

# AnacondaTimes

JANUARY 2, 2008

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA



Photo by Staff Sgt. Dave Lankford

## CAR visits Christmas Day

Chief of Army Reserve visits with troops

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Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

## USO Holiday Troop Visit

Entertainers bring holiday cheer to LSAA residents

Page 8



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

## Soldiers train on CROWS

System helps keep gunners in vehicles safe

Page 10



Photo by Staff Sgt. Dave Lankford

**SHEIK JAMILE, Iraq** – Capt. Jonwayne Lindsey, the 2-320th FA executive officer, holds a Kalashnikov rifle found during a raid on a local farmhouse north of Balad recently. The AK-47 is the most popular weapon used not only by the insurgency, but for home defense in Iraq. The ownership of weapons is authorized with proper documentation; however, if links to insurgent groups are found all weapons may be confiscated.

## ‘King of Battle’ doing much more than firing Howitzers

by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny

1st BCT, 101st ABN

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq**—Throughout the early years of our country, artillerymen were considered the Army’s elite. Their pay was above the rate for infantrymen and even the cavalry. In 1784, when all of the Army was abolished except for a single detachment of 80 men to guard government stores, those men were artillerymen. Thus the artillery is the only part of the Army which has been in continuous service since the revolution.

Today’s artilleryman still finds himself acquiring targets and firing rounds, but in today’s fight, he is using more skill than putting eyes on target or pulling

“It is amazing to see the professionalism that these Soldiers have. I see the fruits of their labor each and every day.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Edward Estep  
2-320th FAR

the lanyards on his gun.

The Bastogne Brigade’s “King of Battle”, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment (FAR) still operate their howitzers and utilize their proficient skills to put “steel on target,” but with the vast area of operations the brigade covers, these Soldiers are also conducting operations which are usually associated with infantrymen.

Just as their sister battalions located to the north of them in

the Salah ad Din Province, the “Balls of the Eagle” Soldiers conduct combat operations as well as assist the Iraqi people located around Logistical Support Area Anaconda (LSAA) and the battle space to its south.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Edward Estep, 2-320th FAR, his Soldiers are making a difference everyday in their area of operation, regardless if they are inside here, or are conducting operations “outside the

wire.”

“It is amazing to see the professionalism that these Soldiers have,” said Estep. “I see the fruits of their labor each and everyday.”

For the Soldiers whose “fox-hole” keeps them within the boundaries of LSAA, their fight is as important as those Soldiers who are out in their Humvees or conducting dismounted patrols.

“Sometimes it is easy for the Soldiers who aren’t out in the battle space everyday to think that their job isn’t important, but to the contrary,” said Lt. Col. John Dunleavy, commander of 2nd Bn., 320th FAR. “Ask any of those guys on the ground and they would tell you the same

See KING, Page 7



# 'At ease' with the 316th CSM



Command Sgt. Maj. Stacey E. Davis

Happy New Year to all! As we look ahead to the challenges which await us in 2008, let us, as leaders, continue to set the standard—and lead by example—in both word and deed. On each one of our New Years resolution list should be a commitment to the following:

- Leading by example, becoming someone that servicemembers want to emulate.
- Enforcing uniform, appear-

ance and performance standards without exception.

- Letting servicemembers know your expectations.

- Conducting after action reviews that focus on learning rather than placing blame for mistakes.

- Knowing your servicemembers' jobs; for doing so will gain their respect.

- Observing their performance and making on-the-spot corrections or adjustments to improve their performance.

- Being accessible, letting those you lead know that they can contact you on and off duty.

- Counseling them in private on performance, writing it down, and maintaining a counseling file.

- Giving them added responsibilities which will help build their character and leadership skills.

- Creating competition which will enhance camaraderie and improve morale.

- Attending all meetings so you can better plan your unit's or section's mission.

- Knowing your personnel... their personalities and treating them fairly.

These are just some of the items which should be on your list for they are the hallmarks which define you as a professional and as a leader. Remember, military leadership begins with what the leader must BE...the values and attributes that shape a leader's character. Your skills are those things you KNOW how to do, your competence in everything from the technical side of your job to the people skills required. But character and knowledge—while absolutely necessary—are not enough. You cannot be effective, you cannot be a leader, until you apply what you know, until you act and DO what you must.

Becoming a leader involves developing all aspects of you.

This includes adopting and living your respective services' values as well as developing the attributes and learning the skills of a military leader. Only through this type of self-development will you become a confident and competent leader of character.

As I have stated on many occasions, being a leader is not easy, because there is no cookie-cutter solution to leadership. And there is no shortcut to being successful at it. However, with mentoring, experience, and time, you can and will improve and ultimately become an effective leader. Our nation and those you lead are counting on to do so, and so am I.

Until then, sustain the victory and continue to always place our servicemembers and civilians serving here with us first.

Stacey E. Davis  
Command Sergeant Major  
316th ESC

Command  
Sergeant  
Major



NCOs  
lead the  
way!

## Provost Marshal Office: Weekly police blotter

**Week of Dec. 16- 22**

**The PMO conducted:** The Provost Marshal Office conducted; (209) security checks, (30) traffic stops, issued (30) DD Form 1408 Armed Forces Traffic Ticket, registered (121) vehicles on the installation, and (11) Common Access Cards were reported lost.

**The PMO is currently investigating:** (8) Larceny Government/Personal Property cases.

### PMO Recommendations: VEHICLE OPERATIONS

Yielding at traffic circles means allowing the vehicle currently in the traffic circle to proceed before you proceed. In other words, the vehicle

currently in the traffic circle has the right away. Always wear your seatbelt. All bicycle operators ensure you also obey the rules of the road.

**Crime Prevention:** Label your personal equipment. Engrave or stencil your personal property with an additional identification number, i.e. last four of your social security number or any additional numbers/letters that will make it easier to identify.

**Lost and Found:** To find out if your lost item has been turned into PMO, contact PMO/Investigations at 443-6105.

by: Air Force Staff Sgt. Marita Jones, PMO



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Marita Jones

**Airman 1st Class Brock Wilson, Provost Marshal Office, enforces the traffic and speeding laws in Anaconda.**

## ANACONDA TIMES

316th ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch

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### Contributing Public Affairs Offices

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing  
12th Combat Aviation Brigade  
402nd Army Field Support Brigade  
20th Engineer Brigade  
213th Area Support Group  
1/82nd Brigade Combat Team  
3rd Sustainment Brigade  
7th Sustainment Brigade  
507th Corps Support Group  
1st Sustainment Brigade  
CJSOTF-AP



# Tools identify Soldiers' high-risk behavior

Courtesy story  
U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center

**FORT RUCKER, Ala.**— Army officials recently released two innovative tools designed to determine a Soldier's accident potential.

