

# ANACONDA TIMES

MAY 9, 2007

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA

## Helping hands

### Children of Bakir village receive school supplies



Page 10

## Water is Life

### Several villages receive potable water



Page 4

## Asian Pacific American Heritage celebrations

by Sgt. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq — In celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage month in May, there will be an observance here May 27.

The 657th Area Support Group and the 4th Corps Materiel Management Center will be leading the combined event held at the East Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center at 5 p.m., where dancing, martial arts and samples of native foods are planned.

Observances are held to highlight the contributions people of all backgrounds make to our culture.

The "Asian Pacific American" designation encompasses more than 50 ethnic or language groups including native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.

There are now more Asian and Pacific Islander groups than in the past - with 28 Asian and 19 Pacific Island subgroups representing a vast array of languages and cultures.

These groups include Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Asian-Indian Americans, Laotian Americans, Cambodian Americans, Hmong Americans, Thai Americans, Pakistani, Samoan, Guamanian and many other language groups.

Asian Pacific Americans were among the victims and heroes of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. In the current war on terrorism, as in wars past, many Asian Pacific Americans answered the call of duty to defend America by serving in the U.S. Army.

"Throughout our history, Asian Pacific Americans have been patriots, answering the call to defend our Nation and to protect the blessings of liberty and democracy," said President George W. Bush in his Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Proclamation.

"Today, in the war on terror, Asian Pacific Americans serve proudly as they carry on our Nation's noble tradition of advancing the cause of freedom around the world. We are grateful for the sacrifice of our men and women in uniform and those who love and support them as we fight to protect our homeland and make the world safe for democracy," he said.

# Iraqis learn logistics

*"I enjoyed the classes because every day I had something new to learn here in medical logistics."*

- 2nd Lt. Ali Faesal

See Page 15



Pfc. Devon Garza, a cargo specialist with the 169th Cargo Transfer Company, operates a forklift at the Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group. The ADACG receives and sends out Army equipment in the Baghdad area.

Photo by Sgt. Amanda Solitario



## "Trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills."

I am Spc. Zachery Richter, from Omaha, Neb.  
755th Chemical Company >> gunner

# What *our* leaders think: Maj. Kenneth A. Patterson

13th SC (E) Officer, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-6

(The Anaconda Times Staff will provide its readers weekly interviews with experienced officers and sergeants major to explain their role within the senior logistics headquarters in Iraq.)

Maj. Kenneth A. Patterson is the Assistant Chief of Staff in charge of the communications for the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

## What is your job with the 13th SC (E)?

I am the Assistant Chief of Staff, G6 in charge of all communications for the command and all subordinate units.

## How are communications and automation services critical to the 13th SC(E)?

The 13th SC(E) cannot function without communications. All logistics are tracked theater wide on data networks, which is our primary mission here, to keep the command's networks operational and secure. The G6 crew is the most technically proficient group of Soldiers that I have ever had. The honor to serve with, and the amount of work they do behind the scene to make sure that everyone in this command can call home every night or open an email from home with a picture of their family is truly amazing. We manage three separate data networks at three different levels of security classification, three separate telephone networks. In addition to all of that, we are fully responsible for all Tactical FM communications on all Main Supply Routes across the entire theater of operations. Most of the time people in the command never realize all that the communication Soldiers are doing to keep things running.

## Aside from the obvious dangers of combat, what are the biggest challenges you face in terms of achieving your mission?



Maj. Kenneth A. Patterson, assistant chief of staff stops for a photo during a recent mission in Iraq.

The challenges for communications in this theater are wide spanning. Communications is always hard, but in Iraq it is hard at a completely different level. We are still at a point where our networks are considered "tactical" while the expectation of the commanders is more in line with a "strategic" network like you would find at Fort Hood. Strategic networks are generally very redundant, meaning if one part of the network goes down, there are numerous secondary paths for the data to still pass across, resulting in little to no operational impact. In Iraq, because the networks are still very much in their infancy stage and single threaded, they do not yet have the required redundancy, if one part of the network goes down it usually results in significant loss of communications for large portions of the customers. Another challenge of being a Signal Officer in a non-Signal unit is explaining what we do and why we need to do it. The 13th SC(E) G6 shop is very fortunate because communications are a top priority of the Commanding General and the entire command. They allow us the latitude to exercise our initiative

to improve the communications capabilities of the command and they resource us to accomplish our mission.

## The 13th does not own any battle space but operate in all of the battle space. Do you directly provide Signal in all the areas that the 13th operate in or are there battle handoffs as logistic operations travel in and out of certain areas?

The 13th SC(E) has 7 subordinate brigade sized elements that are geographically dispersed across the entire battlefield. The G6 works daily to ensure these units are supported for all of their communications requirements. Each Brigade has an S6 and these officers and their Senior NCOs are truly some of the most professional and technically competent communicators that I have seen. Together, we have built an incredibly strong team. We have collaborative sessions where each S6 has the opportunity to brief their priorities and any issues they are having. All of the brigades work

together to support one another, and have, on many occasions lent a hand to directly assist in resolving a variety of short notice requirements for each other. This teamwork makes the overwhelming task of supporting the most geographically dispersed unit in Iraq much more achievable.

## What types of systems do you employ and how do they support the command's mission?

More important than the physical equipment systems that we employ in support of this command are the non-tangible systems that we have put into place to provide more effective and efficient communications to the unit. For example, for all other units on LSAA, when a computer breaks it is turned into the CECOM repair facility that services the base camp for that function. The turn around time for a system with even the smallest issue can be 4-6 and sometimes even 8 weeks to get that computer back into the customer's hand. Our G6 shop brought a Dell Gold certified repair technician with us, so we order our repair parts directly from Dell, who ships them to us from Kuwait in 3-4 days and we repair the computer on site the same day the repair parts are delivered. Our average turn around time, including shipping time, is 5 days. This prior planning on the skill set of the G6 team has allowed us to provide rapid response to most of the communications problems that affect the command.

## Are there any great battlefield Signal improvements coming in the near future? Can you talk about the significance of your role in Signal in terms of jamming the explosive signals to IEDs placed by the terrorists?

One of the most impressive technologies that I have had the opportunity to work with on this deployment is the Radio over Internet Protocol Routing Network

(RIPRNET). This is a system that takes standard FM radio traffic and converts it to Voice over IP, just like most of the telephones in theater now. The system comes with numerous commercial upgrades to the power amplification and antenna system that allows us to nearly double or triple the expected coverage of one FM base station. Because it leverages a data network to pass the voice traffic, it effectively extends a radio network indefinitely. I believe that it will revolutionize how the Army conducts tactical radio missions far into the future.

## How has the surge affected Signal operations?

The Surge has not had an impact on the theater Signal Operations as a whole mainly because of the modular design of the BCTs. Each BCT brings its own organic communications capability to the fight. This allows the MNC-I network planners to just "plug and play" them into the already existing architecture very easily without having to re-engineer the entire network. On LSAA the impact involved supporting a new Battalion sized element.

## Is there anything you would like to add?

I just want to thank all of the communicators in the 13th SC(E), down at the subordinate units, and across the entire LSA Anaconda. The team effort that I have seen here in this past 10 months has been truly remarkable, and is the sole reason for the levels of success we have been able to achieve. This effort goes all the way down to the Company level, who I have dealt with across this command on numerous occasions. The things we are accomplishing across this theater are amazing and it is because of every soldier out there who cares enough to do his or her best to make communications work. I appreciate all of the support and all of the selfless effort to keep the electrons flowing.

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

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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

# Deployment brings new meaning to Mother's Day

by Staff Sgt. Glen Chrisman

1744th Transportation Company PAO

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - Mother's Day has probably taken on different meanings for many people over the course of their lives.

When you were younger you may have thanked your mom for all the wonderful things she has done for you. As you have aged, you think about your mom, but you also think of how motherhood has affected you. Maybe it's you that became the mother or maybe someone special in your life mothered your children. For many women in Iraq, Mother's Day means more now than it did in years past.

Spc. April Cox, of Benton, Ill., is spending this Mother's Day away from her three kids. Cox talks to her three children a couple times a week and said she misses them like crazy.

"Not a day goes by that I don't think about them," she said. "We're a close knit family. They may drive me crazy at times but I wouldn't trade them for the world."

Cox's husband, James, said he gets a call or e-mail from April daily and they have stayed united in raising the kids even though she is about 7,000 miles away. "We talk about how to discipline the kids and how to handle situations," he said. "It's like she is still here."

Cox's husband knows all about being away from family for an extended period of time. As a Marine, he was deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, Israel and Turkey from 1997 to 1999.

He had gotten used to raising the kids by himself. He had to do it for several months after April enlisted in the National Guard in 2003 and while she went through Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training. Two years ago she spent over one month in Louisiana helping victims of Hurricane Katrina.

While both parents agree that the separation is hard on their family, they also agree that their time apart has brought a new appreciation for each other and their children. "We've learned to never take anything or anyone for granted," Cox said. "This deployment has shown me how blessed I am with the family I have."

Her husband said that while he is a single parent, he's not truly single because his wife will be home this fall. James doesn't feel it will be hard to reunite. "I've known April since I was 15 and



Photo by Sgt. Alexandria Hammeny-Brown

**Sgt. Ricky Serrato of Munday, Texas, a light wheeled mechanic with the 368th Cargo Transfer Company, browses Mother's Day cards at the East side Post Exchange April 27.**

she was 13. We've always had a connection and when you're soul mates, that connection never goes away," he said.

The Cox's aren't the only couple coping with the harsh realities of deployment this spring. Mother's Day just isn't the same for a 16-year National Guard veteran and mother of two young children. Sgt. 1st Class Aliska Pond, of Streator, Ill., is on her second tour of duty to the Middle East.

