speech during a change of command ceremony Dec. 15.

Photo by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown



Command Sgt. Maj. Ruben Vela, command sergeant major of the 402nd stands in front of a color guard from the 146th Multi-Functional Medical Battalion of Grand Ledge, Mich.

Photo by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown



Col. John O'Connor of Toledo, Ohio, the outgoing commander of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade-Iraq, passes off his unit's Colors to senior commander, Brig. Gen. Patricia E. McQuiston during the ceremony.

# Field support mission changes leadership

— story by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown —

**LSAANACONDA, Iraq**—Col. George Sorensen took over command of the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade-Iraq from Col. John O'Connor in a change-of-command ceremony here Dec. 15.

"It's truly an honor to stand before you as the new commander of this great organization," Sorensen said during his speech. "There's no better job than leading Soldiers, civilians, and contractors at the point of a spear sustaining our warriors on the battlefield."

Sorensen, from Redmond, Wash., came to Anaconda from his most recent assignment as a logistics staff officer in Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff.

"I am committed to maintaining the exceptional reputation of this brigade both in support of the Soldier and in representing Army Materiel Command,"

Sorensen said.

The 402nd AFSB is responsible for command, control, and coordination of all U.S. Army Materiel Command units and missions in Iraq. It is currently responsible for nearly 35,000 military and civilian personnel who carry out the field support mission.

The brigade carries out a wide variety of tasks including adding armor to vehicles, repairing Strykers, maintaining a fleet of vehicles to swap out if a unit's breaks, repairing radios and computers and Warlocks.

"The 402nd is an amazing organization, like no other; it brings together people from all walks of life...what they do is save lives each and every day; for that simple fact alone, I say thank you," O'Connor said in his handing-over speech.

O'Connor said it had been a blessing to command the 402nd for the past 14 months, and he couldn't think of a more important job than commanding troops.

"To the 402nd team, a new commander has taken over, and I charge you to support him as well and as enthusiastically as you have supported me," O'Connor said.

Although new command is taking over, the mission to keep equipment and personnel running in Iraq at all costs will not change.

"Keep moving forward and continue to execute missions at the same high standards," Sorensen said to the civilians and Soldiers assigned to the 402nd. "Although the future is uncertain, I know you're ready for a new challenge."

## Rememberance "I've Been to the Mountaintop"

### M a r t i n L u t h e r K i n g

#### JANUARY 15 FROM 11 A.M. TO 1 P.M.

#### MWR East Recreation Center

#### Essay Contest

- Two page, double space
- Descriptive of the man
- Discloses interesting facts
- Introduces not so well known aspects of his life
- Effects of his efforts on civil rights movement
- His MO

#### MLK 5-Kilometer Run

For more information, or to register:  
call 829-4001  
or email:  
Kathy.mckay@balad.iraq.centcom.mil  
Amanda.glade@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

#### General Information

For more information, or to help out,  
please call 829-1915  
or email Sgt. 1st Class Leotin Kent at:  
leotin.kent@balad.iraq.centcom.mil



# Combat Stress Control

113th Medical Company (CSC)

## 829-1402

individual counseling by appointment or walk-in

command referrals

services for combat and operationally stressed soldiers

### RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

MONDAY TO SATURDAY  
11 A.M. TO NOON

### STRESS MANAGEMENT

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY  
10 TO 11 A.M.

### HOME FRONT ISSUES

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY  
4:30 TO 5:30 P.M.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY  
10 TO 11 A.M.

### ANGER MANAGEMENT

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY  
1:30 TO 2:30 P.M.

### ANXIETY AWARENESS

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY  
1:30 TO 2:30 P.M.

### SLEEP HYGIENE

MONDAY AND THURSDAY  
4:30 TO 5:30 P.M.

### GOAL SETTING

WEDNESDAY  
4:30 TO 5:30 P.M.

### DEPRESSION AWARENESS

MONDAY AND TUESDAY  
1:30 TO 2:30 P.M.

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

MONDAY AND THURSDAY  
10 TO 11 A.M.

### WOMEN'S GROUP

THURSDAY  
8 TO 9 P.M.

### COMBAT ADDICTIONS GROUP

WEDNESDAY  
7 TO 8 P.M.

for more information, email:  
[melissa.kale@us.army.mil](mailto:melissa.kale@us.army.mil)



Staff Sgt. Don Meyer is part of a combat logistical patrol team on the road outside Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq.

## Ride the red horse

story and photos by Air Force Maj. Richard Sater

**CAMP SPEICHER, Iraq** -- Don't let the color fool you. This is no merry-go-round.

RED HORSE stands for Rapid Engineer Deployable Heavy Operational Repair Squadron Engineers. Maybe the name is a little cryptic (and repetitive), but the image is exactly right: a roan horse charging ahead, proud, strong and unstoppable - like the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron.

You want a road built? New living quarters from the ground up, or an old building demolished? And you want it done quickly? RED HORSE is your animal, tackling heavy construction right here and right now.

The 557th ERHS consists of approximately 400 Airmen filling billets in lieu of Army engineers, working at a dozen locations throughout Iraq.

The most concentrated group, some 250 strong, is located here, near the city of Tikrit. There is "more work being done at Speicher than at any other" forward-operating base, according to Lt. Col. Pete Garner, officer in charge of the RED HORSE detachment here, deployed from the Virginia Air National Guard's 203rd RED HORSE Squadron, Virginia Beach.

It's big work. Hard work. On any day here, you will find Airmen building a "C" hut, erecting a clamshell tent, patching spalls on an aircraft parking ramp, paving a new stretch of road, conducting a route reconnaissance mission outside the perimeter, fixing an engine on a humvee, and more.

The work is mostly outdoors, and the tools are mostly big and noisy, jackhammers, bulldozers, nail guns, power saws, .50-caliber rifles.

Clearly, part of the satisfaction - and part of the fun - of being a RED HORSE-back rider is the variety of tasks assigned and the commitment required to complete them.

The horse won't gallop without teamwork, of course. Every project is a group effort, three, four or 20 Airmen with a common aim.