The Accident Risk Assessment for Individuals allows Soldiers to determine their level of risk, while the Leader's Accident Risk Assessment of Subordinates allows supervisors to assess their subordinates' level of risk. The tools promote interaction between Soldiers and their first-line leaders, the most effective risk assessment and risk mitigation tool our Army employs.

"As leaders, identifying and knowing those Soldiers who are high risk is essential in preventing accidents," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston. "Disciplined leaders engaged at all echelons immediately promote a safer operational environment."

Based on extensive research, the U.S. Army Combat Readiness/Safety Center reports that human error is the largest single component of Army ground, aviation and off-duty accidents, accounting for 80 percent of mishaps. The majority of findings in accidents investigated and reviewed by the USACRC include lack of discipline, complacency, overconfidence and lack of training.

"We know, through all the accident data processed by the USACRC, that the engagement of leaders provides a direct, positive impact in the reduction of accidents caused by human error," said Brig. Gen. Bill Forrester,



director of Army safety and commanding general of the USACRC. "Our goal is to use these assessment tools to raise awareness within our formations of who is our next accident victim."

The Accident Risk Assessment for Individuals is a self-awareness tool for use by every Soldier at every level within the Army. Upon completion of the assessment, safety officials are confident that Soldiers gain an enhanced comprehension of factors responsible for accidents.

"This tool will give Soldiers better awareness of previously identified high-risk events, empower them to assess their own activities and offer suggestions to adjust their actions to decrease the potential for disaster identified by the assessment," said Forrester.

"As always, the chain of command remains integral in the process and can mentor Soldiers with more difficult factors."

Using the Leader's Accident Risk Assessment of Subordinates, leaders have the knowledge to assess the risk level of their Soldiers, said Preston.

"First-line leaders know of the day-to-day events and stressors that affect the way their Soldiers perform," Preston added. "The Leader's Accident Risk Assessment of Subordinates serves as a catalyst for honest, frank discussion with individuals who you have indentified at risk for an accident."

Visit the USACRC Web site at <https://crc.army.mil> to download and learn more about the assessments.

## Worship services

<b>PROTESTANT – TRADITIONAL</b>			<b>PROTESTANT—SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST</b>		
Sunday	7:30 a.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel	Saturday	9 a.m.	Provider
	9:30 a.m.	Provider Chapel	<b>PROTESTANT—CHURCH OF CHRIST</b>		
	10:30 a.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)	Sunday	2 p.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
	11 a.m.	Castle Heights Chapel (4155)	<b>ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS</b>		
	5:30 p.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)	(Sacrament of Reconciliation 30 min prior to Mass)		
	7:30 p.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel	Saturday	5 p.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
<b>PROTESTANT – GOSPEL</b>				8 p.m.	Freedom Chapel(West Side)
Sunday	11 a.m.	MWR East Building		9:30 p.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel
	Noon	Freedom Chapel (West Side)	Sunday	9 a.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
	2 p.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel		11 a.m.	Provider Chapel
	3:30 p.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)	Mon-Fri	11:45 a.m.	Provider Chapel
	7 p.m.	Provider Chapel	Mon-Sat	5p.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
<b>PROTESTANT – CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP</b>			<b>CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MEETING</b>		
Sunday	9 a.m.	MWR East Building	Sunday	2p.m.	MWR-West Side
	10 a.m.	TOWN HALL(H-6)	<b>LATTER DAY SAINTS-(LDS)-(MORMON)</b>		
	2 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)	Sunday	1 p.m.	Provider Chapel
	2 p.m.	Castle Heights Chapel 4155)		3:30p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
	6:30 p.m.	Eden Chapel		7 p.m.	Tuskegee (H-6)
	7 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)	<b>JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES</b>		
	9:30 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)	Friday	7 p.m.	Signal Chapel
Wednesday	8 p.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)	<b>ISLAMIC SERVICE</b>		
<b>PROTESTANT – LITURGICAL</b>			Friday	Noon	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
Sunday	9 a.m.	EPISCOPAL Freedom Chapel	<b>PAGAN/ WICCAN FELLOWSHIP</b>		
	11 a.m.	LUTHERAN (Chapel Annex)	Thursday	7 p.m.	Eden Chapel
	3:30 p.m.	EPISCOPAL (Tuskegee H-6)	<b>BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP</b>		
<b>PROTESTANT --MESSIANIC</b>			Tuesday	7 p.m.	Eden Chapel
Friday	8:30 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)			
<b>PROTESTANT—PRAYER SERVICE</b>					
Saturday	7 a.m.	Signal Chapel			



# Army Reserve top leaders spend Christmas with troops in Iraq

by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Anaconda Times staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq-** To show solidarity with troops spending Christmas a long way from home, commanding general of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, and the senior enlisted leader of the Army Reserve, Command Sgt. Maj. Leon E. Caffie, spent Christmas with Soldiers in Iraq.

Both Stultz and Caffie toured the Air Force Theater Hospital to visit wounded servicemembers, injured Iraqis as well as hospital staff, rode in mine resistant ambush protected vehicles to experience the latest in IED mitigation, and served hundreds of hungry Soldiers during a holiday luncheon.

"I missed Christmas 2002 and 2003 because I was deployed, so I understand what it means to be apart from family during the holidays," said Stultz. "I want to show Soldiers I appreciate them by being here with them. I think all Americans should know what these Soldiers are sacrificing."

Stultz and Caffie visited troops in Afghanistan during the Thanksgiving holiday too. Both top leaders spent unhurried hours chat-



Photos by Staff Sgt. Dave Lankford

(Above) Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, Chief of the Army Reserve, and Command Sgt. Maj. Leon Caffie, Command Sgt. Maj. of the Army Reserve, serve a traditional Christmas dinner to Servicemembers here Christmas Day. After dinner was served Stultz and Caffie sat down with Soldiers from the Army Reserve to share a meal and casual conversation.

(Below) Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz, Chief of the Army Reserve, visited wounded Servicemembers at the Air Force Theater Hospital after an extensive tour of the hospital facilities. Stultz spoke with patients and hospital staff, addressing their concerns and wishing them well.

ting with Soldiers and discussing issues of interest to warrior citizens, including family readiness, employer

support, predictability of deployments and the 100th birthday of the Army Reserve, which will be celebrated April 23.