Pond said this deployment has made her reconsider her decision to stay in the military until her retirement in 2012. "I have missed out on so much," she said. "I didn't have my children for some one else to raise them."

Pond's husband, Dave, has taken on the re-

sponsibility of raising their son and daughter over the last year. Although it's been hard, she

said he has done a great job and she is looking forward to getting back into the groove when the deployment is over. The kids had to get accustomed to having only one parent around. He is also in the Army National Guard and was deployed to Fort Polk, La. for 13 months in 2004 and 2005.

Pond's husband said this deployment has given him a new found appreciation for his wife. "Someone does not think about the things that their spouse accomplishes until they have to assume both responsibilities," he said. "I have all the respect in the world for

**"We've learned to never take anything or anyone for granted. This deployment has shown me how blessed I am with the family I have."**

- Spc. April Cox

single parents out there who do this all the time. It's the little things that I appreciate about her and what she does with our family."

For many Soldier-parents who are deployed, the day-to-day life isn't as hard on them as seeing their kids grow up in pictures and through phone calls. The reality has really been hard for Pond.

"My son has gone from diapers and riding his little push bike to sleeping in a twin bed and riding a four-wheeler. His vocabulary has also expanded; sometimes I forget that I am talking to my son" she said. "I realize just how much my daughter is growing every time that I receive an e-mail from her or talk to her on the phone. She is now learning cursive writing which just amazes me. Her sense of humor is maturing as well and is so fantastic."

Pond's husband said the kids are coping well in the absence of their mother. "There are days you can tell they are really missing mom, but then we talk about her and talk about what we are going to do when she comes home and that cheers them up," he said.

He believes their daughter probably has the hardest time because she doesn't have her "girl-friend," which Pond portrays to her. "They are really close and she misses the female bonding that they have. That is something I cannot fill for her, but we deal with it."

Although being away from her family for a year has tugged at Pond's heart in many ways, it's also made her more appreciative of her children.

"A parent always knows that their children are very important to them, but being away makes you realize just how special they really are and that you would do anything for them," Pond said. "They are both growing so much and I feel that I am missing out on a lot. When things get me down around here, a phone call to them will always cheer me up."

The Pond's and Cox's aren't the only ones coping with separation from their children. More than one-third of the Soldiers in the 1744th Transportation Company have kids anxiously awaiting their return from Iraq early this fall. Most Soldiers would agree this deployment has helped them realize the importance of family and how special their role as a parent is in their kids' lives.

On the street with Sgt. KaRonda Fleming

What is your most memorable moment or experience with your mother?



1st Lt. Thomas Wright

"Having evening dinners with my mom because it was very important to her."



Staff Sgt. Reyjohn Baldugo

"She taught me how to cook. We spent the whole night cooking Filipino food."



Airman 1st Class Janay James

"My mother passed down the family's sweet potato pie recipe to me."



Sgt. David Tielbar

"Seeing my mom at every one of my football games as a young kid."

## Generators, cleared canals to improve farmland

by Staff Sgt. Gary Witte

Anaconda Times Staff

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** - Thousands of acres of Iraqi farmland will benefit from a 134th Brigade Support Battalion program to provide generators at pump stations along the Euphrates River in southern Iraq.

The program is expected to be complete within the month. It involves using local contractors to dredge the existing irrigation canals to area farms, civilian and military officials said. A total of 22 generators are to be used to pump water through the canals, reaching farms up to 15 kilometers away from the river.

Sheikh Mohammed Tayeh, who is a representative on the council of the nearby city of Batha, said in a recent interview that the generators will greatly improve agriculture in the area.

Currently, the three hours of electrical power typically available each day does not allow the water from the river to reach all the farms, he said through a translator.

"These generators will compensate for when the power is shut off," Tayeh said. "Food production will increase providing a better life for the farmers."

Even without the generators, Soldiers have started to see a difference in the area as a result of the dredging of sediment out of more than 300 kilometers of irrigation canals in December.

"It was really barren," Sgt. Todd M. Engbretson of Chaska, Minn. said, noting the now green fields nearby. "When we first got here, it was ... a pretty desolate area."

Engbretson, a vehicle commander, said residents have shown their appreciation of such efforts by helping uncover



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gary Witte

**An Iraqi resident shows Sgt. Yaser Ishtaiwi of Minneapolis, Minn., a civil affairs Soldier with the 134th Brigade Support Battalion, a pump used to draw water from the Euphrates River and send it to nearby farms.**

improvised explosive devices and driving off insurgents who would have shelled nearby Logistical Support Area Adder.

"If you don't have the trust of the civilian population, you really don't have a good base defense," Engbretson said.

Maj. Paul R. Peterson of Hastings, Minn., an officer with civil military operations, said they have received tremendous support from the locals and the local government representatives, who helped plan what needed to be done.

"Without their help and guidance, it would have been very difficult to complete this project," he said.

Peterson said they focused on the irrigation project as a way to improve the economic base throughout the area around Batha and Nasiriyah and give residents a

steady source of income.

"One of the local sheikhs said oil is for the Iraqi government, but agriculture is for the people," he said. "They can provide for their family and no longer have to be worried about being unemployed."

Rural residents who had to move to the cities like Nasiriyah to find work, will now be able to return home because they will be able to make a living as farmers, Peterson said. The additional water will even mean a second growing season and a greater variety of crops, he added.

The 134th BSB is currently working with the government officials of Dhiqar Province, who are forming a committee to monitor the installation and maintenance of the generators.

## Proposed water line would provide for Iraqi villages

*Civil Affairs Soldiers work with Iraqi Engineers to complete project for community of Nasiriyah*

by Staff Sgt. Gary Witte

Anaconda Times Staff

**LSA ADDER, Iraq** - Iraqi engineers recently met with residents along the path of a proposed water pipeline between villages outside Logistical Support Area Adder and the city of Nasiriyah.

The project, which is in its early stages of planning, would provide potable water to more than 3,000 people and at least four villages, according to Capt. Jeremy Berndt of Buffalo, Minn., a civil affairs officer with 134th Brigade Support Battalion.

"It will mean an uninterrupted source of water. The villagers have been very cooperative," he said. "This is one of the ways we can pay them back for all the things they've done for us."

Residents in the villages of Al Awaya, Abu Sweech, Abdul Razag and Al Tuwamy, cur-

rently pay for trucks to bring drinking water from Nasiriyah every two or three days, Berndt said.

The water does not always arrive when it is supposed to, which can be dangerous during the heat of summer, Sheik Dhia Kadhum of Abdul Razag said through a translator. The shipped water, which is only used for drinking, also costs money that could be used elsewhere, he noted.

A pipeline would mean running water for villagers for the first time since 2003, Kadhum said.

"The civil affairs team works hard to help us," he said. "We trust them."

The group of Iraqi engineers studying the project, including a consultant for the Ur District and a surveyor for Nasiriyah, recently examined the areas where the proposed pipeline would run and dis-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gary Witte

**Capt. Jeremy Berndt of Buffalo, Minn., a civil affairs officer with 134th Brigade Support Battalion, watches as Hassan Momma Kamil, an engineer and consultant for the Ur District, checks a water access line.**

cussed the problems it could face.

Berndt said as the project

progresses, they plan to request for bids from local contractors.

## Villages receive water



**A young child plays with water in her backyard community. Thanks to local water projects, made possible through the Iraq Reconstruction Program, these children have water now that is vital to life, comfort and playing.**

story and photo by Lana Aziz

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**ERBIL PROVINCE, Iraq** - More than 26,000 residents in 13 villages receive potable water now due to water well projects recently completed as part of the Iraq Reconstruction Program.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began the well project initiative last year and completed it in March. These 13 villages in Northern Iraq did not have flowing water.

Coalition Forces found and tapped into, another source of water in this area.

Each one of these 13 projects consisted of construction of deep water wells, supplying of generators and submersible pumps, constructing a concrete and steel water tank, supplying and installing the water pipe line, construction of water taps, and expansion of the distribution system.

"Kurdistan is suffering from a shortage of clean water and lack of water sources and water pipe," said Younis Talib, an Iraqi electrical engineer employed in the USACE Gulf Region North's Erbil Resident Office. Talib was responsible for quality assurance and quality control on the project. "This project is one of many that are essential to solve water problems in the Erbil Province; designed to stabilize the water source in 13 villages."

The people in some of these villages did not have enough water, and some were depending on spring sources for water. Others relied on water delivery by trucks, or personally carrying water containers in their cars for many miles, according to Talib.

Nawzad Hadi, the governor of Erbil, said, "The water that U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [made possible] to Bnberzi Gchka has allowed many village people to move back to their village. I am grateful for all other projects which are done and which are under construction by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that positively impacted the Kurdish people."

Maj. Jennifer Munro, deputy area engineer in the Gulf Region North district Mosul Area office, said, "This is an exciting program that has provided water to 26,000 people. It revitalized communities that had stagnated when families were forced to leave their homes during Saddam's era. [Now] these villages are growing and thriving."

Years of a neglected infrastructure, violence, and sabotage created a shortage of potable water in Iraq—a country of some 30 million citizens. But, since the time of sovereignty in 2004, the Iraq Reconstruction Program has effected improvements that bring 120 million gallons of treated water daily to an estimated 2.4 million Iraqi citizens.

Estimates show that nationwide, some 8.4 million Iraqis will benefit from 300 million gallons of treated water daily when all of the original funded water projects are completed.

# 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  
3:30 TO 4 P.M.

### STRESS MANAGEMENT

MONDAY AND THURSDAY  
10 TO 11 A.M.

### HOME FRONT ISSUES

MONDAY AND THURSDAY  
5 TO 6 P.M.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY  
11 A.M. TO NOON

### ANGER MANAGEMENT

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY  
11 A.M. TO NOON

### ANXIETY AWARENESS

WEDNESDAY  
3 TO 3:30 P.M.  
SATURDAY  
10:30 TO 11 A.M.