Bringing people together from different

units and expecting them to pull as one team could present a huge obstacle.

However, Garner credits the month-long combat skills and task-validation training at Fort McCoy, Wisc., and Camp Buerhring, Kuwait, as the catalyst in building those key relationships.

"We had 30 to 40 days of working together before we got here," he said. "It's made things easier. We knew our capabilities, and we jumped right into the work."

Administratively, the 557th falls under the 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing at Balad Air Base. Tactically, however, the 557th reports to the U.S. Army's 411th



Staff Sgt. Jennifer Davidson attaches a Hellfire flashlight to the 50-caliber rifle in the turret of a humvee.



Tech. Sgt. Thomas Hubal is part of a construction team building two "sea huts" for use as Army office space.

Engineer Brigade, headquartered southeast of here at LSA Anaconda.

"We work in conjunction with the Army engineers here," Garner said (A facility-engineering team) "puts together a plan and then comes to us for design and construction."

More than 50 civil engineering units have contributed airmen to the 557th, active duty and Reserve component, with the centerpiece being two sister Air National Guard units, the 202nd RED HORSE from Camp Blanding, Fla., and the 203rd.

Command-and-control of the 557th is centered at Balad Air Base under Col. Jack Paschal, who commands the 202nd back in the States.

The 202nd and 203rd have provided the majority of RED HORSE units contributing Airmen to the 557th.

The rest come from Air Force Prime BEEF (Base Emergency Engineering Force) units - active duty as well as National Guard - around the globe, from Hawaii to Germany.

But individual designations mean little over here. "We're all the same team. Unit designations don't mean anything over here - you're part of the HORSE," Paschal said.

The new rotation of the 557th ERHS has only been on the ground for a week, and it's already charging ahead full-speed with that project list from the Army.

The last RED HORSE team - primarily consisting of Airmen from the 823rd RHS out of Hurlburt Field, Fla., augmented by Prime BEEF units - completed projects valued at an estimate of \$25 million, and Paschal is confident his group will match or even eclipse that mark.

Only just out of the starting gate for a six-month deployment, the 557th reports high morale from its high horse.

"We're here to improve the quality of life for the folks who have to go outside the wire - doing their part to stabilize the country," Garner said. "Whatever we can do to make their job a little easier, we'll do it."



# Big toys keep 13th SC(E) moving through Iraq

by Sgt. Raheem Lay

## 15th Sustainment Brigade

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** – When large things need to be moved from point A to point B, commanders call on the big “toys” to get things in and around Iraq. The 911 for this mission is the Mississippi Army National Guard’s 1687th Combat Heavy Equipment Transporter (HET) Company from Southaven.

Since arriving here in October, Capt. Emanuel Barber and his Soldiers have been busy moving the extra-large cargo around Iraq.

The company’s responsibilities include the movement of supplies and equipment that support U.S. and coalition forces throughout Iraq. Although these missions may be uncomfortable, dangerous, and even intimidating, Barber said his Soldiers embrace the challenges that lay ahead.

“To me, that’s what being a Soldier is about,” said Spc. Esmus Franklin of Belzoni, Miss. “Being able to execute a tactical mission and believing that you will get the job done regardless of how dangerous the mission may be.”

Franklin said because military personnel make up a small slice of the American population, serving here in Iraq makes it more special.

“We are the few chosen ones, which means a lot to me and probably to a lot of other Soldiers who



**Company commander Capt. Emanuel Barber checks out current mission tracker this morning before conducting morning briefing.**

feel the same way I do,” he said.

Prior to the deployment in support of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), based at LSA Anaconda, the 1687th operated medium trucks which hauled packaged goods such as food, supplies, materials, and equipment on stateside missions, according to Barber, who is from Heidelberg, Miss.

He said this mission requires the Soldiers to drive military vehicles which are three times the size and weight of a normal tractor trailers on the hostile roads of Iraq.

“This will be a significant challenge for the Soldiers as well as their families,” Barber said. “However, the members of this unit have a wealth of experience, great work ethic, and high level of motivation. Just like the unit’s motto says, ‘Packhorse will get it done.’”

Several Soldiers of the 1687th bring the experience of previous deployments with them.

“I wanted to assist with the mental preparation of Soldiers who have never been over in theatre. Knowing that there are Soldiers with past experience... makes the transition and adaptation stages much more bearable than not having any experience at all,” said veteran Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Laney, the operations NCO from Tupelo, Miss.

Laney said his Soldiers vol-

unteer with pride as they execute their missions.

“When I joined the Army National Guard, my earnest intentions were to get an education and serve my country,” said Spc. Angela Harsh from Paducah, Ky. “I am thankful for being born and raised here (in the U.S.). I never thought I would love the military so much. It grew on me.”

Harsh said the best part about her deployment is putting on her uniform each day.

“I enjoy working side by side with a battle buddy who came from a different walk in life than I have,” she said. “We share the same feelings about the military and the American people. It is up to us to protect America.”

“It is very difficult to leave your loved ones behind; however, I knew the obligations of the military prior to me joining. I feel that I am making a difference and helping to provide a better safety net for my wife and kids,” said Spc. Derek Booth of Horn Lake, Miss.

Photo by Sgt. Raheem Lay



## Army unveils Light Utility Helicopter UH-72A Lakota

**COLUMBUS, Miss.** - Gen. Richard A. Cody, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and Joe RedCloud, a chief of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, Lakota Nation, accepted the Army’s first Lakota Light Utility Helicopter, UH-72A, in a ceremony here today.

“The Light Utility Helicopter - from concept development to material fielding to rapid deployment - is not only serving as a catalyst for change across the Army, it is also accelerating the speed of Army aviation modernization and integration with other services and government agencies,” said Cody.

The Army has a long-standing tradition of using American Indian names, such as terms, tribes and chiefs for its helicopters. In the case of the Lakota aircraft, the linkage is between the Lakota legacy as stalwart defenders of their homeland and the nature of the aircraft’s intended domestic missions.

“We’re pleased that you honor our tribe by naming this helicopter Lakota. You are not only honoring our past, you are recognizing that we are still here, joint partners in the heritage of the promise of America,” RedCloud told the audience.