"It's 100 years of serving our nation, but it's also 100 years of transformation... The Army Reserve of 2008 needs to call itself the Army

because we are sometimes on reserve status and sometimes on active status, but we are always the Army," said Stultz.



## Chaplains share holiday cheer through song



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** – The 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Chaplains section serenaded in the halls and trailers of the joint operations center here with Christmas carols Dec. 22. The carol singing, a tradition for many families in the United States, was done to raise troop morale and spread holiday cheer.



# Strengthening ties by fixing problems

by Spc. Jay Venturini

Anaconda Times staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - Since the beginning of the Iraq conflict in 2003 more Iraqi civilians have been killed or wounded than Coalition Forces. Also, more Iraqis have had personal property stolen, broken or destroyed.

Because of this the Coalition Forces have established civil military operations centers (CMOCs) throughout Iraq for local Iraqis to address their grievances and try to obtain resolution.

"We are the face of Coalition Forces," said Maj. Joel Compeggie, the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) (ESC) civil affairs deputy. "Many Iraqis will never see Coalition Forces outside of having an issue, so it's our job to gain their trust."

There are a wide variety of issues and requests brought before civil affairs from local Iraqis. A typical day can range from receiving a report about a missing or dead family member to trying to get a job on the installation. Every issue receives the same attention and, if possible, will be resolved in a timely manner.

"The important thing is to listen to them," said Compeggie. "We hear out their concerns and do our best to solve their problems."

There are many different avenues civil affairs can use when dealing with a grievance. Many can be resolved by a face-to-face meeting and a handshake. For instance, if a person comes in looking for employment or



Photos by Spc. Jay Venturini

(Above) The 316th civil affairs team meets with a local sheik at the civil military operation center here. Civil affairs act as the conduit between the local villages and Coalition Forces.

(Below) Sgt. 1st Class Leona Propson, a 316th ESC civil affairs NCO, talks to a local sheik at the civil military operation center concerning safety of local villages. Civil affairs often meet with sheiks to gain the trust of the local villages.

if a weapon was wrongfully confiscated, these issues are quickly handled.

Other cases, which are more serious in nature, can take much longer and may go through the legal office. For example, if a family member is missing or dead or if personal property has been damaged or destroyed it goes to the legal office to determine if the Iraqi is entitled to any damages and if so, how much.

To ensure Iraqis feel safe talking to Coalition Forces, civil affairs personnel work very closely with the battle

space owners of the area surrounding LSA Anaconda.

"Things go a lot smoother when they feel safe talking to us," said Sgt. 1st Class Nicolas Relacion, the 316th ESC civil affairs noncommissioned officer. Along with showing the Iraqis the

Coalition is trustworthy, civil affairs is also trying to show Soldiers that many Iraqis are trustworthy as well.

"We bring 316th ESC personnel with us to experience meeting local Iraqis," said Relacion. "By doing this it shows the Soldiers these are

real people we are trying to help."

Through providing these services, both sides gain mutual trust and get a deeper understanding of one another as they both work towards the goal of building a safe, stable and free Iraq.

## Mullen meets with leaders at LSAA



Photo by Staff Sgt. Dave Lankford

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** - Adm. Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited with leaders here Dec. 20, to discuss his vision for the coming year as well as address some concerns voiced by those in attendance. Mullen was accompanied by his wife, Deborah.





# Airman supports burn clinic for Iraqi children

by Tech. Sgt. D. Clare

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

**BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq** – When Army Cpl. Joseph “Ski” Barzeski invited Staff Sgt. Tracy Davidson, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 732nd Combat Stress Control unit, to tour the Convoy Support Center’s burn clinic in Scania, Iraq, he had ulterior motives.

Shortly after the sergeant’s arrival, the experience became more hands-on than she was expecting. Davidson found herself treating and caring for Iraqi children who had suffered burns. Now, months later, she has become a fixture at the facility as a care provider for families and a resource for combat medics who endure stress.

“I never thought I’d be doing anything like this,” she said. “But it’s become the highlight of my service here in Iraq, and probably of my entire military career.”

Barzeski, a combat medic for the 3rd Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, and non-commissioned officer in charge of the clinic, said the sergeant’s contributions are invaluable. As a female, she is a comfort to the parents and girls whose burns often cover most of their bodies.

Likewise, as a mental health technician in an “in-lieu-of” tasking in support of the Army, she is there to listen and support the medics and Soldiers who rely on her for emotional support.

“She wanted to help. I didn’t think she was going to want to stay. She just fell right into it,” said Barzeski.

Since that day in mid-July, Davidson has assisted nearly every day the clinic has been open.

She’s logged more than 850 hours treating children at the clinic. Based on the impact she had on patients, her command developed a Personnel Asset Sharing agreement that allows her to officially assist all three days the clinic is open vice volunteering after duty hours.

According to Barzeski, who is deployed from Fort Bragg, N.C., burns are prolific among Iraqi children. The majority are caused by household hazards like children pulling hot tea kettles or pans from stoves onto them-



Courtesy photo

**Staff Sgt. Tracy Davidson, 732nd Combat Stress Control unit noncommissioned officer in charge, holds an Iraqi child at the Convoy Support Center Burn Clinic, Forward Operating Base Scania, Iraq. Since July, Davidson has supported the clinic three days a week; her presence has been a source of comfort for parents and female patients whose burns often cover most of the body. Davidson is deployed from Hill Air Force Base, Utah.**

“I think it helps a lot as far as what the opinions are of the Americans. Word is out all over the place about how we have treated people with burns.”

Staff Sgt. Tracy Davidson  
732nd CSC

selves and gas explosions.

Though they are not able to provide the level of care that a patient might receive in the United States, the treatments they provide exceed the level of care that children might receive at an Iraqi hospital.

Davidson pointed to a case where a female patient came in with trash bags on her hands and burns covering her from chest to ankles.

“When we saw her, we didn’t think she was going to live. (Iraqi doctors) were going to cut her hands off,” she said. “I saw her last week and she can grab my hands. She has good use of one of her hands and the other is coming along.”

As the clinic reaches milestones treating patients, word has spread among communities near and far--despite the dangers and intimidation

families encounter enroute to the American outpost.

They have limited options and are referred to the clinic by Iraqi hospitals--especially in instances where they can not afford to pay for care.

Despite the cries and struggles of the children

in their care, Davidson and Barzeski are motivated by the results their efforts yield, and the relationships they build over time with Iraqi families.

“I can’t imagine the pain these kids go through. But if we didn’t do it, nobody else

is going to,” said Davidson, who is deployed from Hill Air Force Base, Utah. “The two-year-old in pain isn’t going to be grateful for what we’re doing. But the parents have seen what happens to kids who don’t get the care.”

