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Desert Voice Magazine
Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

December 5, 2007

***Preventing
a chemical
catastrophe***

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On the cover

Soldiers from the 44th Chemical Company train at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to react in a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear attack Nov. 9. For the full story, turn to page 6.

Photo by Spc. Wes Landrum

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DV
Desert Voice
Magazine

Motor vehicle rollovers affect combat effectiveness

Story by

Chief Warrant Officer Willie Chance
Third Army/USARCENT Safety

In fiscal year 2007, Third Army/U.S. Army Central had 52 motor vehicle rollover accidents involving servicemembers, civilians and contractors. Those accidents resulted in 63 injuries and two fatalities. FY 2008 has just begun and so has this year's rollover accident tally with eight in the first eight weeks.

We must do a better job preventing all motor vehicle accidents, especially rollovers. According to the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, people involved in rollover accidents are 70 percent more likely to die than those involved in non-rollover accidents. That is a staggering statistic. Ask yourself how an accident like this could happen in your organization. Are the personnel properly trained on the vehicles they drive and do they display a defensive driving behavior? Are they aware of the factors that affect vehicle stability as listed below?

- Speed: Possibly the most important factor which affects a vehicle's stability. As the vehicle's speed increases, centrifugal force increases and driver response times decrease. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration data reveals 40 percent of fatal rollover crashes involved excessive speed.

- Driver behavior: NHTSA data attributes nearly 85 percent of all rollover-related fatalities to single-vehicle crashes. 90 percent of these crashes involved routine driving maneuvers (going straight or negotiating a curve) at the time of the crash. USARCENT data implies similar trends in Army motor vehicle rollover accidents. This suggests that driver behavior is a key factor in preventing rollover crashes.

- Fatigue-Impaired Driving: Inadequate rest or harmful drugs negatively affect your judgment and physical coordination, making you more likely to lose control of your



Courtesy photo

Last year, more than 60 people were injured in vehicle rollover accidents.

vehicle.

- Center of gravity: Secure payloads as close as possible to the lateral centerline of the truck or trailer bed.

- A vehicle with a high center of gravity and a short wheelbase (such as USARCENT's leased sport utility vehicles) is less stable and more prone to rollovers.

- Panic-like steering: Many rollovers occur when drivers overcorrect their steering as a panic reaction to an emergency or a wheel going off the pavement's edge. If the vehicle leaves the road, gently steer it back onto the roadway. This reduces the risk of pinching the tire sidewalls against the edge of the road and flipping the vehicle.

- Curve radius and roadway slope: This can generate a centrifugal force that rolls a vehicle sideways. In most single-vehicle rollovers, 95%, are tripped. Tripping occurs when the tires on one side of the vehicle strike an object such as a pothole, curb or even soft soil on the side of the road.

- Vehicles towing trailers: These vehicles are much more prone to roll over as a result of the trailer's exaggerating motion in curves and

during sudden steering maneuvers.

Drivers should be trained to pull trailers prior to receiving any missions involving trailers.

- Vehicle condition and preparation: Your vehicle must be in good operating condition before starting your mission. Pay attention to the tire condition, tread and air pressure during Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services and insure that all four tires match in tread pattern and belt characteristics.

- Leaders: Periodically educate soldiers on rollover prevention as part of the unit vehicle safety program. The HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer is an excellent tool for teaching Soldiers about rollover prevention by letting them experience one in a controlled environment. Apply composite risk management during all operations, addressing risk concerns during mission briefings.

- Drivers: Drive responsibly! Complete your missions without accidents.

- Passengers: Be alert for dangerous situations and inform the driver when your comfort level is exceeded. Don't become a statistic because of the "sin of silence". It's your life. 

Department of Navy senior leaders visit Sailors, Marines in Kuwait

Story by
Sgt. 1st Class Reeba Critser
Third Army/USARCENT Public Affairs

Department of the Navy senior leaders visited Sailors and Marines at Kuwait's Life Support Area Nov. 21.

Spending Thanksgiving with their troops were Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter, Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James T. Conway and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent.

Wearing a khaki shirt and trousers, combat boots and a Marine Corps utility cover, Winter first met with individually augmented Sailors at Camp Virginia before having lunch with Sailors and Marines at the LSA.

He entertained the Sailors and Marines and talked about their hometowns and what they missed most.