The fielding of the LUH is part of an ongoing Army-level effort to transform its aviation capability through the deliberate reinvestment of funds from the canceled 2004 Comanche program.

The Army National Guard will receive the majority of the 322 new aircraft. Initial aircraft will be sent to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., for medical evacuation missions in January 2007. The UH-72A Lakotas will replace UH-60 Black Hawks, which will be transferred to the National Guard for operational missions.

“The Lakota heralds a new beginning for our Army and for our communities across every state,” said Cody. “It is our nation’s responsibility and the Army’s duty to provide our National Guard Soldiers with the tools they need to respond fully and rapidly to homeland security missions and national disasters.

“This exceptional platform will fly for years to come in America’s skies. It is an aircraft we needed and we are proud to see it take flight,” he said.

The UH-72A is a commercial aircraft designed to conduct light general support tasks in permissive, non-combat environments. Those tasks include civil search and rescue, personnel recovery, evacuation, counter-drug and limited civil command and control operations in the conduct of Homeland Security.



## Army Reserve Affairs Building 4135 DSN: (318) 829-1113



LTC Russell D. Rogers  
russell.rogers@balad.iraq.centcom.mil  
SSG Brandon D. Fambro  
brandon.fambro@balad.iraq.centcom.mil  
SSG Annette Tyler  
annette.tyler1@balad.iraq.centcom.mil  
SSG Melinda P. Baldwin  
melinda.baldwin@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

## Join the Army's premiere job as a Broadcast Journalist

The Army public affairs branch is increasing active-duty authorizations in the 46R (Broadcast Public Affairs Specialist) career field. Soldiers in the career field learn television, radio, announcing and writing skills. 50 percent of the positions are with the Armed Forces Network. It's an extremely civilian-marketable job skill.

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3. Have at least a 107 GT Score.
4. Must maintain a Secret clearance or an interim secret clearance.
5. Must be deployable
6. Most P2 profiles are OK, but check with the public affairs branch manager.

### A VOICE AUDITION IS MANDATORY

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Sports anchor Leeann Tweeden talks with Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston at Balad Air Base on LSA Anaconda during their arrival Dec. 20.

# Preston stresses Army standards, leadership

story and photos by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown



**LSAANACONDA, Iraq**— The 13th Sgt. Maj. of the Army, Kenneth O. Preston, visited Anaconda bringing with him an array of celebrities and entertainment for his 2006 Hope and Freedom Tour, just five days before Christmas.

Preston visited wounded servicemembers at the Air Force Theatre Hospital and held a question-and-answer session with junior-enlisted Soldiers, as well as taking a short trip to Ramadi and back before the show.

During the question-and-answer portion of his visit, Preston stressed the importance of setting standards in today's Army, and the NCO's role in leadership.

"Now that you are a sergeant, you are responsible for a little

piece of the Army," Preston said to his junior-enlisted audience. "When sergeants stop enforcing on-the-spot corrections, that's when things start to slip. Know the standard, enforce the standard, be the standard ...and lead by example."

Preston also addressed questions on pay differences between married and single Soldiers, the re-organization of the Army, and plans for future deployments.

"I'm very proud of all of you," Preston said. "There isn't a day that goes by that we (at the Pentagon) don't look at and review the missions you are completing over here."

Spc. Shaunreika C. Moten of Huston, Texas, an administrative specialist with 1st of the 149th Aviation Battalion said she learned from the session.

"It was cool," Moten said. "It's not every day you get to meet the Sergeant Major of the Army. It definitely updated me with a lot of information."

Preston, who has held his current position since 2004, said he makes a trip to Iraq about four times per year so he can get a personal feel for the conditions here.

As Sergeant Major of the Army, Preston's main duties lie in enlisted-related matters, especially training and quality of life. He spends a majority of his time traveling throughout the Army observing Soldiers at work.

"Be sure to go back to 'hometown U.S.A.' and tell the Soldier's story," he stressed.

Preston also promoted his tour, by saying it is intended to motivate Soldiers, and hopes that goal is accomplished.

"Yes, I've made claims that this is the best United Service Organization show in history," Preston said. "If you don't walk out of there totally pumped-up, you need a heart transplant."

The Sergeant Major of the Army and his show stopped at several locations before coming to Anaconda, and will visit Afghanistan before returning to the States.



(Clockwise from above) Setting and maintaining standards were among the top themes covered in the Sergeant Major of the Army question-and-answer session. Preston speaks with Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Fountain, the 13th SC(E) command sergeant major, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jorge Young, command sergeant major of the 657th Area Support Group after a tour of the Air Force Theater Hospital here. Preston addresses junior-enlisted Soldiers at a question-and-answer session. The Sergeant Major of the Army is greeted by LSA Anaconda Soldiers as he lands Dec. 20.





American and Iraqi soldiers unload donations during the recent trip to Mosul.



Iraqi soldiers talk to a local youth as she walks to school. Iraqi and American troops work together during a recent goodwill mission in Mosul.

# Commanders cross language barriers to better one Iraqi community

story and photos by Maj. Kirk Slaughter



American and Iraqi forces work together during a recent mission to find the best solution for a situation during thier Mosul operation.



Protected by an armored vehicle, an Iraqi soldier keeps his automatic weapon pointed toward any possible trouble spots during a recent mission.

**MOSUL, Iraq** – In one of the most dangerous and poverty-stricken areas of Mosul, two battalion commanders set out to bring happiness to Iraqi school children.

Lt. Col. Steven Eveker, commander of the 352nd Corp Support Battalion, and Lt. Col. Mohammed Ibrihim Belal, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade of the 2nd Division of the Iraqi Army, worked numerous days coordinating between Mosul officials, the chaplains office at Forward Operating Base Diamondback, and Iraqi and American troops.

“This was one of the largest joint humanitarian missions conducted in Mosul during daylight hours since Operation Iraqi Freedom,” Eveker said. “Most missions conducted by the 352nd CSB occur under curfew hours, which really limit the Soldiers’ contact with the local population.”