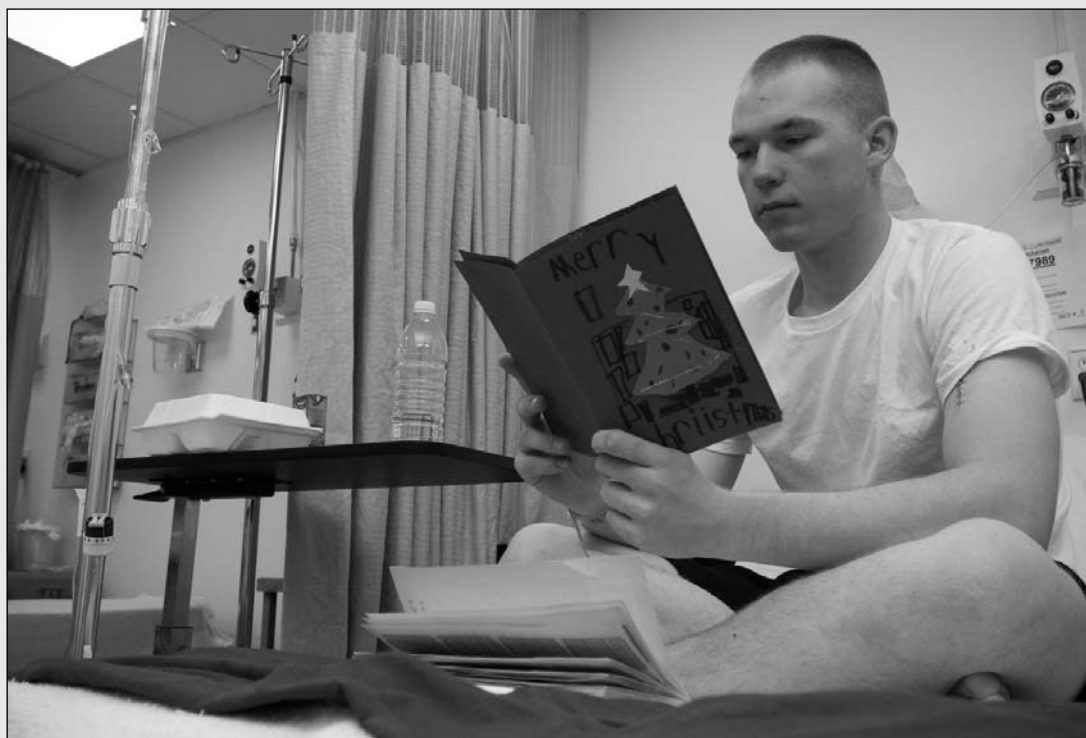
“I think it helps a lot as far as what the opinions are of the Americans. Word is out all over the place about how we have treated people with burns.”

For help building these relationships, Davidson and the Soldiers here turn to their supporters at home. She’s received donations of clothes and toys for the children from her family and a church in her hometown in Lincoln, Neb.

“We’re receiving tons of help from all over. People want to support this mission,” said Barzeski. “It makes us feel good that we’re really doing something to help these people. Even just to take a little tiny chunk of the population and make a difference -- to make it so that people can come back and say the Americans helped us. That makes it all worthwhile.”

For more information on the clinic, contact Barzeski at joseph.barzeski@us.army.mil.

## Soldier receives greetings from Girl Scouts



Air Force Photo by Tech. Sgt. D. Clare

**BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq** – Army Pvt. Zachariah Harvey, an artilleryman deployed to Camp Taji, reads a holiday card Dec. 24 from members of Girl Scout Troop 47534 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Harvey, a native of Le Roy, Minn., was wounded by a gun shot north of Baghdad Dec. 23. He is recovering at the Air Force Theater Hospital here. The hospital is the medical hub for all of Iraq and the only facility capable of providing a full spectrum of medical care for trauma patients. Harvey is deployed from Rose Barracks, Vilsek, Germany.





Photo by Staff Sgt. Dave Lankford

**SHEIK JAMILE, Iraq – Sgt. Ryan Ahern, 2-320th Field Artillery Regiment, searches a room piled knee deep with rubbish during a raid in a village north of Balad after receiving a tip regarding a suspected weapons cache. Though no cache was uncovered, information gained in the search will help keep the 2-320th FA hot on the heels of insurgents in the area.**

**KING, from Cover**

thing. Everyone supports a mission in their own way. This battery gets to do both, as a maneuver force and the headquarters of the battalion.”

“I am amazed at what every Soldier in this battalion does everyday,” said Dunleavy. “Whether you are manning a gun, patrolling a street or turning a wrench, each Soldier has a piece in the security and peace of this area. We are only in the beginning stages of our deployment and we have a long way to go, but I know with the leadership of our officers and non-commissioned officers, we will continue to make strides everyday.”

Dunleavy also said his artillerymen interacting with the local populace have made significant progress to the fight.

“My brigade commander once told me that the most powerful weapon we have in this fight is not a gun, but when a Soldier gets out of a vehicle and talks to the people. He was absolutely correct. Our tone, stance and the way we treat the people can be more powerful than a 105mm round.”

## Sergeant Major of the Army visits Anaconda, talks to servicemembers



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini



Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler

(Above) LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston meets Command Sgt. Maj. Stacey E. Davis, command sergeant major of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) (ESC), on the flight line at Balad Airfield during Preston’s visit to Balad and Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

(Left) LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston talks to Soldiers of the 20th Engineer Brigade here during his visit Dec. 18. Preston made the visit to Iraq, which included several stops over seven days, to meet with Soldiers and address any concerns they may have.



# Holiday Show gives service



Comedian and actor Robin Williams performs in front of roughly 5,000 service members at Holt Stadium here. This is Williams' fourth USO tour to Iraq to visit



Photos by Spc. Jay Venturini  
(Above) Kid Rock performs in front of roughly 5,000 servicemembers at the USO Troop Visit at Holt Stadium. The show was part of a week long USO tour throughout the Middle East to entertain deployed servicemembers.  
(Top) Seven time Tour De France winner and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong tells his inspirational life story to the residents of LSA Anaconda during the USO Troop Visit.



# Members taste of home



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

Approximately 5,000 servicemembers during the USO Troop Visit at Holt with servicemembers.



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

(Background) Kid Rock throws souvenirs to the crowd of servicemembers at the USO Holiday Troop Visit at Holt Stadium.  
(Top) (From Left) Lance Armstrong, Kid Rock, Robin Williams, Rachel Smith and Lewis Black say goodbye to servicemembers after the USO Troop Visit. The performers came as part of a week long USO tour throughout Iraq and Afghanistan over the holiday season.