"You don't see the Secretary of the Navy every day," said Cpl. Jose Jimenez, with the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command section at LSA and a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. "It was great that he spent his time



photo by Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox

Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter meets with Sailors and Marines before heading to Iraq to spend Thanksgiving with servicemembers in Iraq.



Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox

Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps Gen. James T. Conway and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Carlton W. Kent meet with Marines before heading to Iraq to spend Thanksgiving with Marines in Iraq.

with us."

Later in the day, Conway and Kent visited Marines at the LSA.

"Things are going good [in the Global War on Terrorism]," Conway told the Marines. "Iraq's a dangerous place, but it's incredible to see how it's progressed since December 04, what the Sailors and Marines have done."

Kent said his nephew is on his second tour in Iraq.

"First time he was there, [the Marines] were kicking butts," Kent said of his nephew's unit. "On this rotation, they're kissing babies. It's a big change."

He told the Marines about the Corps' expansion plan.

"We have been authorized to grow the Marine Corps by 25,000," Conway said. "We'll accomplish this in a five-year period. We'll increase our recruiting goal by 5,000 every year."

He ensured the quality of incoming Marines would remain high.

During the question and answer phase, Chief Warrant Officer Randy Martinez, personnel action officer for Third Army/U.S. Army Central, asked

if civilians were authorized to wear the Marine Corps cammies.

"It's approved," Conway said.

Kent added, "Civilians can wear it, but they must maintain our standards to wear the uniform."

A bonus was when Conway showed the new Marine Corps physical training uniform to the Marines in attendance.

"We changed the color green on the uniform to the green of Belleau Wood," Conway said.

The new uniform will feature a light weight jacket which Marines can wear with civilian attire to help encourage recruitment.

"It's going to the wounded Warriors first," Conway said. "Then to boot camps and the rest of the Corps."

Conway and Kent also discussed reenlistments and bonuses.

"We don't pay as much for an enlistment as other services," Conway said. "But we do pay a good reenlistment bonus to keep our good Marines."

All three leaders headed to Iraq next to spend Thanksgiving with more deployed Sailors and Marines. 

Human resources unit makes historic deployment

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Anishka Calder
1st TSC Public Affairs

When Soldiers deploy to hostile areas, they are authorized to wear a combat patch for their unit assignment while deployed. The 8th Human Resources Sustainment Center out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, held a ceremony Oct. 13 during which Soldiers in the unit had their combat patch placed on their right shoulder sleeve by Col. Lorraine Tyacke, the Director for the 8th HRSC.

The unit activated in September 2006 and was given a patch that was originally approved for the 8th Field Army Support Command during the Vietnam War. After the unit's activation, work went into assigning Soldiers to the new unit, in preparation for making history as the first HRSC to get deployed.

"We gave birth to our unit in September of last year. We had a handful of people and we did a lot of leg work trying to get the unit filled with the right rank, the right military occupational specialty and the right experience," said Sgt. Maj. Ben Cavazos, the 8th HRSC sergeant major. "Within a year we were ready to deploy."

Soldiers of the 8th HRSC were delighted at the opportunity to serve in the capacity to make a difference on the war on terrorism, and to receive a patch that signifies wartime service.

"This patch ceremony means a lot to me because this is my first deployment," said Pfc. Aaisha Shakir, a native of Charleston, S.C., and a human resource specialist from 8th HRSC. I have a combat patch now that says I actually did something significant, and it's the first, so it means a lot to me."

"This ceremony is extremely significant to me. This is my first deployment and my first combat patch. I'm very proud of it and I'm very proud of the people who I serve with," added Lt. Col. Brigitte Williams, the postal operations division chief for 8th HRSC. "I woke up this morning thinking about it, and I've been thinking about it all day long.



Colonel Lorraine Tyacke, the director for the 8th Human Resources Sustainment Center, gives a Soldier his combat patch during a ceremony Oct. 13 at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The unit, based out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, is currently deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

I know days on down the road when I retire, that it will be something that I look back on."

Not every deployment comes with a patch ceremony. Even some of the Soldiers who were deployed before never had the opportunity to have their combat patch placed on their right shoulder sleeve by the unit commander.