The operation included more than 1,400 small bags of school supplies, 35 kerosene heaters, more than 50 boxes of clothes, more than 200 umbrellas, and 42 backpacks that were ready to be delivered to about 1,350 children at two schools in downtown Mosul, Chaplain (Capt.) Mark Cisco said.

“The initial planning for the mission began in early October,” Cisco said. “Numerous email messages and letters were mailed to friends, families, churches, and supporters of the 352nd CSB requesting school supplies, clothing, and heaters for the classrooms.”

Approximately 30 soldiers from the 352nd CSB, 1345th Transportation Company, 714th Ordinance Detachment (Corps Support Company), and the 399th Combat Support Hospital, went out into the community and interacted with residents while being protected by the Iraqi Army, which was pre-positioned on rooftops and street corners during the two hour mission.

A casual conversation took place between the two commanders as they walked down the middle of the streets of Mosul from the

first school to the second school. Iraqi adults and children seemed excited, and smiles could be seen on their faces, as they walked along the sidewalks and occasionally made contact with IA and American soldiers.

The two commanders led the parade of soldiers, the unit ministry team, and reporters through what used to be labeled as a very dangerous street in Mosul.

“Lt. Col. Eveker is very well-liked, trusted and respected in the 222nd IA and throughout the community of Mosul,” Mohammad said. “He is a good man and we work well together, and that is why we can do humanitarian missions like this.”

“Lt. Col. Mohammad understands the complexities of the military, economic, political, and religious challenges for the city of Mosul,” Eveker said. “This is what makes him a great leader and commander. He is fighting for a free Iraq and a more democratic Iraq. His soldiers are very disciplined and that is why we were able to walk down the streets of this city while they protected us.”

Once inside the second school, the two commanders met with the school principal, who appeared surprised at the visit. A short meeting – with tea – took place, then both commanders went into a classroom and started handing out school supplies to the students.

“When we first went into these schools the children appeared terrified and scared of the Iraqi soldiers and me,” Eveker said. “The most rewarding thing about this mission was how quiet, timid, and thankful these children were. And as we left their classrooms they would burst out with laughter and excitement as to what had just happened.”

“Can we make an impact on every child in Mosul? Probably not,” he said. “But we did make an impact on the children we saw today.”

As the two commanders walked back up the street to their vehicles off in the distance one could hear the sounds of two suspected bombs go off.

More than 1,000 children, ages 7-13, received school book supplies and candy during this joint humanitarian mission.

“For our soldiers to see the indigent population and feeling the effects of a war torn nation in the daylight was a memory that will be forever etched in their minds,” Sgt. Charles Sebok, 352nd CSB Chaplains assistant, said.



Positioned on a nearby rooftop, an Iraqi soldier keeps a watchful eye out for any trouble during the recent mission into Mosul.



Sgt. Michael Hunt, with the help of an Iraqi soldier, unloads a portable heater during a recent goodwill mission in Mosul.





The Best Damn Sports Show Period host Leeann Tweeden gets down with servicemembers with the "lawnmower" dance.

# Preston, entertainment entourage raise spirits

story and photo by Spc. Amanda Solitario

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq**—Santa may not have been able to visit Iraq this year, but the Sgt. Maj. of the Army, Kenneth O. Preston, spread some holiday cheer here Dec. 20.

Servicemembers sang, danced, and laughed for more than three hours as entertainers of the Sergeant Major of the Army's Hope and Freedom Tour stormed the stage just days before Christmas.

Touring with Preston this year were country music singers Mark Wills, Darryl Worley, Keni Thomas, and Shevy Smith. Hip-hop brother and sister duet, Jakob and Rachael Washington, joined the tour for a second year but with a new name, the Washington Projects. The U.S. Army Band performed some top American hits and sang back up for all of the musical guests.

The concert was peppered with comical interludes by best-selling author and comedian Al Franken, and model and host of The Best Damn Sports Show Period, Leeann Tweeden. Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, Shenythia Willie and Laura Beke, braved the cold temperatures to heat up the night with their popular dance routines.

For the last three years, Preston brought smiles to troops' faces during the holiday season with United Service Organization sponsored event.

"This is a special time of year that most Americans like to take vacations, be with the family, do family reunions, and spend time together," Preston said. "This year these Soldiers that are here deployed on freedom's frontier are

making those sacrifices so that all Americans can enjoy that time at home in peace."

Preston said the concert is his way of showing the servicemembers that their service to the nation never goes unnoticed.

"I remind Soldiers over here that all of America is greatly thankful for their contributions, and what they are doing right now in the fight on the Global War on Terror," Preston said.

Each entertainer had a unique reason for coming on the tour. Some have personal ties to the military, and for others it has become a tradition to return year after year.

Thomas, a former Army Ranger and a performer during last year's tour, said he owes it to the Soldiers to come out here and share his talents during the holiday season.

"It's a no-brainer," he said. "I will do it until the day they tell me I can't."

Willie has a cousin on Anaconda, Sgt. 1st Class Darryl Derrick, platoon sergeant for A. Battery, 17th Field Artillery, who she was able to see for the first time in over a year.

"I had to hold back my tears when I saw him because I knew I was going out on stage," she said.

Aside from their personal convictions, all of the entertainers came together to express their deepest gratitude to each of the men and women in the military.

"I think it is more than just a morale booster," Preston said. "I think it is important because all the entertainers that I bring out here are so honest and sincere, and they speak from their heart."



Country music singer Mark Wills entertains more than 800 servicemembers at LSA Anaconda.

As the night progressed, things got a little hands-on as Wills taught Soldiers the proper technique for congratulating someone on a "good game" with a slap on the backside. The crowd never stopped laughing as Franken and Tweeden put on a skit impersonating former Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, and his potential last requests before execution.

With all the laughter throughout the evening, Worley was able to bring tears to some servicemembers' eyes as he sang his hit, "Have You Forgotten," while a Soldier marched across the stage with the American flag.

Worley told the audience that much of his inspiration for his songs comes from the troops.

After a previous tour in Iraq, he went home and wrote, "I Just Came Back From a War," which he performed for hundreds of screaming fans.