### SLEEP HYGIENE

MONDAY AND THURSDAY  
6 TO 6:30 P.M.

### GOAL SETTING

MONDAY AND THURSDAY  
11 A.M. TO NOON

### DEPRESSION AWARENESS

WEDNESDAY  
2 TO 3 P.M.  
SATURDAY  
10 TO 10:30 A.M.

### COMMUNICATION SKILLS

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY  
10 TO 11 A.M.

### RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

WEDNESDAY  
9 TO 11 A.M.

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## 829-1402

# Ammo Airman named new Balad Idol

by Senior Airman Candace Romano  
332nd AEW Public Affairs

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - After five weeks of intense competition sponsored by the 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron, the audience chose from the last six remaining contestants for the coveted title of "Balad Idol" at the H-6 Recreational Center April 24.

Senior Airman Elizabeth Milliken, a munitions systems journeyman with the 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron, received a thunderous round of applause and standing ovation from the huge crowd after performing Dusty Springfield's 1968 classic song "Son of a Preacher Man."

"I was very excited to win the contest," said the new "Balad Idol," who deployed here from the 31st Maintenance Squadron, Aviano AB, Italy. "It was like being able to put a valuable gift to good use," she said.

Airman Milliken said she's been singing since she was four years old, and her mother always put her and her siblings in plays and let them sing in church.

"Patsy Cline was the greatest influence on my desire to sing once I got older," said the Kona, Hawaii native.

The field of contestants during the AEF 5-6 "Balad Idol" competition began with 26 people competing for the honor five weeks ago and was trimmed down each week by a panel of three judges including 2nd Lt. Tiffany Castleberry, Chief Master Sgt. Richard Lander, and Master Sgt. Kevin Dooms.

"We've had a great field of talented people participating," said Staff Sgt. Ken Fincham, of the 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron, and coordinator of the event. "It's been an extremely competitive event with great support from many people across the



Senior Airman Elizabeth Milliken, a munitions systems journeyman with the 332nd EMS, performs Dusty Springfield's 1968 classic song "Son of a Preacher Man" to become the new Balad Idol at the H-6 Recreation Center April 24.

base," said the sergeant deployed here from the 366th Services Squadron, Mountain Home AFB, Idaho.

Command Chief Master Sgt. Scott Dearduff, joined the panel as a special guest judge for the final night of the competition and offered encouraging comments to each of the contestants.

The evening began with Airman 1st Class Janay James, of the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, who performed Gretchen Wilson's "Redneck Woman," resulting in motivating comments from all the judges.

Next up was Airman Milliken, who sang Faith Hill's "When the Lights Go Down," resulting in loud applause from the crowd.

"You have an unbelievable voice, and I know everybody was watching you sing," said Sergeant Dooms from the judge's panel.

Then it was the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group's Senior Airman Jamie Ralls-Johnson's turn to impress

the crowd and judges panel. She received a loud, positive response from the crowd after her performance of Shania Twain's "Feel Like a Woman."

After a brief break in the action due to an indirect fire attack, Mr. Michael Franklin, a contractor on LSA Anaconda, sang the popular Luther Vandross hit "Never Too Much," which was also quite well received by the judges.

Then another 332 ESFS representative, Master Sgt. Kelly Winston, also honored Luther Vandross, singing his hit song "A House Is Not a Home."

"You're a talented, talented singer," Chief Dearduff told her.

Closing out the opening round of performances was Army Specialist Joe Bateman, from the 875th Engineering Battalion, who played the guitar as he sang Toby Keith's "American Soldier," which provided a patriotic tug to the heartstrings of the audience.

After all six contestants finished their first songs, the judges picked Air-

man Milliken as a finalist and ended up with a three-way tie for the second finalist, resulting in the need to poll the audience. After a close applause evaluation, the crowd determined Mr. Franklin would be the other finalist in a sing-off against Airman Milliken.

Following a brief intermission, Mr. Franklin took the stage first, bringing his rendition of Eric Clapton's "Wonderful Tonight," down to the judges table.

Then it was time for Airman Milliken's closing performance, which ultimately clinched the "Balad Idol" title for her. According to the panel of judges, the finalists were both awesome performers and definitely deserved to be recognized. They felt it would not be right for them to choose the winner, so the decision was again left up to the crowd.

A thundering round of applause from a standing crowd confirmed Senior Airman Elizabeth Milliken would be the new "Balad Idol."

## Unit works to keep morale high among servicemembers

by Maj. Damien Pickart  
332nd AEW Public Affairs

**BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq** - Between aircraft sorties, mortar attacks and grueling long days for the service members and residents of Balad AB and LSAA, the 20 Airmen of the Expeditionary Services Squadron are doing their part to keep them fit, entertained and ready for the fight.

"We're here for everyone else's happiness and good health," said 2nd Lt. Tiffany Castleberry, ESVS deputy commander. "We really enjoy the fact we can help make life in the combat zone a little less stressful and bring out a few smiles and laughs."

In keeping with their motto, "Be Ready, Be Fit, Be Entertained," the squadron's Airmen, 16 of whom are deployed from the Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, Services Squadron, toil daily to keep the Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing well-rested, in top physical condition

and topped off with a smile.

Services' diverse, but critical, missions include overseeing the lodging requirements of 3,600 Airmen, maintaining the facilities and programs of the recreation and fitness centers, and managing and operating the ever-popular library, cyber café and education center.

Services Airmen also make time to manage the operation of a self-help laundry, organize and continually stock their warehouse and coordinate closely with their Army brethren to bring outside entertainment for service members.

The squadron has major initiatives according to the major, among them the addition of 120 three-room trailers in the primary Air Force H-6 housing complex, which will provide 1,440 more bed spaces and help alleviate overcrowding, especially during rotation overlap periods.

Also in the works are improvements at the fitness and recreation centers as



Airman Aaron Morrow, 332nd ESS, "spots" a fellow Airman on the bench press at the Balad Air Base fitness center. Morrow is a certified fitness trainer.

well as an expansion of the Red Tail Library and Cyber Café, which offers the wing's only commercial Internet service.

"A lot of Airmen don't have their own computer at work so our Cyber Café computers and telephones are

constantly packed 24/7," said Tech. Sgt. Clifton Hundley, ESVS Client Support Administrator and general manager of the Cyber Café. "The addition of another trailer with 20 more computers and phones will help reduce wait time and thin out the crowds."

# FOB Q-West unveils new one-stop shop

## SSC creates convenience through consolidation

by Spc. Kyndal Hernandez  
45th Sustainment Brigade PAO

**FOB Q-WEST, Iraq** – A ribbon cutting ceremony April 13 marked the opening of the Soldier Support Center, giving Soldiers at Q-West a one-stop shop for personnel issues.

The Soldier Support Center includes the offices of the Inspector General, Equal Opportunity Advisor, Legal, Sexual Response Coordinator, Reenlistment and Personnel Services Battalion.

A finance office, where Soldiers will be able to receive casual pay or cash checks, and a post office, where Soldiers will be able to ship boxes and buy stamps will also be added to the center.

“This is the way it should be at every base, even back in the States,” said Col. Michael T. McBride, 45th SB commander. “We need to consolidate as much as possible to make things easier for the Soldiers.”

McBride said that in 1979, he spent four days visiting various offices scattered around Fort Dix, N.J. It isn’t easy for Soldiers to travel all over an installation to find the services they need, he added.

“As we downsize bases in Iraq, some forward operating bases will experience growth. Q-West may even experience 3,000 to 8,000 more Soldiers. This center will just be more convenient for Soldiers. This is a perfect location near work areas and sleeping areas.”

Troops from different units around Q-West have been working on this project since

November.

“The project was done collectively by troops,” said Master Sgt. Gary Canteen, NCOIC of Operations with 45th SB. “They dedicated a lot of hard work and pride to complete this project that is beneficial to everyone.”

“We put a lot of work into this project, not just the people who will be working here, but a lot of Soldiers as well,” said Master Sgt. Ceilita Jackson, reenlistment NCOIC. “In the beginning, we had problems with being able to get everything started, but we had to make them understand, we aren’t doing this just for us, we are doing this for the units that are coming in after us as well so we need to get this done.”

Canteen said the building that was used for this project was an old dilapidated building that units who were deployed here prior to 45th SB complained about being unusable.

“About 15 Soldiers dedicated a lot of their time and hard work to making this building into what it is now,” Canteen said. “Now Soldiers have everything they need to take care of their personal issues in one place, and don’t have to go everywhere around the FOB to take care of things.”

“Bottom line, in the beginning this was just an idea; then it became a reality,” Jackson said. “It was a challenge to get this project done, but it is very beneficial to Soldiers because it is a one stop shop to take care of all their personal affairs and it will be beneficial for the units coming in after we leave.”

“They dedicated a lot of hard work and pride to complete this project that is beneficial to everyone.”

- Master Sgt. Gary Canteen



Photo by Spc. Kyndal Hernandez

Col. Michael T. McBride, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Seals, command sergeant major, of the 45th Sustainment Brigade, cut a red ribbon in front of the Soldier Support Center signifying the grand opening of the new one-stop shop.

## Nebraska senator visits Soldiers



Photo by Sgt 1st Class Douglas Schultz

Sen. Ben Nelson (D-Neb.) and Rep. Lee Terry (R-Neb.) from right, visited LSAA, April 29, and had a town hall meeting with Lincoln Nebraska Soldiers from the 1-167 Cavalry, the 734th Transportation Battalion, from Kearney, and Company C, 2-135 General Support Aviation Battalion, from Lincoln.