"Out of three deployments, this is the first patching ceremony that I've been to. After my last deployment to Iraq and being in charge of casualty operations, I realized that this (the military) is really where I need to be and what I need to be doing," said Warrant Officer Billy Fritz, a human resources technician from 8th HRSC. "I love my job."

"I've been deployed to Panama, Somalia and during Desert Shield/Desert Storm, but this is my first time deploying

with young Soldiers. It (the deployment) is different and very unique, and I am just happy that I am a part of it," said Cavazos, a native of Kaneohe, Hawaii.

The combat patch signifies wartime service; it is testament of the camaraderie and experience that these Soldiers share, and is an identifying factor for a specific time in history.

"Here is where you establish relationships that will last a lifetime. The combat patch is a way of saying 'I've been there, I've got the shirt and I'm wearing it,'" said Cavazos. "When you have someone who shares the same combat patch as you, it shows that you have gone through the same things. You have experienced some of the good days and some of the not so good days, and that is something that folks who have never joined the armed forces will never understand." 

44th Chem

*Story and photos by
Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer*

Two trucks rolled up around 8 a.m. One pulled a generator. The other carried cylindrical objects. Teams climbed down from the vehicles, surveyed the situation and then got to work. It was time for the 44th Chemical Company to clean up a mess.

Soldiers from the company conducted a simulated mission in the Zone 7 container yard at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Nov. 9. For the scenario, an unidentified substance was found in one of the cargo containers and the team was sent to contain the spill and identify the substance.

The training keeps the Soldiers on top of their game, said Capt. Timothy Graber, 44th Chem. Co. commander.

"You never know when an attack could occur," he said. "We have to be ready to respond in a moment's



44th Chemical Company Soldiers set up a mobile shower system during a training exercise at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Nov. 9. The shower is used during the decontamination process.



Sgt. Jason Mangus is checked for radioactive particles during a training exercise at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait Nov. 9. The check is done after the person has stepped out of the shower in the decontamination process.

n trains to prevent disaster

notice.”

The team set up a command post and the decontamination areas first, making sure they were not downwind of the contaminated area. After the set up, they proceeded to the contamination site.

A two-man reconnaissance team entered the contaminated area first. Dressed in protective suits, they laid out their equipment and began to identify the substance.

Graber said each person’s job is important. Each person contributes in their own special way whether it is the reconnaissance team, the sample team or the decontamination squad.

“One team cannot work without the other,” Graber said. “We are like a machine in some respects. If one part is out of kilter, the machine will break down.”

With the recon team’s job done, the sample team went into the cargo container. When they entered the structure, they quickly noticed the overturned cylinder and the powdery substance scattered on the floor.

Staff Sgt. Catherine Jones, team leader for third platoon, 44th Chem. Co., said once the substance is identified, they collect samples. She said the three-man team she heads up collects as much of the unknown substance as they can to process it further.

“We’ll go in and take a specimen of the substance,” Jones said. “It’s a very important step because we have to make sure it does not get out and make people sick, or worse, kill them.”

Once they’ve collected the samples, they decontaminate themselves. A decontamination shower is set up for the sample team to walk through. One by one and in their suits, they step into the shower. While there, they scrub off the contaminated particles. As they exit,



Spc. Jacob Borden seals an unknown liquid substance during a training exercise at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Nov. 9. During the exercise, Borden’s job was to identify and collect samples of unknown substances.

they are met by the decontamination squad who helps them get out of the suits. Upon delivery of the unknown substance to the proper authorities, their mission is over.

While it is only training, Jones said it is to be taken seriously because anything can happen at a

moment’s notice.

“We are in a combat zone,” she said. “The enemy may have access to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons. We need to be at the top of our game so we can prevent (contaminants) from spreading and infecting people.” 

A symbol of a nation:

Story by
Ahmad Al-Khaled
Kuwait Times staff writer

Flags have traditionally marked ships, castles, and land. But beyond their use as a sign for identification, flags have come to represent the indelible markings of people's love for their homeland. Flags can imbue emotions ranging from fear and pride to joy and tears.

The Kuwaiti flag is no different, for Kuwaitis it is a symbol of their identity.

"The national flag represents the people of a nation, and ours came to mean so much more to us after the invasion and occupation that we survived. Since liberation we hold that flag very dear to our hearts," said Jenan Mohammed.