# CROWS keeps gunners in vehicles, out of turrets

by Spc. Jay Venturini

Anaconda Times staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** – Without question, Iraq has some of the most dangerous roads in the world, especially for Coalition Forces. Since the beginning of the conflict in 2003 there has been an on going process of making vehicles safer for servicemembers.

A player in the process that has been flying under the radar for some time now is the common remotely operated weapons station (CROWS) which has the gunner inside the vehicle controlling the mounted weapon with a remote.

"It works like a video game," said Mr. John Lowe, a CROWS instructor. "There is a camera next to the weapon that shows where the round is going."

The CROWS is a computer based weapon mounted on the top of a Humvee that can support a .50-caliber machine gun, a Mark 19 grenade launcher, a M-249 squad automatic weapon and a M-240B.

The CROWS has been in theater since the beginning of the war in 2003 but hasn't been widely used.

For those commanders that



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

**FOB O'RYAN, Iraq** – Spc. Stephen McCoy, 1138th Engineer Company gunner, spots and engages a target on the common remotely operated weapons station (CROWS) during a live fire exercise here. The CROWS remotely controls the mounted weapon which keeps gunners safer inside the armored vehicle.

wish to use the CROWS there is a week long course here that covers every aspect of the system. It takes the students from learning how to use the joystick and software to how to properly mount a weapon.

"I really learned a lot going through the course," said Sgt. Stephen Bowers, Golf Company, 703rd Explosive

Ordinance Detachment. "It's a new concept for me and I see it being a big part of the Army's future and saving many lives."

Along with keeping gunners more protected inside the armored Humvee, the camera can also zoom in on a target. This greatly helps the gunners to see possible threats from a much greater distance.

"The zoom puts the gun-

ners at a great advantage," said Lowe. "You can clearly see up to a mile away with the zoom."

Because the CROWS is computer based, the gunner can program in such things as no fire zones and sectors of fire. It can also pick up heat signatures through a thermal setting on the camera, keep track of the number of rounds left, and much more.

"This is a great piece of equipment," said Spc. Eric Rennie, a 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment gunner. "The computer gives the gunner so much vital information and the zoom on the camera is a lot better than the binoculars."

However, there are some shortcomings to the system.

"The CROWS is not designed to replace the gunner in the turret in every situation," said Lowe. "It's best used when there is a smaller sector of fire for the gunner."

In addition, a gunner in the turret has a greater sector of visibility and has the ability to go through escalation of force procedures with local traffic.

With safety on the roads being vital to the success of the numerous missions throughout theater, the CROWS offers yet another option to keep gunners from being openly exposed to enemy attacks.

"Anything that keeps gunners out of harms way is a great thing to have," said Rennie. "I'm going to recommend to my battalion that we get as many CROWS as we can."

If you would like more information pertaining to the CROWS e-mail [crows@mms.army.mil](mailto:crows@mms.army.mil).

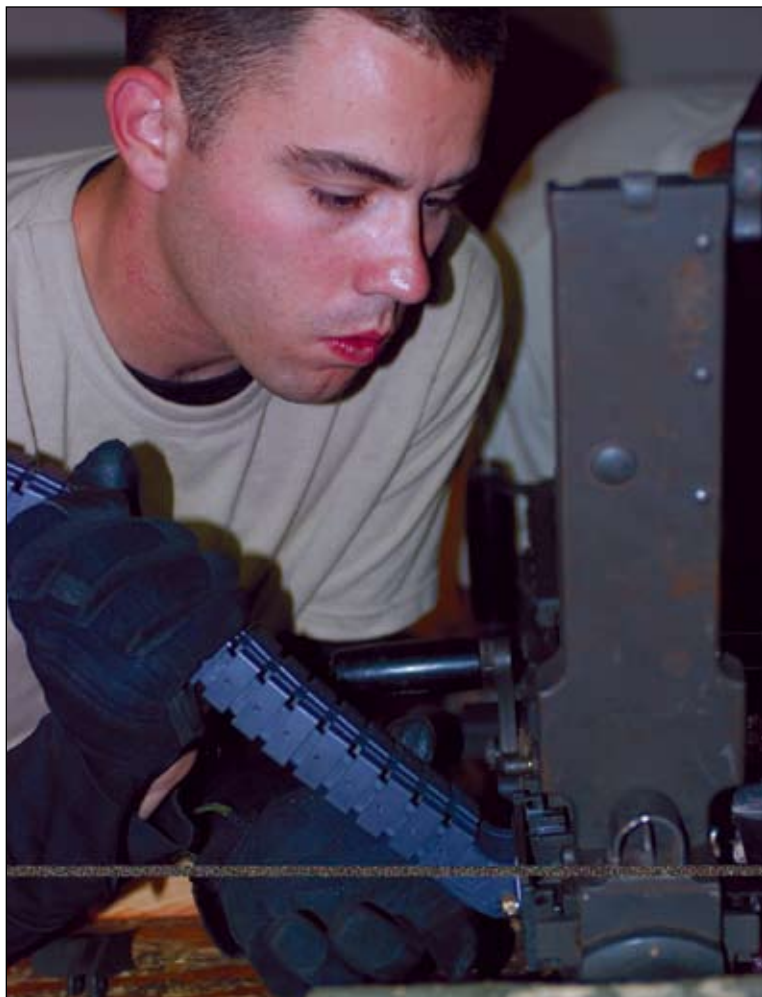


Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

Spc. Sean McCormick, an Alpha Company 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment gunner, attaches the pieces to a .50-caliber machine gun needed to mount the weapon to the CROWS. Along with the .50-cal., the Mark 19 grenade launcher, the M-249 squad automatic weapon and the M-240B can be mounted on the CROWS.

## Operation Green Christmas arrives in Iraq



Photos by Spc. Thomas Keeler

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** – Staff Sgt. Jennifer Ludicello (right), a support operations noncommissioned officer with the 213th Area Support Group, and Capt. Eric Turner, company commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, unpack a live Christmas tree donated by members of the Pennsylvania Landscape and Nursery Association outside of their battalion headquarters here Dec. 21. The donation to the 213th Area Support Group, a Pennsylvania National Guard unit, was arranged by Rep. Tim Solobay, D-Washington, with support from the Pennsylvania Mushroom Growers Association.



# Education center now offers classification test

by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

Anaconda Times staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq**—Soldiers no longer have to travel to Kuwait or wait until they return to their duty or home station to take the Armed Forces Classification Test (AFCT), which is a different version of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery given to persons already in the service.