## Army Reserve Affairs



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# Soldiers honor fallen comrades with memorial park

## Ceremony opened park to honor those within Sustainment Brigade

Story and photos by Spc. Kyndal Hernandez  
45th Sustainment Brigade PAO

**FOB Q-WEST, Iraq** – The new Warrior Memorial Park was opened for viewing Saturday with a ceremony unveiling the site here and a tribute to the fallen Soldiers of 101st Sustainment Brigade.

“We built this memorial for the Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice when they were here,” said Col. Michael T. McBride, commander of the 45th SB. “These Soldiers will never be forgotten.”

A ceremony paying tribute to Cpl. Donald E. Fisher II and Pfc. Antonio Mendez Sanchez was constructed by placing symbolic rocks in front of the memorial. Both Soldiers were killed in non-combat related injuries in vehicle accidents when on a logistics patrols.

The ceremony also consisted of the unveiling of a mural painted with a draped United States flag in bold colors representing the optimism, passion, and spirit with which the Soldiers lived. In contrast, the fallen comrade symbol of combat boots, a weapon, and identification tags was painted in shades of gray to symbolize the memory that remains when life has passed.

The park was built by Soldiers who put a lot of dedication into completing the project in a timely matter, McBride said.

“We worked a lot of long hours painting and getting the mural done,” said Spc. Anne Long, personnel clerk with 45th Special Troops Battalion. “We would have to get all the work for our actual job done, and then go



With paintbrush in hand, Spc. Anne Long adds photorealistic shadows to a mural in the newly opened Warrior Memorial Park at FOB Q-West.

and work on the mural until midnight some nights.”

Long and Spc. Silas Mauk with 45th STB, were the Soldiers responsible for painting the mural.

“It was awesome, and I feel honored and privileged to have been able to take part in this,” said Long. “It means so much, not just to the Soldiers here but also to their families

back home.”

Mauk said the commander had an idea of what he wanted for the mural, and he and Long took that idea and added a little of their own style to it.

“I thought this project was very worthwhile to honor the fallen Soldiers,” Mauk said. “I’m very proud of it, and it turned out wonderful. I think

it was a great way to show the importance of remembering those Soldiers who paid the ultimate price for this war and that we never forget them.”

When the next sustainment brigade transitions into Q-West, more stones will be placed in the Warrior Memorial Park to pay tribute to the fallen Soldiers of the 45th Sus. Bde.



Sgt. Audrey Simon with Headquarters and Headquarters Company 45th Special Troops Battalion, and Sgt. Burnadette Faison with 45th Sustainment Brigade pause to pay their respects to their fallen comrades at the mural wall in the Warrior Memorial Park at FOB Q-West.



Symbolic rocks were placed in the Warrior Memorial Park to pay tribute to fallen Soldiers during Operation Irai Freedom.

# CTC sends supplies soaring in the sky



Above, Pfc. Michael Macaulay, a watercraft engineer with the 169th CTC, unhooks the cargo net before sorting through a pallet of military equipment at the Arrival and Departure Airfield Control Group in Baghdad. Below, A civilian contractor tightens the cargo net of pallets being delivered to customers on the Victory Base Complex in Baghdad.



## Arrival and Departure Airfield Control Group sorts and distributes Army supplies in Baghdad area

story and photos by Sgt. Amanda Solitario

**SATHER AIR BASE, Iraq** – Distributing logistical supplies can often be dangerous as convoys roll across unsafe roads in Iraq. The Soldiers at the Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group are making it their mission to save lives by using aerial assets.

Every time equipment is moved by air, another convoy is spared from leaving the base. This ultimately translates into Soldier safety, said Pfc. Devon Garza, a cargo specialist with the 169th Cargo Transfer Company.

“We prevent convoys from coming back and forth,” Garza said. “Soldiers’ lives are being saved every day.”

The ADACG, managed by the 169th CTC, 15th Sustainment Brigade, estimates in the last six months more than 1,000 Soldiers were kept off the roads thanks to air movement.

But moving military equipment in this fashion takes a little more coordination and a lot of time, Garza, stationed at Ft. Eustis, Va., said.

The ADACG operates out of a yard conveniently located just off the airfield in Baghdad. When planes land, the large pallets are pulled from the belly of

the aircraft and moved into the heart of the yard.

Most of the pallets that come in are mixed—meaning the equipment still needs to be separated according to its final destination. The job of the ADACG is to purify those pallets by reorganizing the cargo in relation to where it will be distributed.

“We prevent convoys from coming back and forth. Soldiers’ lives are being saved every day.”

- Pfc. Devon Garza

“We have pallets all over the yard that need to be broken down before they go to another forward operating base,” Garza said.

The Soldiers begin to sort and sift through the hodgepodge of items and build new pallets based on where the equipment is heading to next.

“It is pretty easy, but it takes a lot of time,” she said.

There are many things to take into consideration when making pure pallets, said Sgt. Edgar Perez, a shift leader at the ADACG.

He said in order for pallets to go on a helicopter, dimensions have to be just right. With tape measures in hand, the Soldiers check to make sure they do not exceed the 60-inch height requirement.

“If it is too big, the pilots will kick it back,” Perez, from Chicago, Ill., said.

Aside from the height restrictions, Garza said there has to be free space on the pallets—four inches on the long side and two inches on the short side to be exact.

“When the pilots inspect the pallet, they have to walk on the pallets so they need the room to move around,” Garza said.

Getting the equipment out of the yard and into the hands of the customer is a top priority for these Soldiers, said Sgt. Manuel Oliver, a cargo specialist with the 169th CTC and a native of El Paso, Texas.

“Nothing happens until we move it,” he said.

Perez said that between the two shifts in the yard, they build almost 100 pure pallets a day. And there is never a short supply of work with planes coming in several times a day to drop off supplies.

The unit uses a variety of vehicles and machinery to get the job finished, but it is still a very physical job.

“We definitely don’t sit in an office everyday,” Oliver said.

The ADACG operates 24 hours a day, pushing boxes, lugging containers, and moving pallets in order to get supplies to the customer the safest way possible.

“These Soldiers give nothing less than 100 percent out here,” Perez said.



Pfc. Michael Macaulay, left, a watercraft engineer with the 169th CTC, and Sgt. Jason Soto, a cargo specialist with the unit, cover a pallet with cargo netting for shipment by air to a nearby forward operating base. Below, Sgt. Edgar Perez, a shift leader at the Arrival/Departure Airfield Control Group, uses hand and arm singles to guide a pallet to the breakdown pad. The Soldiers at the ADACG breakdown pallets of mixed supplies and regroup them according to their final destination.



Above, Sgt. Jason Soto, a cargo specialist with the 169th Cargo Transfer Company, and Spc. Kyle Erikson, a transporter with the unit, tighten cargo nets on military pallets at the ADACG. The unit receives and ships cargo to military bases in the Baghdad area. Right, In the middle of the night, helicopters fly into the ADACG to pick up military cargo. The 169th CTC helps the pilots load the pallets into the back of the aircraft. By flying cargo, the unit is able to keep convoys off of the roadways in Iraq.



# Supply Soldiers gain new customers

Story and photos by Sgt. Amanda Solitario  
Anaconda Times Staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - On a normal day, the Soldiers of the 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion are busy pushing supplies out to deployed servicemembers. But this day was slightly different.

Their customers did not wear a military uniform, and the equipment being distributed was far from the typical beans and bullets requested

by troops.

For this particular mission, a group of 1034th CSSB Soldiers found themselves in nearby Bakir village handing out hundreds of school supply packets to Iraq's youngest residents during an April 16 humanitarian mission.

This was the first time the unit organized and participated in a civil affairs operation, and for many of the Soldiers, it was their first time seeing life on the other side of the fence, said

1st Lt. Fredrick Leytham, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1034th CSSB.

"My Soldiers got to go out there and be a part of what the U.S. Army and Coalition Forces are trying to do over here," he said.

The effort did not unfold overnight, said Command Sgt. Major Tim Saylor, the battalion command sergeant major for the 1034th CSSB.

"There are more moving pieces to doing a mission like this than anybody would ever imagine," he said.

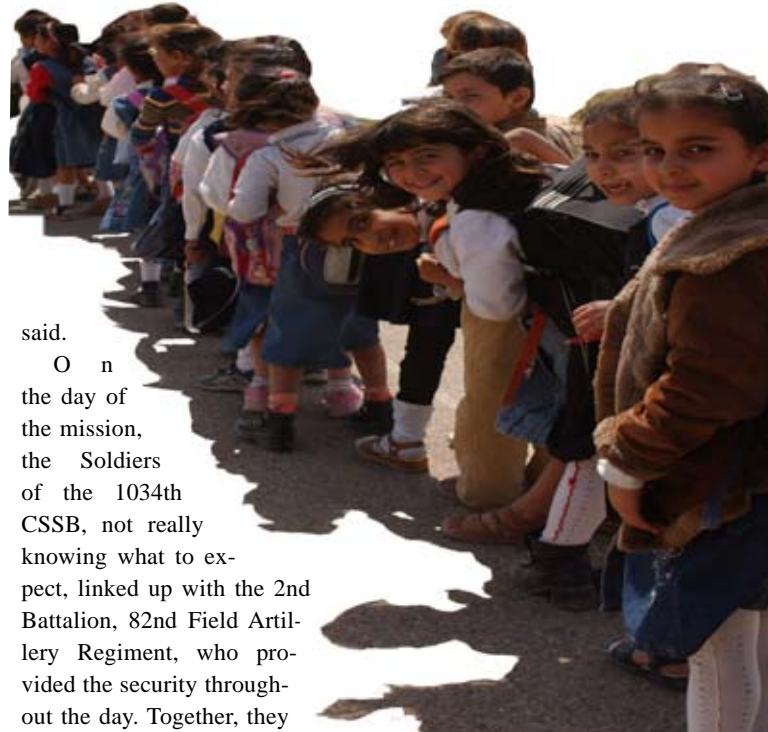
In January, Soldiers began making flyers requesting certain school items. They mailed them back to families, friends and local businesses hoping for some help in getting the operation underway.