The earliest known flag of Kuwait was called Solaimme. It was a plain red flag, rectangular in shape, with a white zigzag pattern along the far left edge of the flag. It dates back from about 1746 and is known to have been flown by the second Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah I. He is said to have adopted the flag as a way of identifying ships in the large Kuwaiti fleet which is thought to have numbered around 800 by the late 1700s.

The white zigzag pattern served to distinguish Kuwait's red flag from the many red flags flown by Gulf ships in the 1700s and 1800s. Red flags date back as early as 700 AD, having been carried by Arab conquerors into Andalusia and North Africa as early as the 711 AD. When the Ottoman Empire was at the height of its power, all its territories throughout the empire were required to fly the Ottoman flag, which was represented by a crescent and star on a red or green background. Although Kuwait was never under Ottoman rule, its ships sailed under the Ottoman flag beginning in 1871



Courtesy photo

Kuwaiti boys partake in festivities during a recent flag celebration.

through 1914.

The Amir, Sheikh Abdullah II decided to fly the Ottoman flag after Kuwaiti ships had been harassed by Ottoman governors in foreign ports. By flying the Ottoman flag, Kuwaiti ships could avoid harassment as well as evade the taxes and customs duties

which were imposed on all non-Ottoman ships. In the early 1900s, after several Kuwaiti ships were seized by the British, Kuwait, under the leadership of Amir Sheikh Mubarek, adopted a national flag which did not carry the Ottoman markings and instead adopted a flag that said 'Kuwait' in white

*"... Ours came to
pation... Since lib*

The Kuwaiti flag



used the French spelling 'Koweit.'

The old flags were quite interesting, especially the triangular ones. But I like our flag as it is now, as it is our Independence flag," said Yusef Abdullah.

In 1961, Kuwait adopted its current flag under the rule of Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem. The decision to fly a new flag was made on June 19, 1961, which is the day Kuwait gained full independence from its status as a British Protectorate. The flag was a twist on the Arab Revolt Flag designed by Sharif Hussein who fought in 1916 for the expulsion of the Ottomans from the region.

Hussein succeeded in spreading his flag's colors to destinations throughout the Arab world, where they later became known as the colors representing Pan Arabism. "Our flag is similar to flags in other Arab states. We are proud of the colors which were taken up by the Hashemites and we continue to fly the colors of Arabia today," said Faisal Ali.

On the morning of November 24, 1961, the current flag of Kuwait flew overhead for the very first time. The black trapezoid of Kuwait's modern flag represents the defeat of enemies, red signifies the blood of sacrifice, white represents Arab achievements, and green signifies fertility.

"When Kuwaiti soldiers flew the first Kuwaiti flag after the liberation on Qaruh Island, I felt a new attachment to the flag," said Khaled Issa. "We all now understand the blood of sacrifice, our flag means a lot to me now."

Editor's note: This story first appeared in the Nov. 24 issue of the Kuwait Times. 

mean so much more to us after the invasion and occupation, we hold that flag very dear to our hearts."

Jenan Mohammed

Arabic lettering on a red background.

The British, who had signed an agreement with Kuwait in 1899 making Kuwait a British protectorate, seized the Kuwaiti ships because they were sailing under the Ottoman flag, which was in direct conflict with the protectorate agreement. By 1914, the

Ottoman flag was no longer in use. The flag of 1914 took several forms. Flags flown under the state moniker were triangular in shape. Government offices flew a square-shaped flag and ships flew the rectangular version. On some of the flags, Kuwait was written in English and Arabic, while others

Bringing a message of peace to all

Story and photos by Spc. Wes Landrum
Desert Voice staff writer

The man rose from his seat and walked toward the center of the room. The audience that had gathered rose to their feet as they clapped for him. Humbly, he slowly raised his mangled hand to thank the crowd for their generosity. A smile came across Dave Roever's scarred face as he began to tell his tale of agony, despair and, ultimately, redemption.

"I want all of you to know that I thank you for doing what you're doing over here," Roever began. "Because of you, my wife slept soundly in her bed. Because of you, my grandchildren slept peacefully in their beds. I am proud of you."

Roever's tale began in 1969 on a river in Vietnam. A petty officer second class at the time, Roever was the front gunner on a patrol boat. A firefight had erupted, and he was given the task of clearing a thicket to make sure no booby traps went off. That's when his life changed forever.