The Blackjack Education Center here has received a waiver which will allow a senior ranking servicemember to act as a test proctor in order to offer a variety of tests to troops seeking to improve their general technical (GT) score, as well as take college tests and other exams which require a proctor.

“Before hand it had to be a civilian that had to do the testing and now we have a waiver for an Army member to do the testing,” said Air Force 1st Lt. Dominique Boivin, the officer in charge of the Blackjack Education Center, Det. “We’re excited because we haven’t been able to do any testing at all for the last three months in Iraq.”

Boivin said that as a result of not being able to test in Iraq, servicemembers had to travel to Arifjan, Kuwait in order to take the test they needed.

“It’s a great advantage (to test here). That way I don’t have to try to get a flight down to Kuwait to take the test,” said Staff Sgt. Ian Jackson of Ansbach, Germany and the signal noncommissioned officer in charge for the 3-158th Aviation Regiment.

“I was actually planning to wait until I went on R&R leave back to Germany and that would’ve been in April; so I would’ve lost all the information I learned in the fast class that helped me with this,” said Jackson.

Jackson is taking the AFCT so he can submit his



Photos by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

**Sgt. 1st Class Bleu-D'A Matthews, the test control proctor for the Blackjack Education Center, 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), hands the bubble sheet to one of the examinees at the Blackjack Education center here.**

“We’re excited because we haven’t been able to do any testing at all for the last three months in Iraq.”

Air Force 1st Lt. Dominic Boivin  
Det 1, 332nd EMSG

warrant officer packet, which is one of the incentives for improving his GT score.

Sgt. 1st Class Bleu-D'A Matthews, the test control officer for the Blackjack Education Center, administers the necessary exams to servicemembers wishing to improve their GT score which is needed

“for the purpose of pursuing or obtaining a military occupation specialty classification, duty assignments, proficiency pay and promotions.”

“I am extremely proud to be part of an organization like the Blackjack Education Center, whereby one is able to provide a high quality educational service to the many servicemembers whose quest, aspiration and focus is to strive for excellence. Such are the building blocks to a brighter tomorrow and successful future,” said Matthews, who is also a member of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a native of Richmond, Va.

If you would like more information on the exams and classes offered by the Blackjack Education Center please call DSN (318) 433-2099.

## America's warrior

by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

### A snapshot of servicemembers in the Global War on Terrorism

**Full name and rank:** Sgt. Wilmer Aja.  
**Unit:** Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery  
**Job Title:** Field Artillery.  
**Time in service:** Five years in service.  
**Age:** 26.  
**Hometown:** Miami, Fla.  
**Hobbies:** Watching movies, dancing Latino music and playing soccer.  
**Life-changing event/moment:** When my daughter was born.  
**Lesson Learned:** How to be responsible.  
**The person I admire the most:** My father.  
**Why I joined the military:** To belong to something important.

**If I wasn't in the military I would be:** A police officer or a soccer player.  
**The one thing I would change about the Army:** Make the deployments shorter.  
**What makes a good Soldier:** Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Personal Courage.  
**What makes a good leader?** One who sets the example, does the right thing and is empathetic.  
**Motivations in life:** My daughter.  
**Unusual fact about you:** I'm "by the book."  
**Goals:** To become a drill sergeant.  
**Hardest part of my job here:** Being away from home.  
**Best part of my life:** My daughter.

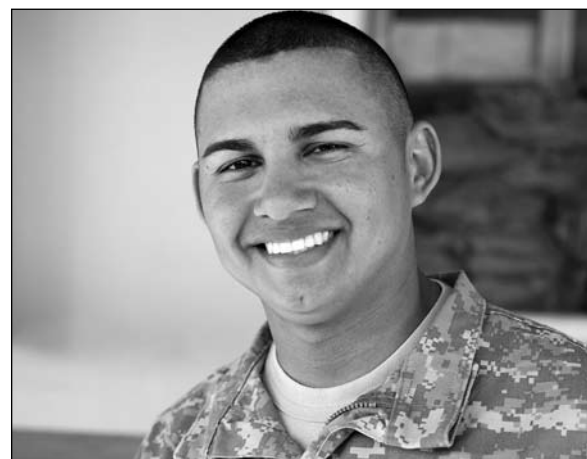


Photo by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra



## Anti-terrorism course prepares servicemembers, combats complacency

by Spc. Jay Venturini

Anaconda Times staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** — You can't go a day here without hearing it at least once. It's portrayed on TV commercials by cute animals and it's plastered all over computer screen savers: operational security (OPSEC). However, something Squeakers, the mouse, doesn't tell you is that OPSEC is more than securing information, it is also ensuring that buildings and personnel of an installation are ready for any possible enemy activity.

That's what the anti-terrorism course held here Dec. 4 was all about. Servicemembers in attendance learned to locate and correct vulnerabilities in existing structures and procedures that the enemy could use to their advantage.

"What the class was basically about was learning how to find vulnerabilities in buildings and standard operational procedures that the enemy can exploit," said Sgt. Taybe Spitler, a 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) significant actions manager and Washington, Pa. native. "There are a lot of ways they could improve security that could save lives in the long



Marine Maj. Monte Powell, an Iraq Central Command joint specialty officer and course instructor, discusses risk assessments during the anti terrorism course here. The course provided students in attendance the skills and tools needed to perform risk assessments at their respective installations.

Photos by Spc. Thomas Keeler

run."

Coalition Forces from all over Iraq attended the course, including every branch of the military and two Polish officers. Many found it rewarding to work with all the services to glean different ways of doing things.

"It's very unique seeing

how the different services do business," said Marine Maj. Monte Powell, an Iraq Central Command joint specialty officer and course instructor. "We can all learn from each other and find the best ways to keep our servicemembers safe."

The course consisted of classroom and practical exer-

cises which covered the entire risk assessment process. After being shown examples of different types of vulnerabilities, the students broke into groups and performed risk assessments for many different buildings with high pedestrian traffic throughout the installation such as the bazaar,

dinning facility, Morale, Welfare and Recreation building and gym. They then presented their findings to the group and provided solutions to eliminate the vulnerabilities.

"We identified different possible threats and vulnerabilities and plan to present them to the commanding general soon," said Polish Chief Warrant Officer Paul Rabiej, Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I) South Central Command. "Overall the sites were secure but there is always room for improvement."

After the course the students went back to their respective installations with the knowledge and skills to evaluate and improve their defensive posture.