"My biggest worry was not getting enough stuff, but the support back home was unbelievable," said Sgt. Katie Ramaeker, the company clerk for the HHC, 1034th CSSB.

What the unit received was enough school supplies and toys for more than 1,000 students. Leytham said the response was overwhelming and far exceeded any expectations.

Saylor said one thing they could have used more of was soccer balls. When the children saw the "footballs," the schoolyard turned into a frenzy of eager children trying to obtain one of the few prized commodities.

"You can tell (soccer) is the country's national past-time," Leytham



**A group of children turn around and smile at the camera as they wait in line to receive a school supply packet from Soldiers. The 1034th CSSB organized and participated in a local humanitarian drop April 16.**



**Sgt. Carol Cory, a heavy wheeled vehicle mechanic with the 1034th CSSB, hands an Iraqi girl a frisbee and a jump rope during an April 16 humanitarian mission at a village close to Logistical Support Area Anaconda.**

said.

On the day of the mission, the Soldiers of the 1034th CSSB, not really knowing what to expect, linked up with the 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, who provided the security throughout the day. Together, they hopped into their Humvees and set out for the afternoon.

When the vehicles halted in front of the boys' school, parents and children began to fill the yard waiting to see what was in the two large white boxes positioned in the middle of the crowd.

While a medic performed on-the-spot medical treatment to a few children, other Soldiers worked quickly to organize the donations for the dozens of people crowding around.

Girls, ranging from about 5 to 12, formed a single file line and moved somewhat timidly to receive their gifts. Some looked down, some smiled, and some said thank you in English. They all walked away with

smiles.

After the girls moved out of the yard, teachers escorted the boys through, in the same precise manner. When all the school supplies had been given out, Soldiers gave a special donation of cleats and soccer balls to the school's soccer team.

Leytham said the operation was something the Iowa National Guard unit had been planning for months. He said the unit they replaced did something similar, and they want-

See Children, Page 15

# Military service a 'family business' for mother and sons

by Sgt. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

Anaconda Times Staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - The near-identical dimples make the association unmistakable; mother and son. Both clad in Army Combat Uniforms and smiling at each other incessantly, it's the first time they've seen each other in more than six months.

This year Mother's Day came early for Maj. Cynthia A. Lerch, operations officer for the 4th Corps Materiel Management Center, in the form of a visit from her son, Sgt. Justin D. Lerch, an intelligence analyst with 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division April 28.

Maj. Lerch, stationed on Anaconda since fall 2006, first found out her son would be coming to Iraq in December. Although Sgt. Lerch's unit is stationed at Camp Taji, the Lerchs' kept in close contact to coordinate a meeting on his way through Anaconda.

Although Maj. Lerch said she wasn't sure of the exact date her son would be arriving in Iraq, or even if he'd be passing through Anaconda, she did her best to make sure they had a chance to see each other.

"We've been in contact since he arrived in Kuwait," Maj. Lerch said. "I've had guys in Kuwait watching out for him."

As the first deployment for both family members, the younger Lerch said it felt strange to see him mom in a combat zone.

"This is the best Mother's Day present I

could ever have," she said. "It could only be better if my other two sons were here."

Lerch has two other sons serving in the military, Martin and Aaron, and as Sgt. Lerch said, military service is a "family business."

"Our 'rule' at home was that the boys were allowed one year off or free time after graduation from high school, then they either had to go to college full-time, work full-time or join the service," Lerch said.

She said each of her sons decided to join the military on their own accord; Martin joined the Air Force, and Aaron and Justin joined the Army.

"It is not often that sons follow in their mother's footsteps, but mine did," Lerch said. "I don't know how to describe the pride I feel for my boys. Knowing that as men, they are choosing to serve in the military - not because it's the easy road, because it is certainly not - but because they have watched me, feel the commitment to their comrades, and want to impart some special piece of themselves to the world for their children and future children."

The grandmother of three said as a family, they are proud to serve their country, and separations during deployments only makes them stronger.

"We all email all the time," she said of her military-serving family.

Currently, three Lerch family-members are deployed. To keep connected even when situations such as communications blackouts prohib-

ited phone and email usage, the family came up with a plan.

"We worried all the time and eventually devised a system for those times that email or phones were blocked," Maj. Lerch said. "Aaron was to go to the Post Exchange and charge anything - a Coke, a candy bar, anything just so we could check his account and know that he was all right."

She said the program worked out well, and that she believes in fate and destiny, which is why she doesn't waste time worrying about her sons when they deploy.

One of the biggest things that I tell all my boys is to learn their Regulations - believe it or not. Not everyone you will meet in the Army, just as in Civilian life, has your best interests at heart. You must know what you can and can't do and what others can and can't do to you, Lerch said. That is paramount.

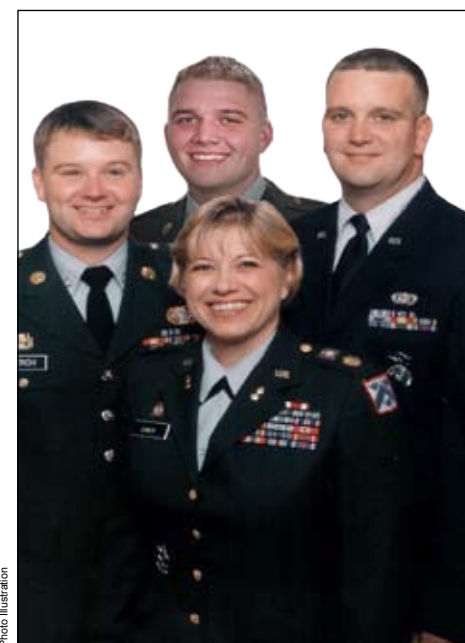
"We have a 'deployment candle' (an electric one) that burns continuously while one of our family members is deployed," Maj. Lerch said.

The candle has been burning almost non-stop since October 2005 and will continue to burn until sometime in 2008, she said.

Here on Anaconda, even though the two Lerch's only got to spend a few hours together, they said they made the best of it.

"Just to see each other for the first time (after so long) ... I couldn't stop smiling," the major said.

Lerch also said she plans to try and visit her



**Maj. Cynthia A. Lerch, operations officer for 4th Corps Materiel Management Center takes a family photo with her three sons.**

son in Taji before her deployment ends.

Upon returning home, the Riverside, Calif., natives are anticipating the birth of Sgt. Lerch's new baby.

His wife, who is six months pregnant, is expecting to give birth at about the same time Maj. Lerch will finish her deployment.

If only for a few moments, the military and coincidence brought a service-serving family together for a Mother's Day to remember.

# Keeping Soldiers satisfied one uniform at a time

by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell

Anaconda Times Staff

**VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq** – One stitch at a time.

That's how one Army Reserve Soldier assigned to the 442nd Quartermaster Company makes it through early mornings and late evenings while deployed in a combat zone.

Nestled between several combat brigades is one of Victory Base Complex's best kept secrets – Staff Sgt. Gwendolym Champ, a native of Alexandria, Va.

Champ is the only uniform renovation specialist assigned to the sprawling coalition compound and the workload keeps her extremely busy.

With stacks of Army combat uniforms scattered about in her small office and little colored pieces of paper atop each pile to determine the priority of a job, the sound of a sewing machine rattling and nearby retrofitted air conditioners blasting cool air nearly conceals any forms of life in the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion's uniform alteration shop.

As the word-of-mouth spread from battalion to battalion, Champ's hours keep getting longer and longer and that's the way she likes it – extremely busy.

"Satisfaction on a Soldier's face when they see their uniform fixed is all I need," she said about the revolving door that keeps Soldiers



Staff Sgt. Gwendolym Champ, of Alexandria, Va., a uniform renovation specialist assigned to the 442nd Quartermaster Company, sews the hole in a pair of Army Combat Uniform pants recently.

coming and going.

From changing out the Velcro strips to repairing the notorious holes in the crotch of the pants that seem to always appear, Champ said she has quickly learned the art of fast, reliable service.

"These Soldiers here are the reason I work more than 16 hours a day," said the 20-year veteran. "I am 100 percent here for them. Their missions are very important and without a serviceable

uniform, how can I expect them to go out and do the things they need to do every day and night."

With a seemingly endless stack of digital camouflage pattern taking every possible countertop space and available corner, Champ said she has a simple work ethic. "I am here until the job is done," said the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) logistician.

A small tally board in the back of her office reminds her of all the hard endless work. In less than six months and hundreds of spools of thread, Champ has sewn more than 2,500 holes, pockets and patches for servicemembers and civilians on base.

"My hours on the door say from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., but most times I am here by 5 a.m. and gone at 11 p.m.," she said.

Although she normally has a two-day turnaround time, Champ said if a Soldier comes in and really needs the uniform fixed, she is happy to set aside her already packed schedule to make a quick fix to an easy solution.

"It's just the right thing to do," she said.

As her feet work in near automatic mode controlling the speed of the needle and thread and her hands working like a surgeon to repair countless uniforms, Champ said sewing was

never her passion or hobby.

"I didn't sew growing up or before coming here," she said.

As a laundry, bath and renovation specialist, Champ said this is the first time she has used her uniform renovation skills outside her advanced individual training.

"Wow, I never thought sewing would be so much fun," she said laughing. "In the past I have always done the laundry and shower portion of my job, never this. It took me about one month to get into the swing of things, but now watch it; I have this thing down to an art."

A grandmother-to-be, Champ said she is ready to put her new talents to work when she redeploys back to the States.