"I had a white phosphorous grenade in my hand getting ready to throw it when a Vietnamese sniper's bullet pierced the grenade," Roever said to a silent crowd. "The grenade was six inches from my face when it went off."

Roever explained to the crowd that a white phosphorous grenade can reach temperatures of more than 5,000 degrees. He suffered severe burns to the right side of his face, ear, arms and body. Roever said he feared the worst when he looked down at his feet and saw part of his face on his boots.

"I was making plans to meet the man I grew up believing in right there on that riverbank," Roever said. "That man was Jesus Christ."

Roever spent more than a year at Brooks Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. The one thing Roever said he feared the most was looking at his wife.

"There was a guy in the bed next to me with 100 percent third-degree burns all over his body," he said. "His wife walked in, took one look at him and threw her wedding ring down



Vietnam Veteran Dave Roever speaks to a capacity crowd at the Zone 1 Chapel at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Nov. 29. Roever concluded his tour of the Middle East with two motivational talks at the desert installation.

on the bed. She said she would be embarrassed to walk anywhere with him.

"I was scared to death thinking my wife would do the same thing to me," Roever continued. "But, she walked in and kissed my charred head and said, 'Welcome home, Davey.'"

The message Roever said he wanted to get out was about choices. Everyone has choices to make. Whether you make good choices or bad choices is up to you, he said.

"Married men, you can be promiscuous while you're over here. She won't know," Roever said. "That's a choice. But whatever you do, be prepared for the repercussions."

Roever looked at the crowd and told them that it was time to make the right choices.

"Call your wife, men, tell them that you love them," he said. "Better yet, send them flowers and tell them thank you for keeping the homefront secure."

Senior Airman Darick Alexander, a chaplain assistant with Detention 1, Expeditionary Mission Support Group, Army Life Support Area-Kuwait, said Roever's speech made him think a lot about his life and the choices he's made.

"(Roever) is someone who impacts everyone he's around," he said. "What really impacted me was I just got to see a hero. The things that he's gone through – it's horrendous, yet he made

it through and showed true character."

Roever ended his talk with a story of his debriding process. During debriding, burned skin is removed to make way for new skin to grow. It's the most painful process Roever said he's ever been through. After the first time, he told them he would not go through it again. Yet the next morning, the gurney was rolled in to pick him up.

"I fought to keep them from getting me on that gurney," Roever said, with tears in his eyes. "There was an orderly who came and picked me up in his muscular arms and carried me to that room, saying 'Don't worry. It will be alright big man.'"

Roever continued saying Rosey, as the muscular man was called, stood by and watched as the debriding process went on.

Roever said, at one point he looked at Rosey and could see he had been crying at seeing him subjected to that terrible process. After the debriding was done, Rosey again approached Roever.

"Then he came up to me, with tears in his eyes, and picked me up out of that nasty water and carried me back to my room, again saying, 'Don't worry. It will be alright, big man.'"

Roever concluded by telling everyone in the room that he was there to be a Rosey to all of them.

"I'm here to tell you 'Don't worry. It will be alright,' he said. **A**

Just One Question...

"What does the Army-Navy game do to the morale of the camp?"

CAMP ARIFJAN PRESENTS

PEARL HARBOR

EAGLE CASH 'DIAMOND' 5K



07 December 0600 hrs
Zone 1 Fitness Center

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"I think it raises morale."

Sgt. Shannon Cotten
 2nd Transportation Company
 Vehicle operator
 Orlando, Fla.



"I feel proud, the Navy always beats the Army, so if we win that would be great."

Spc. Tyrone Holland
 109th Transportation Company
 Vehicle operator
 Chesapeake, Va.



"It's good. It's something to look forward to. Sometimes things here get monotonous."

Petty Officer 1st Class Leonard Spears
 Theater Field Confinement Facility
 Administrator
 Birmingham, Ala.



"It's going to be a good time. Everybody will have fun tonight."

Chief Petty Officer Patrick Patten
 Navy Customs Battalion Tango
 Quality assurance
 Longview, Wash.



"It's good for the troops. It takes their mind off of everyday business."

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Erik Lathrop
 Logistics Task Force 10
 Night battle Captain
 Fort Eustis, Va.