"The main way to keep the installation safe is don't get complacent," said Air Force Lt. Col. Joseph Milner, MNC-I transition coalition police team. "Servicemembers have to keep their head on a swivel and be ready for anything"

"I don't expect them to leave as experts in risk assessments, but if we just raise awareness, that means I'm doing my job," said Powell. "I measure success by seeing you and I going home safely. That means I'm doing my job right."

## Stars and Stripes donates popular video game console to Air Force Theater Hospital

by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Anaconda Times staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** — The Air Force Theater Hospital and its residents are three Wii's richer, thanks to a donation Dec. 7 from Stars and Stripes newspaper.

The holiday donation is part of a program by Stars and Stripes to provide Wii systems to servicemembers at rehabilitation centers in the United States and overseas, said Matt Bush, marketing manager for Stars and Stripes.

"We're donating a couple more between now and Christmas to the Fisher House, which is part of the rehab center at Landstuhl hospital in Germany," said Bush.

In addition to the video game consoles donated overseas, Stars and Stripes is donating consoles to locations in the United States, such as Walter Reed Medical Center and the Center for the Intrepid, an Army rehabilitation center which opened in San Antonio in January.

"Stars and Stripes has partnered with Nintendo Wii to get some of these game stations to hospitals throughout the country," said Air Force Lt. Col. Stephen O'Connor, the Stars and Stripes military commander and chief of operations for Europe and the Middle East.

"We feel at least it's a good way to brighten morale, make somebody's day perhaps, and also perhaps good for therapy," said O'Connor.

"It feels very realistic and it actually gives you a workout, and you can actu-



Photos by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Air Force Lt. Col. Stephen O'Connor (right), the military commander of Stars and Stripes and chief of operations in Europe and the Middle East, presents a Wii game console to Air Force Col. Patrick Storms, commander of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, during a Stars and Stripes visit to the Air Force Theater Hospital here.

ally work up a sweat, even though you're playing a video game," he said.

The Wii system is unique among video game consoles, in that the physical involvement of the person playing the game controls the action on the screen. A special, hand-held wireless controller sends a signal to the video game console, which is then sent to the television screen. A person playing tennis, for example, must physically swing his arm in order for the video game character to swing the tennis racket.

"For our wounded warriors here, in various stages of convalescence, it's going to make a huge difference," said Air Force Col. Patrick Storms, commander of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group.

"Not only will it give them some respite from laying in a hospital bed, but it's going to give them an opportunity to interact with other patients and staff members, it's going to certainly break some of the monotony of being a patient, and it's good therapy, too," said Storms.

"A little moving around never hurt anyone."

Of the three Wii consoles donated to the hospital, one will be placed in the ward for Iraqi and Coalition personnel, another will be provided for Coalition personnel about to be airlifted out of theater, and another will be placed in the "swamp," the hospital's staff lounge.

"We're going to put it to good use, and I expect we'll wear those controllers out in fine fashion," said Storms.



# Upcoming sports on AFN

**Wednesday 1/2/08**  
Rose Bowl: Illinois vs. USC live 12:30 a.m. AFN/sports  
Sugar Bowl: Hawaii vs. Georgia live 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 3:00 p.m. AFN/sports; replay 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports  
Pittsburgh Penguins @ Buffalo Sabres replay 7:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
Outback Bowl: Wisconsin vs. Tennessee replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/sports

**Thursday 1/3/08**  
Atlanta Thrashers @ Carolina Hurricanes live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
Fiesta Bowl: Oklahoma vs. West Virginia live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 2:00 p.m. AFN/sports; replay 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports  
New Orleans Hornets @ Los Angeles Clippers live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra  
Music City Bowl: Kentucky vs. Florida State replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/sports

**Friday 1/4/08**  
Orange Bowl: Virginia Tech vs. Kansas live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 2:00 p.m. AFN/sports; replay 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports  
Portland Trail Blazers @ Chicago Bulls live 4:15 a.m. AFN/xtra  
Seattle Supersonics @ Phoenix Suns live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: Ohio State @ Illinois replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/sports

**Saturday 1/5/08**  
Detroit Pistons @ Toronto Raptors live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports  
Philadelphia Flyers @ New Jersey Devils live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
Miami Heat @ Dallas Mavericks live 5:30 a.m. AFN/sports  
Chicago Blackhawks @ Anaheim Ducks live 6:00 a.m. AFN/prime  
Philadelphia 76ers @ Los Angeles Lakers live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra  
International Bowl: Ball State vs. Rutgers live 8:00 p.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: Kansas @ Boston College live 8:00 p.m. AFN/prime  
2008 US Army All-American Bowl live 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports  
College BB: Michigan @ Purdue live 10:00 p.m. AFN/prime  
College BB: Oregon @ Arizona live 11:30 p.m. AFN/xtra

**Sunday 1/6/08**

College BB: Louisville @ Kentucky live 12:00 a.m. AFN/prime  
NFL Wildcard Playoffs: Teams TBD live 12:30 a.m. AFN/sports  
College BB: Cincinnati @ St. Johns live 2:00 a.m. AFN/prime  
College BB: UCLA @ California live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: Minnesota @ Michigan State live 4:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
NFL Wildcard playoffs: Teams TBD live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sports  
College BB: Connecticut @ Notre Dame live 5:00 a.m. AFN/prime  
Utah Jazz @ Portland Trail Blazers live 6:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
Detroit Red Wings @ Dallas Stars replay 8:30 a.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: Air Force @ Utah replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: LSU @ Texas A&M replay 1:00 p.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: St. Mary's @ Texas replay 3:00 p.m. AFN/xtra  
Boston Celtics @ Detroit Pistons replay 5:00 p.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: Northwestern @ Ohio State live 8:00 p.m. AFN/prime  
College BB: Pittsburgh @ Villanova live 8:00 p.m. AFN/xtra  
NFL Wildcard Playoffs: Teams TBD live 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports  
College BB: Penn State @ Illinois live 10:00 p.m. AFN/prime  
College BB: Marquette @ West Virginia live 10:00 p.m. AFN/xtra

**Monday 1/7/08**  
Dallas Mavericks @ Minnesota Timberwolves live 12:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
NFL Wildcard Playoffs: Teams TBD live 12:30 a.m. AFN/sports  
College BB: Cornell @ Duke live 1:30 a.m. AFN/prime  
Milwaukee Bucks @ Charlotte Bobcats live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: North Carolina @ Clemson live 3:30 a.m. AFN/prime  
GMAC Bowl: Bowling Green vs. Tulsa live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sports  
Indiana Pacers @ Los Angeles Lakers live 5:30 a.m. AFN/xtra  
Buffalo Sabres @ Atlanta Thrashers replay 8:30 a.m. AFN/xtra  
College BB: Xavier @ Auburn replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/xtra