"I already have some ideas for my daughter," she said about making some dresses for her granddaughters when they are born. "My daughter is very proud of me and I can't wait to get home to make all sorts of clothes for her children."

Champ said Soldiers are usually amazed with her work and never expected their uniforms to come back almost new.

"It's cute, some Soldiers even try to pay me for the work I do," she said. "But the only payment I accept is a 'Thank You' as they pick up their uniforms. Who could ask for more from these Soldiers. They are the true heroes here."

With the Baghdad surge in full swing, Champ's workload is quickly gaining momentum.

"I have Soldiers bringing in hundreds of uniforms from the outlining forward operating bases," she said. "I know those Soldiers' uniforms are very important, and I try to get them back to the units as soon as possible."

Champ keeps in contact with Soldiers with her nearby laptop. With e-mails filling her inbox on the status of the uniforms, convoys make the trip to Victory Base Complex each week to visit the large post exchange, drop off mail, and pick up uniforms from Champ's office.

"I truly know I am making a positive difference on the lives of Soldiers who go outside the wire each night protecting both the Iraqi people and coalition forces," she said. "This really is an amazing experience for me, and I can't wait to go home and tell everyone about it."



Staff Sgt. Gwendolym Champ, a uniform renovation specialist, 442nd Quartermaster Company uses a needle and thread to make a repair to an Army Combat Uniform recently.

## Roadside grass cutting protects mission, helps Iraqis 1-167 RSTA develops projects to benefit community around Anaconda

by Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Schultz

1-167 Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition PAO

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - Most people in the States would think that cutting grass is a routine job – more of a pain than anything else. However, cutting down grass near and around LSA Anaconda is a win-win situation.

During the past several months, local Iraqis have been clearing the roadsides around the base. Workers are clearing debris and tall grass near roadsides and fence lines, a process called de-vegetation.

Chief Warrant Officer Ron-Michael Pellant, targeting officer for the 1st Squadron, 167th Cavalry (Reconnaissance, Surveillance, Target Acquisition), said the objective is two-fold.

Pellant said the project of clearing grass and debris employs locals from the surrounding areas. Thus, the local economy is boosted.

"(The force protection officer), Capt. Bradley Wangler, thought it would be best to hire locally than a company from Baghdad," Pellant said.

Hiring locally, versus contracting through Baghdad, keeps the money in the hands of civilians around Logistical Support Area Anaconda, an area known for high unemployment rates.

Pellant said that Capt. Joseph Lynds and Wangler worked up the program.

The idea of the project was developed during the 1 Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division training at Camp Shelby and the Joint Readiness Training Center, Ft. Polk, La.

"All CMO elements in the Brigade Combat Team are using the concept," Pellant said. The concept of de-vegetation is part of the CTIT or Civil Transportation Improvement Team.

In addition to employing locals, Pellant said clearing the roads of grass and debris makes travel safer for Iraqis and Coalition Forces.

There are many projects of this nature ongoing around the LSA. There are other projects as well, such as water purification, road rebuilding and school improvements.

"Currently we have 10 projects," Pellant said, noting more than 350 locals have been employed through the program.

Additionally, the project has "injected" an estimated \$200,000

into the surrounding communities.

There have been several kilometers of roadsides cleared in the area which the 1-167 Squadron conducts business and patrols. The grass cutting is done manually so it does take time to complete.

"The contracts are built around time rather than distance," Pellant said.

"There are nine more CTIT's planned in the 1-167 area of operations," he added.

The projects that are proposed, planned, and implemented will create a safer and more secure environment for the local Iraqis and Coalition Forces, Pellant said.

"The projects ... will create a safer and more secure environment for the local Iraqis and Coalition Forces."

- CWO Ron-Michael Pellant

**May 9**

Green Bean Karaoke  
8 p.m., West MWR

8-Ball Tourney  
8 p.m., West MWR

9-Ball Tourney  
8 p.m., 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.,  
East MWR

Spades & Ping Pong  
8:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.  
H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics  
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Aikido  
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Step Aerobics  
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Open Volleyball  
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Floor Hockey  
8 to 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Spin Class  
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Cardio Funk  
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aerobics  
7 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts  
9 p.m. West MWR

Hawaiian Dance Practice  
6 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Salsa Dance Class  
8:30 p.m., West MWR

**May 10**

Console Game Tourney  
8 p.m., West MWR

Country/Western Dance Class  
7 p.m., East MWR

9-Ball Tourney  
8:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.  
H6 MWR

Karaoke Night  
8:30 p.m., H6 MWR

Dodgeball League  
8 p.m., Circuit Gym

**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)

Pilates  
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Aikido  
10:00 a.m. to noon., East Fitness  
Center

Tae Kwon Do 1  
8 - 9 a.m., East Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do 2  
7 - 8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Spin Center  
6 a.m., H6 Fitness Center

Korean Martial Arts  
4:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Water Aerobics  
7:45 p.m., Indoor Pool

Intermediate Swim Lessons  
6 p.m., Indoor Pool

**May 11**

Hip-Hop Coffee Shop  
8 p.m., West MWR

Scrabble Tourney  
8 p.m., West MWR

Chess Tourney  
8 p.m., West MWR

Hip-Hop Dance Class  
7-11 p.m., East MWR

R&B Music Night  
9:30 p.m., H6 MWR

Open Volleyball  
7 p.m., West Fitness Center

Self Defense Class  
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Step Aerobics  
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Dance Aerobics  
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Friday Night Spikes  
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Spin Class  
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

**May 12**

Country/Western Dance Class  
8 p.m., West MWR

Texas Hold'em  
8 p.m., West MWR

Salsa Dance Class  
7 p.m., East MWR

Bingo Night  
8:30 p.m., H6 MWR

Wrestling  
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

Aerobics  
7 p.m., West MWR

Boxing  
3 to 4:30 p.m., West Fitness  
Center

Pilates  
11 a.m., West Fitness Center

Aikido  
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do 2  
7 - 8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

**May 13**

Magic, The Gathering  
11 a.m., West MWR

Green Bean Karaoke  
8 p.m., West MWR

Spades, Dominoes & R&B  
8 p.m., West MWR

Poker  
7 p.m., East MWR

Poetry Night  
7 p.m., East MWR

Salsa Dance Class  
8:30 p.m., H6 Recreation

Gaston's Self Defense  
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Boxing  
3 to 4:30 p.m., West Fitness  
Center

Aikido  
10 a.m. to noon, East Fitness  
Center

Swing Dance  
7:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Spin Class  
1:30 a.m., H6 Fitness Center

Abs Salute  
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

**May 14**

Martial Arts  
9 p.m., West MWR

Poetry Jam  
8 p.m., West MWR

9-Ball Tourney  
8 p.m., West MWR

Karaoke  
8 p.m., East MWR

Texas Hold'em  
8:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.  
H6 MWR

Aerobics  
7 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts  
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

Dance Aerobics  
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do  
8 to 9:30 a.m., East Fitness  
Center

Step Aerobics  
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Boxing  
7:30 to 9 p.m., East Fitness  
Center

Floor Hockey  
8 - 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Spin Class  
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Cardio Funk  
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

**May 15**

Martial Arts  
9 p.m., West MWR

Foosball/Ping Pong  
8 p.m., West MWR

8-Ball Tourney  
8:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.  
H6 MWR

Pilates  
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Martial Arts  
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

Aikido  
10 am to noon, East Fitness  
Center

Tae Kwon Do 2  
7p.m. - 8:30 p.m., East Fitness  
Center

Combative Training  
8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Spin Class  
3:30 and 8:30 p.m., H6 Fitness  
Center

Korean Martial Arts  
4:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Kung Fu  
7 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

**May 16**

Aerobics  
7 p.m., West MWR

Green Bean Karaoke  
8 p.m., West MWR

8-Ball Tourney  
8 p.m., West MWR

9-Ball Tourney  
3 p.m. and 8 p.m., East MWR

Spades & Ping Pong  
8:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.  
H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics  
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Aikido  
5 p.m., East Fitness Center

Step Aerobics  
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Open Volleyball  
7 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

# The Safety Belts Live in Concert

West Side MWR  
May 10 at 8 p.m.

**Come see their final show!**

For more information contact [Emily.McGovern@kbr.com](mailto:Emily.McGovern@kbr.com)

# Shout outs from home

Hello John J. Elam,  
We just wanted to say thanks for all that you are doing. I'm sure that you're looking forward to your time home for Kelly's graduation. Your family definitely has a lot going on and you are constantly in our prayers. Take care!  
Sincerely,  
Dan, Shelley (Beroza) and Brooke Roth

Nathan Dameron  
Hey big guy! We are looking forward to seeing you very soon! I love you!  
Mother

Hey Jonathan Terry!!!!  
I just wanted to thank you for what you are doing, and tell you how extremely proud I am of you!! I tell my girls a lot about you, and how you are a soldier just like the men they show on TV.  
I think about you every day, and pray for you every night. Come home safe, and we love you.  
Daphne, Mark, Kelly and Piper

P.S. If you would like, I will send you a picture of the girls. Can you believe Kelly is almost 5! Love ya!!

Rob Lawton  
Hey Love...We had a great time during your R and R and look forward to your next trip home! Until then we'll hold onto the memories from

Mexico... and that big bottle of tequila!  
Jennifer

Henry Torres  
Hi Butch! WOW, can't wait. You'll be home soon. I just mailed off my taxes just under the wire. How does that work since you're way over there? I'm sure that's the last thing on your mind. Stay safe. God bless you always and da Torres ohana in Kaneohe all wish you the best and send our love and prayers!  
Ivy

Frank Kelly  
Dad,  
We miss you so much! We can't wait to have you back home with us!  
Love, Brendan, Eileen, James, Liam & Terence (Mom, too!)