Worley said the passion and pride in the troops never ceases to amaze him, and it touches him each and every time he comes to the Middle East.



A Dallas Cowboy cheerleader gives one Soldier an extra special dance.



Country music singer Darryl Worley and Leeann Tweeden sign autographs after the show.



A singer with the Washington Projects sings a special solo song to Sgt. 1st Class Darryl Derrick during the USO tour here on Anaconda.

"These things just inspire me to be a better person and go that extra mile," he said.

After the show, servicemembers were able to take photographs with

their favorite entertainer and get autographs.

Balad was the last performance for the tour in Iraq, before it headed to Afghanistan.



# Red Bulls validate vehicles at boarder crossing

**FOB TREBIL, Iraq** – A small group of Soldiers from the 1st Battalion 133rd Infantry and a handful of Florida Army Reserve Soldiers play a huge role in moving commodities from Jordan to Al Asad.

They ensure that contracted trucks and trailers are able to make the 300-mile, one-way trip by inspecting each rig near the Jordan border for “road worthiness.” Reasons these trucks would be rejected and sent back to the Jordan border include bald tires, missing spare tires, cracks in the frames of the trailers and massive engine oil leaks. The driver or the driver’s company is responsible for the repairs.

Maj. Todd Aarhus of Marshalltown, Iowa, the officer in charge of the Iowa Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, said his team has inspected more than 14,000 trucks and had more than 110 convoys leave Trebil since arriving in April.

“It is a very, very high profile port of entry

here, and the 133rd and the 1st Brigade play a big part of that,” Aarhus said.

He said this port of entry is among three into Iraq. The other two are on the Kuwait and Turkish borders. Unlike those two which take a minimum of 45 days to move the commodities, Trebil takes less than a week.

Aarhus said these commodities include, fuel, vehicles, armored parts, material for living quarters, and food for the bigger dining facilities in Iraq.

“The commodities that we’re moving across here are of extremely high importance,” he said.

Aarhus said there have been days with as many as 205 trucks and days with only 70 trucks in the convoys.

Aarhus’ team lives in air-conditioned and heated wooden huts. There is also a small dining facility, a shower trailer, a restroom trailer and a day room where the group can watch American Forces Network TV.

“We’re getting by OK,” Aarhus said.

# Iowa Soldiers at Camp Korean Village

**AR RUTBAH, Iraq** – When a convoy of up to 150 contractor-driven trucks and trailers, escorted by about 30 convoy protection vehicles from the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, rolls into a tiny Marine Corps outpost named Camp Korean Village, the Soldiers know they will be taken care of.

Once they reach this base that was formerly used to house Korean construction workers working on the Anman-Baghdad Highway, they will find comfortable housing (cots with mattresses in a wooden building), some of the best food in Iraq at the small dining facility, experienced mechanics to work on their vehicles and even a small Post Exchange.

All this is coordinated by a small contingent from the battalion commanded by 1st Lt. Chris Klink of Ankeny, Iowa.

The busiest section in Klink’s contingent is the mechanics. Upon arrival, each escort vehicle is inspected by the mechanics.

“There are nights they work until 3 o’clock

in the morning because there is break down after break down,” Klink said.

Sgt. Steven Long, a mechanic, said that his hours can vary from four to 24 hours. “It just depends on the day,” he said. “The mechanics’ challenge is the “time crunch.”

“We have a very short time to get the vehicles mission capable and back on the road,” he said.

Klink’s Soldiers also provide intelligence debriefs to all convoys, and 24/7 guards at the drivers lot to ensure that the drivers don’t wander on the base. Soldiers man the guard tower in shifts.

Spc. John Toyne of Muscatine, Iowa, said he feels being a guard “is a good job to do.”

Klink also has assigned one of his Soldiers to the base’s Command Operation Center. This allows him to be in direct contact with the Marines for medical evacuation operations and the removal of explosive ordnance. “So we can react as quickly as possible with our guys,” Klink said.

## UPGRADES, from Page 1

The gunner sits in a suspended, cushioned harness, which swings 360 degrees in a powered turret he operates with a joystick. He also said the ballistic glass offers greater peripheral vision as well as added protection.

Rhoades said the door panel kits are only available for the M1114 models, but the O-GPK is also available for the M1151 and the M1114.

“It’s like NASA,” said Jim Heaton, process improvement manager for 1-402nd, concerning the emergency hatch system.

“The doors give the troops a single-point emergency re-

lease,” said Heaton. “Should a fire break out in the vehicle, the standard door handles also serve as an emergency hatch release, breaking the door away from the hinges.”

Dennison said his battalion, also known as the Sustainment Battalion, wants to be the primary source of the add-on armor installs to supported units.

“We have expanded the number of install sites within Iraq,” he said. “We wanted to reduce the travel distance and minimize time on dangerous routes for the Soldier.”

Once the program gets in full swing, Dennison said the units will need these remote locations to achieve the goal of more than 2,000 upgrade installs a month.

Thomas C. Labonte, the installation site leader for Taji, said the upgrades will catch on quickly.

“This is going fast,” he said, whose mechanics started production on Nov. 1. “I expect we’ll get up to 30, possibly 40 installs per week once we reach peak production.”

“As long as the customer brings the vehicles prepped for install, we can move a vehicle out in two days,” said Labonte. “Prepped for install” means the vehicle is clean, and clear of debris and personal effects in order for the installation crew to start work immediately.

Unfortunately, Dennison said units cannot drive up to the Sustainment Battalion expecting armor installs like they would an oil change at a service station. The MNC-I has instituted an induction

schedule, he said. Every major command in Iraq has an appointed Add-on-Armor Induction Manager who issues Add-on-Armor allocations based on the commander’s guidance.

Dennison expects maximum unit participation in the program. Dennison wants units to take advantage of this upgrade opportunity so the number of vehicles inducted closely matches his battalion’s production capability.

“The two new armor systems provide over 2,000 pounds of extra protection,” Dennison said. “And every Soldier saved makes it well worth its weight in gold.”

As some motor pools take days or a week waiting for parts for a simple nut or bolt, Dennison said the battalion has instituted remote installation sites and an assembly line type installation process to reduce the time Soldiers are away from their vehicles.