Why I serve: Staff Sgt. Armando Soria
 1-167th Infantry
 Light wheeled vehicle mechanic



The Dallas, Texas native explains why he chose to join the military.

"Men before me have gone to fight for freedom and I do it to honor them."

What's happening around Kuwait ...



(above) United States Senator Jim Webb (D-Va) shares a laugh with Sgt. Danny McNeil, a truck commander with the 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

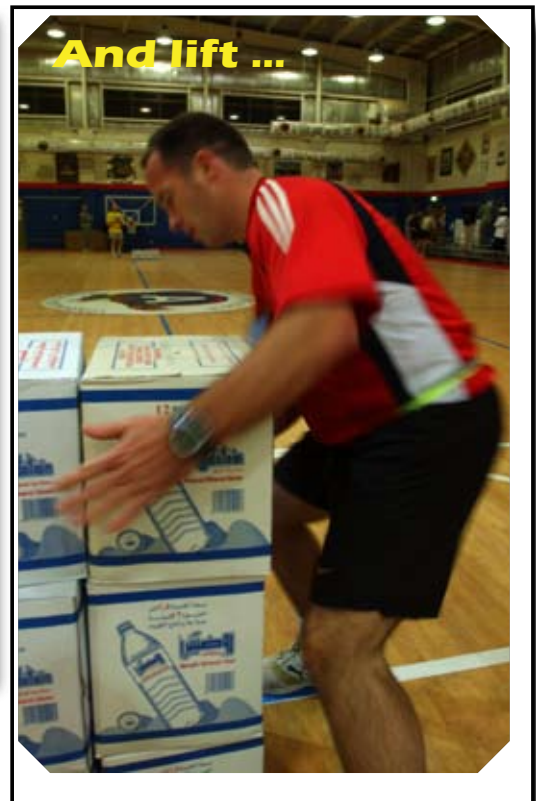


Photo by Pfc. Christopher Grammer

Stephen O'Neil, commanding officer at Operation Stand Down, British Royal Navy, from Glasgow Scotland, lifts a box of water during The Amazing Fitness Race II at the Zone 1 Physical Fitness Center Nov. 30.



Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Chris W. Cox

Rear Adm Mark D. Harnitchek and Brig. Gen. James R. Hodge wear their respective academy jerseys during a cake-cutting ceremony Nov. 30. The first Army-Navy flag football game took place Dec. 1 with each service claiming a victory. For the results of the games, check our Dec. 12 edition.

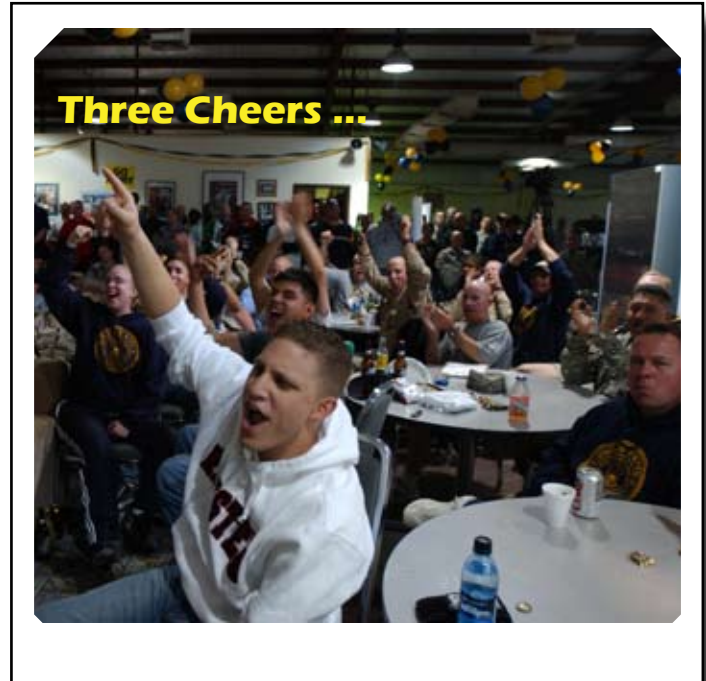


Photo by Pfc. Christopher Grammer

Army and Navy fans cheer on their respective teams at Camp Arifjan's Zone 6 MWR Tent Dec. 1. A capacity crowd witnessed Navy beat Army 38-3.