MSG Eugene Rains  
Hey Hon,  
I'm so proud of you and how you keep up the good fight. Keep your chin up, don't let them get to you, and know that we are all here waiting for you to be home. Won't be long now!  
You are my everything!  
All my Love always!  
Your OHM - Sue

Russell Hayes  
Hey Babe! Love you and can't wait til you come home!!

Vince Dvorak  
Happy Spring from sunny and warm Iowa (it snowed last week!) I hope you had a good Easter! It was great to spend some time with Jen and Elias last weekend at Julie's. Elias is getting so big! I wish you could have been there. I tell Derek almost everyday about you, and I will tell him we can give you a shout out! We miss you, and are very proud of you everyday! Take Care of yourself.  
Jean

Pat Leone  
We all miss and love you, Papa! You are the BEST! U rule!  
Love, Josh and Jordan

Evan Carter  
Hey Evan... Can't wait until you're home... Take care and remember that you are sooooo loved here!  
Rebecca

Pat Leone  
Hey Baby - I'm counting the days until Italy!  
Love YOU!  
Penny

Jonathan Terry  
Hi Jonathan! I'm your second cousin - your dad's first cousin. I've thought of you so often and hope all is going well for you as your

serve our country. Many blessings and much, much hope.  
Love -- Shauna

Spc. Paul A. Chavarilla  
Hi Honey, we miss you, all of us back here at home are praying for you and all of our troops....God Bless, and lots of kisses and hugs...from your kitty Rita too....  
Jorge and Irma Arenivar

Will Murray  
Hi Will, Miss you and can't wait for you to come home. Stay busy and the time will go by quickly.  
Love ya. Mom & Dad

Everett E. Gray  
We love you! Can we have a pony????  
Liannah

Jack Conoly, III  
Hey J.M.,  
We know your doing fine, but just wanted to give you a Shout and tell you we are proud of you and love you . You and your buds are in our constant prayers.  
Love Dad and Mom

Tracy J. Finnerty,  
The oldest one is about to be on her way  
The middle one is about to leave the nest. We knew this would happen someday. Thank heavens I could

really use the rest of wait the youngest just started walking yippee, yippee, what were we thinking. We were almost free, they say third time is a charm. So heres to our life. Please hurry back to the funny farm because I love being your wife.  
Pamela

Jonathan Terry  
Hey Jonathan! Just wanted to say we miss you and are so proud of you! Take care of yourself and we'll see you soon!  
Love ya!  
Jarod

Christopher Mullennix  
Hey honey, we love you and miss you, can't wait for you to get your butt home! Stay safe and all the love to you!  
xo your girls

Hi Jeff Elam,  
Thanks for serving and stay SAFE!  
Mark

Hello Juan Torres,  
Stay safe, take care, and see you soon!  
MY MOM and DAD said HI!

Jason Lockett  
See you soon hope you come safe and sound.  
Love Dexter Jazmyne & Jailyn

Jason Lockett  
Hey big brother, I hope you are doing fine and working hard so you can come home. We love you, Jazmyne and Jailyn (Come home)

Gabriel Morgan  
Hello son! We are planning a huge Thanksgiving, no matter what day it is. Do you think we should have a wedding that day? I do. You guys have waited long enough! What a wonderful day it will be. You are so strong and brave. We are so proud of you. Fancy is shedding so Spring must be on its way. Miss you,  
Mom

Adam Ballard  
Hi Daddy, Can't wait for you to come home!  
Love you,  
Anastasia

Col. John J. Elam  
Jeff,  
We are thinking of you often and hoping that you will return home safely. Enjoy your leave and make the most of your time at home with the family. Hope to hear from you soon!  
Denise, Jim, Kevin, Brad, and Erin

Alan Schmitt,  
Hey there. We are all thinking about you and grateful for risking your life for all of us. Take care and see you soon.  
Love,  
Penny



**SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER**

(Schedule is subject to change)

**Wednesday, May 9**  
5 p.m. Astronaut Farmer (PG)  
8 p.m. Fracture (R)

**Thursday, May 10**  
5 p.m. Spider Man 3 (PG-13)  
8 p.m. Music and Lyrics (PG-13)

**Friday, May 11**  
2 p.m. Reno 911: Miami (R)  
5 p.m. Spider Man 3 (PG-13)  
8:30 p.m. Ghost Rider (PG-13)

**Saturday, May 12**  
2 p.m. Spider Man 3 (PG-13)  
5 p.m. Ghost Rider (PG-13)  
8 p.m. Reno 911: Miami (R)

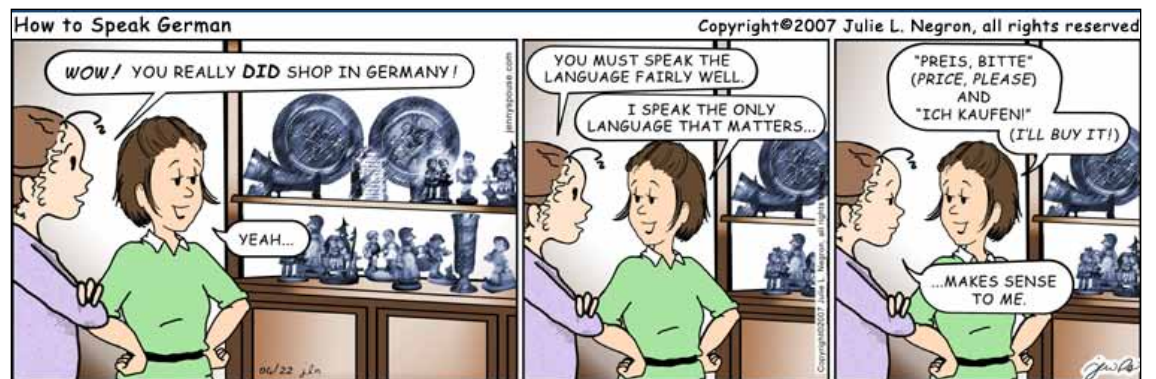
**Sunday, May 13**  
2 p.m. Astronaut Farmer (PG)  
5 p.m. Wild Hogs (PG-13)  
8 p.m. Spider Man 3 (PG-13)

**Monday, May 14**  
5 p.m. Spider Man 3 (PG-13)  
8 p.m. Ghost Rider (PG-13)

**Tuesday, May 15**  
5 p.m. Reno 911: Miami (R)  
8 p.m. Wild Hogs (PG-13)

<http://jennyspouse.com>

## Jenny, the Military Spouse

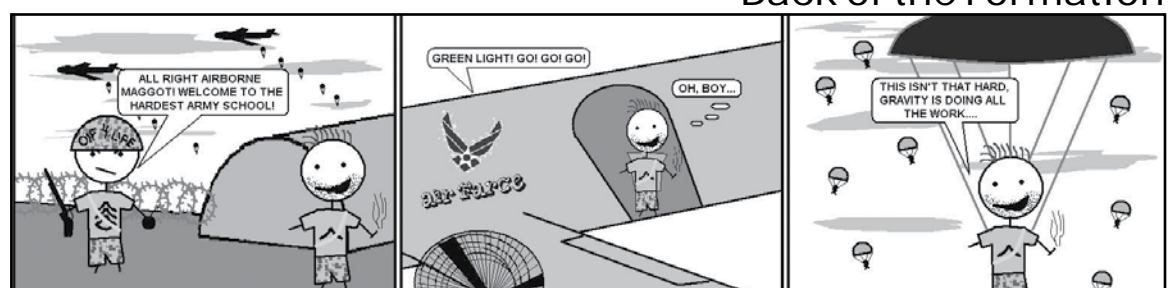


<http://www.pvtmurphy.com>

## Pvt. Murphy's Law



## Back of the Formation



# Record-breaking mail services offered on base

by Capt. Ken Hall

332nd AEW Public Affairs

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** – Servicemembers here enjoy some of the fastest, most reliable mail service in the history of armed conflict, and when it's time to go home, they can lighten their load by mailing their gear, instead of lugging it through airline security gauntlets. They can even be reimbursed if they follow all the rules. Postal Airmen are here providing them with mail and helping lighten their load.

'Combat Postal' Airmen with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing processed a phenomenal 328,668 pounds of incoming and 85,100 pounds of outgoing mail during the week of April 9-15. They deployed here with the 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron, and 'In-Lieu-Of' tours with the Air Force's 732nd Expeditionary Support Squadron, and the Army's 22nd Personnel Services Battalion, who fall under the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Whether you're talking about the four who work for the Air Force or the 43 who work for the Army, they all have one thing in common, a demonstrated history of accomplishment.

The incoming mail process is highly intricate. Mail control activity chief, Tech. Sgt. Amanda Snyder, said contractors unload the daily airmail under her and Senior Airman Kevin Goldman's quality control oversight. Together, they ensure the base is getting the right mail and inspected them for damages before they are taken to the Joint Military Mail Terminal. Snyder is deployed from the 2nd Air Postal Squadron at Ramstein AB, Germany.

At the terminal, contractors process the mail. Mail, for the base's Airmen and Soldiers, as well as mail for numerous forward operating bases, transits the JMMT. Postal Airmen here run one of the biggest postal operations in the CENTCOM area of responsibility.

After mail is separated, Staff Sgt. Kelvin Brantley, from Detroit, and Senior Airman Brandon Reynolds, from Baltimore, sort the Air Force mail into bins for 27 Air Force unit mail clerks, and 17 ILO Airmen do the same thing with the Army mail.

"Our Airmen are doing great work keeping the postal system running strong," said Lt. Col. Craig Wilcox, 332nd ECS commander.

With his four Airmen responsible for seeing nearly half a million pounds of mail come and go each week, he couldn't be happier with their performance. "We often take the reliability of our mail service for granted -- sure as the sun rises and sets -- but it's the dedication of our Airmen and contractors that keeps the wing's Airmen happily connected to their loved ones and friends back home."