With crews working long hours to ensure Soldiers get the latest armor upgrades quickly, changes were quickly made to the installation process.

George Eaton, 402nd Historian, said that MNC-I has reinforced the unit participation by assigning more than 100 Soldiers to assist in the installation of the kits.

“This will allow for 24-hour operations at the install sites,” he said.

Eaton said there are now Soldiers working in the program at every install site in Iraq.

“I expect maximum usage of all our add-on armor facilities thereby enhancing force protection for those that need it most -- the war fighter,” Dennison said. “It is worth the 40 man-hour install time. Soldier’s will be saved.”



Hundreds of bolts, nuts, washers and other small parts are used to assemble the kits at the Anaconda installation facility.

# LSA ANACONDA RELIGIOUS SCHEDULE

Religious schedule subject to change

## Roman Catholic Mass

Saturday 5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel  
Saturday 8 p.m. Provider Chapel  
Sunday 7:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel  
Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel  
Sunday 5:30 p.m. Provider Chapel  
Sunday 11 a.m. Air Force Hospital  
Monday - Friday 5 p.m. Tuskegee

## Sacrament of Reconciliation

30 minutes prior to each mass

## Protestant-Contemporary

Sunday 10 a.m. Town Hall

## Latter Day Saints

Sunday 1 p.m. Provider Chapel  
Sunday 4 p.m. Freedom Chapel  
Sunday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

## Church of Christ

Sunday 2 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

## Islamic Prayer

Friday 12:30 p.m. Provider Chapel

## Samoan Congregational Service

Sunday 4 p.m. Provider Chapel

## Friday Shabbat Service

Friday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

## Protestant-Gospel

Sunday, 11 a.m. MWR East Building

Sunday 11:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel  
Sunday 2 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel  
Sunday 7 p.m. Provider Chapel

## Protestant Praise and Worship

Sunday 9 a.m. MWR East Building

Sunday 9 a.m. Eden Chapel

Sunday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Sunday 7:30 p.m. Eden Chapel

Wednesday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

## Protestant-Traditional

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Air Force Hospital

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel

Sunday 10 a.m. Freedom Chapel

Sunday 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel  
Sunday 8:15 p.m. Air Force Hospital

## Non-Denominational

Sunday 9 a.m. Signal Chapel

## Non-Denominational Spanish

Sunday 2 p.m. Freedom Chapel

## Protestant-Gospel

Sunday 3:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

## Protestant-Liturgical

Saturday 7:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel



**December 27****Aerobics**

6 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Yoga**

6 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Boxing**

7:30 to 9 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Rock Climbing Class**

8 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**8-Ball Tourney**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**Madden '05**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**9-Ball Tourney**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**DJ Classes**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**December 28****Tae Kwon Do**

7 to 8:30 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**NOGI Jiu-Jitsu**

9 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Level 2 Swim Lessons**

7 p.m.  
Indoor Pool

**Level 1 Swim Lessons**

8 p.m.  
Indoor Pool

**ANACONDA ACTIVITIES**

Your one-stop connection to activities around LSA Anaconda  
to add your activity to the event calendar, email [anaconda.times@balad.iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:anaconda.times@balad.iraq.centcom.mil)

**Battlefield Ground**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**December 29****Aerobics**

5:30 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Boxing**

7:30 to 9 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Chess Tourney**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**4-4 Volleyball Tourney**

8 p.m.  
West MWR Fitness Center

**Caribbean Dance**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**December 30****Aerobics**

noon to 1 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Open Court Volleyball**

6 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**500m Fins/Kickboard**

9 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.  
Indoor Pool

**Texas Hold'em**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**Aerobics**

8 p.m.  
West MWR Fitness Center

**Salsa Dance**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**Tae Kwon Do**

7 to 8:30 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**NOGI Jiu-Jitsu**

9 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Level 2 Swim Lessons**

7 p.m.  
Indoor Pool

**Level 1 Swim Lessons**

8 p.m.  
Indoor Pool

**Command & Conquer**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**Dodgeball Tourney**

8 p.m.  
West MWR Fitness Center

**Texas Hold'em**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**December 31****Aerobics**

5:30 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Boxing**

7:30 to 9 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**100m Butterfly**

10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.  
Indoor Pool

**Spades Tourney**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**4-4 Volleyball Tourney**

8 p.m.  
West MWR Fitness Center

**Caribbean Dance**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**January 1****Aerobics**

noon to 1 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Open Court Volleyball**

6 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**One-Mile Swim Race**

10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.  
Indoor Pool

**Texas Hold'em**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**Aerobics**

8 p.m.  
West MWR Fitness Center

**Salsa Dance**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**January 2****Open Court Volleyball**

6 p.m.

East MWR Fitness Center

**Tae Kwon Do**

7 to 8:30 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu**

9 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Green Bean Karaoke**

8 p.m.  
Green Bean Coffee Shop

**5-5 Basketball Tourney**

8 p.m.  
West MWR Fitness Center

**Poker**

8 p.m.  
East Rec Center

**January 3****Aerobics**

6 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Boxing**

7:30 to 9 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**Rock Climbing Class**

8 p.m.  
East MWR Fitness Center

**One-Hour Swim-A-Thon**

Two-Person Teams  
5:30 a.m.  
Outdoor Pool

**Jam Session**

8 p.m.  
West Recreation Center

**Aerobics**

8 p.m.  
West MWR Fitness Center

# A New Years Eve Sports Extravaganza

# Superbowl XX Championship

## Quarterback Jim McMahon and kicker Kevin Butler

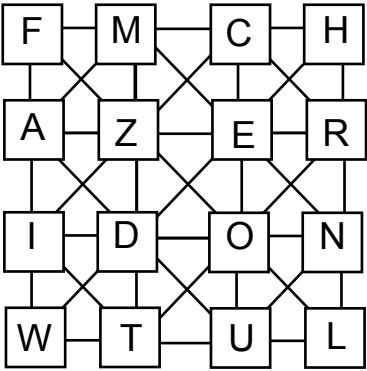
## Karri Turner from the hit television series JAG

## visit your local MWR facility for times & locations



ALL FOURS

How many four-letter words can you find in the diagram by moving from letter to adjacent letter up, down, forward and diagonally? Do not return to a square to repeat a letter in a word. Proper names, abbreviations, contractions and foreign words are not allowed.