'Combat Postal' Senior Airman Thomas Baker, 732nd Expeditionary Support Squadron, completes a postal transaction at the East Side Post Office. Postal facilities on Anaconda include the East and West Side Post Offices and a Joint Military Mail Terminal, responsible for more than 325,000 pounds of incoming and 85,000 pounds of outgoing mail each week. Additionally, the post offices serve an average of 1,800 customers each week.

The outgoing process is even more complex. 'Free' mail weighing less than 16 ounces is processed by contractors, official and certified mail by Army personnel and all personal packages over 16 ounces are processed by 24 more ILO Airmen at the East or West Side Post Offices who prepare it for handling by JMMT contractors for the next outgoing flight.

Albuquerque, N.M., native 1st Lt. Lewis Taylor deployed here from the 65th Communications Squadron at Lajes Field, Azores, to serve as officer in charge of Army and Air Force post offices here. He oversees the ILO Airmen, and he's proud of them. "We're the first group of Airmen to work postal in an 'ILO' setting," he said.

"We've also decreased the number of postal claims from 30 in 2006 to just three for 2007," added East Side postmaster Tech. Sgt. Victor Negrón, who deployed from the 374th CS at Yokota AB, Japan. "We're open seven days a week, and we put in about 58 hours a week while the doors are open and another 14 when they're closed." Negrón hails from Jackson Heights [Queens], N.Y.

More than just moving the mail, the Airmen are also responsible for the safety and efficiency of mail service and personnel, and they accomplish both with thorough inspections of mail content. Master Sgt. Cedrick Palmore deployed from the 435th CS at Ramstein AB, Germany, to serve as the Airmen's superintendent.

"Our Airmen have posted a 95 percent improvement, removing restricted and contraband items," Palmore said. "It's important to stop these items because they hold up the entire delivery process and are potentially dangerous."

Equally valuable to customers is Combat Postal's helping hand during redeployment. Everyone's done the "bag drag" before, and most have wished for fewer bags to haul. Policy changes are helping further reduce what must be hauled to and from the AOR by service members. They just have to follow the rules.

"If your orders authorize excess baggage, you may transport them by either hand-carrying them or mail-

ing them," said Maj. Brad McDonald, comptroller for the 332nd AEW. "In order to be reimbursed, you must provide a copy of the receipt and the weight, but you will not be reimbursed for anything over your authorized excess allowance."

Palmore explained how to get through the process.

Don't seal packages prior to postal inspection - specific guidance for non-mailable items is available at the post

office and on the Web at [www.balad.afnews.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-070419-029.pdf](http://www.balad.afnews.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-070419-029.pdf). Soft-sided parcels like mobility and duffel bags must be boxed so their straps don't tangle up mail-handling equipment. Put the bags in a cardboard box so the handles are not exposed. It's just as good to ship belongings in either a cardboard packing box or one of the plastic 'tough boxes' or footlockers available at the exchange.

When customers ship their gear home now, they'll do it from an improved facility. During their tour of duty here, postal Airmen have not only set records in the extraordinary amount of mail they've processed, they've improved the process in an extensive remodeling of the inspection and handling areas to increase efficiency and throughput. They're here to help, and they've demonstrated what motivated Airmen can do.

The Army praised the ILO postal Airmen. "They're the most professional Airmen I've had the pleasure to work with," said 22nd PSB Command Sgt. Maj. Earlene Lavender. "They've made huge improvements in both efficiency and throughput ... they'll never know just how positive an impact they've made on morale in the field."

The battalion executive officer [deputy commander] concurred. "They've far exceeded our expectations," said Maj. Michael McTigue. "These 43 ILO Airmen replaced some 70-odd Soldiers this past October and processed mail through the four highest months of mail volume since the war began ... truly impressive."



Two Soldiers enter the East Side Post Office April 17 at LSA Anaconda, Iraq. The three postal facilities on Anaconda are responsible for more than 325,000 pounds of incoming and 85,000 pounds of outgoing mail each week, serving an average of 1,800 customers.

# Medical logisticians train Iraqi soldiers

by Sgt. KaRonda Fleming

Anaconda Times Staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - Soldiers from the Class VIII Taji National Depot Iraqi Army warehouse attended a weeklong, in-depth training program beginning April 15.

Currently, there is not a medical logistics system set up throughout the Iraqi Army, said 2nd Lt. Kelsha D. Weaver, the deputy support operations for the 32nd Multifunctional Medical Battalion, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C.

By coming to the class, five IA soldiers gain the concept of how to set up their own medical logistics in order to supply the Iraqi divisions throughout Iraq, she said. There are 10 Iraqi Divisions and five reserve supporting units, which are equivalent to the Army's Forward Distribution Teams.

"If they see our operations and how we interplay with our FDT's, then they can get ideas on how they can distribute their Class VIII items out to the Iraqi Army," Weaver said, from Lafayette, La.

She said, as of now, only three of the 10 divisions have previously picked up medical supplies from Taji.

Weaver said "When they have a system of supplying their divisions established, then we will know this class benefited the Iraqi Army."

The 32nd MMB stores level I, (small company) and level II (battalion size), aide station supplies, which are distributed to servicemembers throughout the theater of Iraq, Weaver said.

Second Lt. Ali Faesal, the officer in charge of the TND warehouse in Taji said, "It (training) is helping me to learn how to manage the Class VIII."

He said he learned how to make an inventory of supplies to include

the shipping, receiving, and storage. He also learned new classification methods.

Another concept he learned was how he could ask the medical logisticians general for items he needs.

With the numerous items stored at the warehouse, the Soldiers of the 32nd MMB complete a 10 percent inventory each month along with a 100 percent vault and cage check every six months, to verify and fix any discrepancies with the electronic inventory said Spc. Zatic S. Davis, a medical logistician, from San Antonio, Texas.

"If there are discrepancies, we must research all items and write up a memorandum explaining what happened to the item," Davis said.

The paperwork tells the higher command what happened to the items, he said.

The Iraqi Army soldiers were taught how to count and inventory items through on-the-job training. They were then taught how to do the research and other mathematics when mistakes are found.

Faesal said it is important to take the experiences learned from the 32nd MMB, because they are very knowledgeable about their job.

"I enjoyed the classes because every day I had something new to learn here in medical logistics," Faesal said. "I will reflect the views that I got from the American Soldiers, trying to tell my unit just what I learned at the American base."

"We have come a long way with this partnership and training with the Iraqi soldiers," said Lt. Col. William M. Stubbs, 32nd MMB commander, during an awards presentation completing the training.

Stubbs said "We've had the opportunity to meet with the Iraqi Army's surgeon general, and he is very appreciative of this battalion's



Photos by Sgt. KaRonda Fleming

Staff Sgt. Jimmy L. Mitchell, the storage NCOIC for the 32nd Multifunctional Medical Battalion, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C., shows 2nd Lt. Ali Faesal, the officer in charge of the Class VIII Taji National Depot Iraqi Army warehouse how to understand the paperwork for conducting warehouse inventory.



Second Lt. Kelsha D. Weaver (center), the deputy support operations for the 32nd Multifunctional Medical Battalion based out of Fort Bragg, N.C., and Spc. Zatic S. Davis (right), a medical logistician explain the importance of a flammable material storage area to 2nd Lt. Ali Faesal (left), the officer in charge of the Class VIII Taji National Depot Iraqi Army warehouse during a week-long training class held at Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Balad, Iraq.

## Children

Continued from Page 10

ed to do the same before redeploying.

"It is just an extension of our legacy," he said. "It was an opportunity to provide a positive experience for the community."

The day was just as much for the community as it was for the Soldiers. Leytham said it was important to him that the Soldiers understood that what they do over here makes a difference.

"When you hand a kid a stuffed animal or a toy, and you see the smiles, it makes it all worthwhile," he said.

Ramaeker, who did a lot of the coordination for the effort, said she was excited to help. For her, it was all about the children.

"They are just kids," she said. "If we can help out in any way, we should."

Leytham said, the unit ultimately wanted to show the Iraqi's that the military is here to help and is very much invested in the future of their country.

That thought was echoed by the Soldiers of the 1034th CSSB.



Photos by Sgt. Amanda Solfano

Soldiers with the 1034th CSSB unload packages off a truck to distribute to the children of Bakir village.

"I hope us going out there could help foster a better relationship with the community," Saylor said. "We are here to make a handshake across the wire, and hopefully one day we will not need that wire."



A young child holds a stuffed animal she received April 16 from the Soldiers of the 1034th CSSB.



# WET-N-WILD

photos and story by Sgt. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

## ANACONDA KICKS OFF SUMMER WITH A SPLASH DURING 2ND ANNUAL WATER BOTTLE RAFT RACE



LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - Amidst a "sea" of pirate flags and modestly held-together contraptions, the sounds and splashes of Anaconda's second annual Raft Race could be heard at the outdoor pool here April 29.

For the event, participants were challenged to build rafts using only water bottles, duct tape, 550-cord and one wooden rod.

Contenders built their rafts prior to the race, and were unable to test their vessels' strength beforehand. Each team

consisted of four members; one person to ride the raft, one person pushing

or pulling it, and a person at each end of the pool. Raft riders had to navigate the full length of the pool, collect their team's flag at one end, then paddle back again before their time was clocked.

Contestants were judged on speed and best raft design. Winners for best time received a TV, while the team with best raft design won calling cards.

Staying true to their team's name, 'Fastest Raft,' an Air Force team, won first place for best time. Team members were Maj. Matthew C. West, Capt. Charles B. Toth, Staff Sgt. Kristy Zentkovich, and Senior Airman Jennifer Hull.