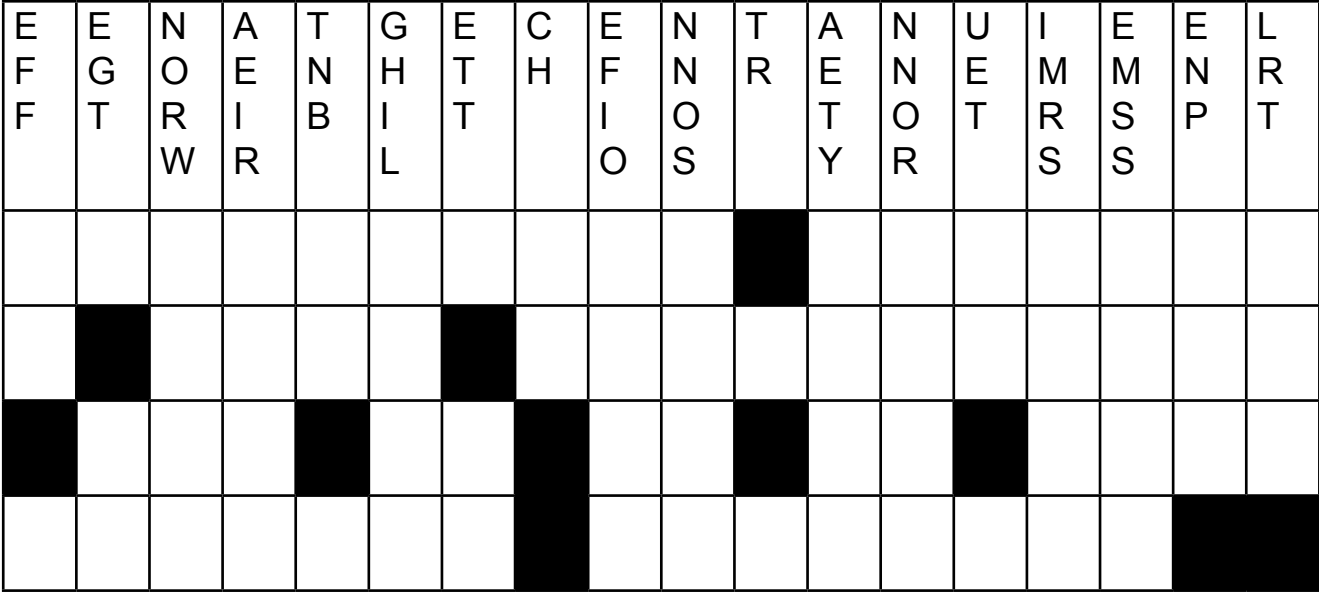
YOUR WORD LIST

Fill in as many boxes as you can to form 11 different words starting with the given letters. Words starting with a capital letter, foreign words, contractions and abbreviations are not allowed. No letter may be repeated in the word itself, in the word above, or in the word below. For each word, the number of letters needed to earn the maximum score is indicated by the number of boxes.

**SCORING:**  
Each letter you use is worth one point. Give yourself a bonus of 10 points if you use all 26 letters of the alphabet. Include the given letters in your score.

WORD	SCORE
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S <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
B <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
H I <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
F R <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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C L <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
H <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

The letters in each vertical column go into the squares directly below them, but not necessarily in the order they appear. A black square indicates the end of a word. When you have placed all the letters in their correct squares, you will be able to read a quotation across the diagram from left to right.





# Remote FARP keeps aircraft on mission

Small band of 449th ASB Soldiers master the art of aerial logistics two weeks at a time

story and photos by Master Sgt. Charles Wheeler

**FOB NORMANDY, Iraq** – Military logistics is the art and science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of military forces.

A weapon without ammunition can not protect a Soldier. An aircraft without fuel can not fly a mission.

With the importance of Army aircraft on the battlefield in Iraq, the need for quick access to fuel makes strategic placement of fuel points a combat multiplier.

The logistical answer to this need is a Forward Area Refuel Point (FARP).

The Petroleum, Oil and Lubrication Section, Company A, 449th Aviation Support Battalion, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, rotates Soldiers to a FARP located at a remote site known as Forward Operating Base Normandy, Iraq.

These Soldiers know that they are saving lives by helping the aircraft stay engaged longer in areas away from large, established bases.

The Soldiers spend two weeks at the FARP working 12-hour shifts. They each pack one duffel bag with extra uniforms and other necessities.

They then load onto an aircraft and fly to Normandy early on the morning of their first day of the new shift. The crew they replace spend a few hours briefing them on everything from how often aircraft arrive, to how to function at night.

This base observes total blackout each night, and if there is no moon, "You can't see your hand in front of your face," said Staff Sgt. Jose Gerardo. "We use chemical lights to work at night, so it is important that everyone knows their job inside and out."

Gerardo is the night-shift noncommissioned officer in charge and has been here

before. He was on the battalion's advance party and spent 33 days working in the same location before going back to LSA Anaconda and settling into his duties there. "I enjoyed my first time working here," Gerardo said. "When you stay busy and enjoy what you do, time goes by quickly."

No matter if it is day or night, the Soldiers here all exhibit a very high morale and dedication to duty. Depending on if any helicopters arrive, their 12-hour shift starts with two or three hours of performing preventive maintenance on their equipment, and cleaning away the debris on the landing pad.

There is always a Soldier monitoring the radio listening for an aircraft calling the Tactical Operations Center (TOC).

This is how they know an aircraft is inbound, however they will not know if an aircraft is in need of fuel, unloading passengers, or stopping for other reasons until they see which landing pad they are maneuvering for.

"When we hear (aircraft) radio the TOC, our operation tempo shifts into high gear and we move into position," said Sgt. Anthony Hernandez. "We do not know if they want fuel until we see which pad they are landing on, so it becomes a quick reaction drill."

The excitement of an attack helicopter landing, and conducting a quick and safe refuel is the highlight of their time here. There is however a lot of less exciting but very important work that makes this a successful operation.

Every 30 days, samples must be precisely extracted from each of the fuel storage tanks and submitted for an array of tests. The results can tell these petroleum specialists if they need to change the various filters or make other adjustments. The shift NCOIC



**Soldiers take a small break in between missions at a remote refueling site for helicopters.**

also has to be vigilant in maintaining proper records on the history of fuel test results and corrective action taken to ensure the quality of fuel in the storage tanks stays high.

When their shift is over, the Soldiers here have a few diversions to occupy the time before they go to sleep. The area is quite small so everything is within five minutes walking distance of their sleeping areas, making it readily accessible for all Soldiers.

There is a dining facility which has a sign posted in the short order line for HOOAH hamburgers and has seating in a few small rooms giving it the feel of being in someone's house.

Soldiers can also go to the Post Exchange, identifiable by the yellow "Best Buy" sign placed near the entrance. Inside is a single barber chair and a half-dozen seats for those waiting for a haircut, and a 500 square-foot shopping area.

A recreation area is in a building adjacent to the dining facility with a ping-pong table, a well-stocked bookcase, and access to the

Internet available for the Soldiers' use. All of these activities help keep the Soldiers' minds occupied in a positive direction and better enable them to sleep well and prepare for another day at the FARP.

The Soldiers here quickly settle into their routine and find it is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

All of the logistics Soldiers working here told stories of pilots relaying their appreciation and gratitude for the job they are doing. The air crews give them unit patches for keepsakes and often yell out inspirational compliments.

Hernandez said his favorite was the pilot who yelled "You rock" when his crew got the Apache helicopter fueled and gave the pilots a cold Gatorade in a very short time on a hot day recently.

One morning when these Soldiers wake up, two weeks will have passed, which is too soon for Gerardo, but it will be time to pack and prepare to move back to home base for a few weeks.



**(Above) The Petroleum, Oil and Lubrication Section, Company A, 449th Aviation Support Battalion, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade, takes time after a successful mission to pose for a group photograph. (Left) A aircraft crew chief keeps a close eye on the FARP personnel to get final instructions before refueling the medical evacuation helicopter recently.**





Local Anaconda celebrity Sgt. Marc McNab, from the hit television series, "McNab on the Street" puts on his Santa suit, floppy hat and recognizable over-sized sun goggles and hits the post exchange area for another round of easy questions that everyone seems to miss. Pfc. Jenna M. Wood of Ozark, Mo., assigned to the 163rd Military Intelligence Battalion, battles with "Santa" McNab's questions during a recent Newreel Anaconda episode.

# Holiday Spirit in Balad

photos by the Anaconda Times Staff

A small snapshot of servicemembers giving a little holiday cheer in the desert



Spc. Chad Fritz, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) as an engineer technical specialist, enjoys the gifts during a recent unit party. Soldiers from the 13th SC(E) enjoyed a holiday party at the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center East on Dec. 16. Soldiers sang Karaoke, met with Santa, and received a number of different Christmas presents.



Sgt. Jennifer Rockmore, with 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, gets into costume and sings "Santa Baby" during a recent MWR Christmas show.



Sgt. Travis Reid, the Resource Management NCOIC for the 13th SC(E), climbs a ladder to hang up some decorations.



Carrie Underwood takes a quick photograph with Spc. Chas "Santa" Grieve, 22, from Lincoln, Neb.



Doris Hector (center) sings Gladys Knight & The Pips' hit single, "Midnight Train to Georgia," with the help of her friends during a recent holiday musical show at the West MWR Recreation Center here.



# Idol, country music star entertains packed house

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. ALEXANDRA HEMMERLY-BROWN

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** — It all started with a lottery.

Lights dimmed, and a few hundred bodies crowded into Sustainer Theater, a select group of servicemembers were privy to the musical stylings of former American Idol winner, Carrie Underwood.

On the last day of her first tour in Iraq, Underwood visited injured servicemembers at the Air Force Theater Hospital, met Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 167th Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition Squadron, and gave a performance to approximately 700 personnel, who represented a mixture of those stationed here.

Luck was the deciding factor of who got to see the performer, since the event was held inside where there was limited seating. Most units were given a small number of tickets to the show, some of which were dispersed through drawings and other types of random selection.

The Grammy-nominated 23-year-old from Checotah, Okla., captivated the audience with her rendition of Guns N' Roses, "Sweet Child of Mine," and her own, "Jesus Take the Wheel."

The 2005 winner of American Idol made an impression on the servicemembers here, especially those who got a surprise visit.

"It's cool to meet people like that," said Marine Lance Cpl. Randy J. Mchaffey of Greenville, S.C., a patient at the hospital. "It shows you are supported, and brings a lot of motivation."

Underwood said she wanted to come on a tour in Iraq to lift the spirits of the troops here.

"It seemed like a good idea, you know, a good experience for me," Underwood said. "And our hopes were to spread some holiday cheer."

She said performing for servicemembers has been new for her, as the majority of her fans in the states are young women, and military audiences are quite the opposite.

"It feels really weird, I never

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Carrie Underwood slows it down during a ballad at her Dec. 16 performance at Sustainer Theater.

## Underwood, from Page 2

thought I'd be here of course...but I feel like it makes a difference, even if it's a small difference," Underwood said.

Underwood's upcoming plans for her musical career are getting back into the studio and writing, she said. She is going to start working on a new album, but there is no estimated timeline of when we might see another CD on the shelves.



Spc. Doug King, assigned to the 19th Engineer Battalion, from Mullan, Idaho, gets a chance to talk country music recording star Carrie Underwood while he was at the Air Force Theater Hospital being treated for minor injuries.



Carrie Underwood signs the wall outside the Air Force Theatre Hospital on LSA Anaconda.



Because it was the first ticketed MWR event, our company had to draw names and I was selected to go. THANKS EVERYONE :)



Carrie Underwood sits in an up-armored Humvee during a visit with 1-167th Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition Squadron.