**Tuesday 1/8/08**  
BCS National Title Game: LSU vs. Ohio State live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 1:00 p.m. AFN/sports; replay 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports  
San Antonio Spurs @ Golden State Warriors live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER		(Schedule is subject to change)	
		Wednesday, Jan. 2	
	5 p.m.	Mr. Magorium's Wonder	(G)
	8 p.m.	Lions for Lamb	(R)
		Thursday, Jan. 3	
	5 p.m.	National Treasure: 2	(PG)
	8 p.m.	American Gangster	(R)
		Friday, Jan. 4	
	2 p.m.	Enchanted	(PG)
	5 p.m.	Beowulf	(PG-13)
	8:30 p.m.	The Water Horse	(PG)
		Saturday, Jan. 5	
	2 p.m.	Beowulf	(PG-13)
	5 p.m.	The Water Horse	(PG)
	8 p.m.	Enchanted	(PG)
		Sunday, Jan. 6	
	2 p.m.	The Water Horse	(PG)
	5 p.m.	Enchanted	(PG)
	8 p.m.	Beowulf	(PG-13)
		Monday, Jan. 7	
	5 p.m.	Enchanted	(PG)
	8 p.m.	The Water Horse	(PG)
		Tuesday, Jan. 8	
	5 p.m.	The Water Horse	(PG)
	8 p.m.	Beowulf	(PG-13)





# ANACONDA ACTIVITIES

## INDOOR POOL

**Aqua Training:** Tuesday and Thursday- 7:45 p.m.

### Swim Lessons

-Beginners: Tuesday - 7 p.m.

-Intermediate: Thursday- 7 p.m. \*Must sign up with instructor.

-Advanced: Saturday - 7 p.m. \*Must sign up with instructor.

**Time Trails- 50m, 100m, 200m:** Friday - 8 a.m.&p.m.

## EAST FITNESS CENTER

**Basketball League:** Monday-Friday - 7 p.m.

**Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 8 p.m.

**Kyu Kyu Kempo:** Sunday- 2 p.m.

**Modern Army combatives:** Tuesday and Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

**Open court volleyball:** Sunday- 6 p.m.

**Shotokan Karate Do:** Thursday- 6:45 p.m., Saturday- 8:30 p.m. and Sunday- 5:30 p.m.

**Soo Bahk Do:** 6 p.m.

**Step Aerobics:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 5:30 p.m.

**Wrestling & physical fitness class:** Tuesday- 6 p.m. and Saturday- 7 p.m.

**Swing dance:** Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

## EAST RECREATION CENTER

**8-ball tourney:** Monday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**9-ball tournament:** Wednesday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Game Console Tourney:** Thursday- 8 p.m.

**Country Dance Class:** Thursday- 7 p.m.

**Dominoes:** Friday- 8 p.m.

**Karaoke:** Monday- 8 p.m.

**Model building:** Sunday- 1 p.m.

**Poetry/ open mic:** Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

**Poker tourney:** Sunday- 6 p.m.

**Salsa dance class:** Saturday- 8:30 p.m.

**Swing dance:** Tuesday- 7p.m.

**Ping pong tourney:** Tuesday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

## WEST RECREATION CENTER

**8-ball tourney:** Wednesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**9-ball tournament:** Monday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Dungeons & Dragons:** Saturday- 8 p.m.

**Friday nights in Balad:** Friday- 8 p.m.

**Foosball:** Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

### Green Bean karaoke:

Wednesday and Sunday- 8 p.m.

**Ice Ball Tourney:** Thursday- 4 p.m.

**Ping pong tourney:** Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Salsa dance class:** Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

**Spades, Chess and Dominoes:** Friday - 1 p.m.

**Texas hold 'em:** Saturday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Game Counsel Tourney:** Thursday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

## WEST FITNESS CENTER

**3-on-3 basketball tourney:** Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

**6-on-6 volleyball tourney:** Friday- 7 p.m.

**Aerobics:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m.

**Body by Midgett Toning Class:** Tuesday, Thursday - 7 p.m.

**Dodge ball Game:** Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.

**Furman's Martial Arts:** Monday, Wednesday, Sunday- 1 p.m.

**Gaston's Self-Defense Class:** Friday, Saturday- 7 p.m.

### Open court basketball:

Thursday- 7 p.m.

**Open court soccer:** Monday, Wednesday - 7 p.m.

**Zingano Brazilian Jui Jitsu:**

Tuesday, Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

### CIRCUIT GYM

**Floor hockey:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 8 p.m.



## Army to get more Stryker NBC recon vehicles

by C. Todd Lopez

Army News Service

**WASHINGTON** — The Army now has authorization to purchase 95 more Stryker nuclear, biological and chemical reconnaissance vehicles (NBCRVs), in addition to 10 already in Iraq and several others used for testing and training.

During a press conference Dec. 19 at the Pentagon, Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Spoehr, chief of the U.S. Army Chemical Corps, said existing NBCRVs have proven important for Army commanders in the field and that the Army requested and received approval to purchase more of them.

"The Stryker NBCRV represents a powerful tool for commanders to protect U.S. interests from weapons of mass destruction," Spoehr said. "And this month, after careful consideration, the Department of Defense gave the authorization for 95 more Stryker NBCRVs."

For now, the NBCRV is

in low-rate initial production, but the Army eventually hopes to have as many as 355 NBCRVs.

The Stryker NBCRV is an NBC testing lab on wheels. It is intended as a replacement for the Fox NBC Reconnaissance System and demonstrates improvement in several key areas over the Fox. It also provides improved communication to ground commanders, said Spoehr.

"The Stryker NBCRV represents a vast increase in capability over its predecessor, the Fox, in terms of biological sensing, accuracy, speed, lethality, survivability and digital communications -- it is a true leap ahead," he said. "The Stryker NBCRV gives combatant commanders an unmatched capability to sense, mark and warn U.S. forces about weapons of mass destruction threats in near real time."

The NBCRV, as a moving NBC sensor, provides to ground commanders information about where it is safe to move their Soldiers. The

vehicle could be used, for instance, to determine the safest route for troop movement or for supplies.

Spc. Christopher A. Case, a chemical operations specialist with the 23rd Chemical Battalion, Fort Lewis, Wash., was on hand at the Pentagon to discuss the capabilities of the NBCRV and to enlighten civilian press about the features of the vehicle. He says he believes the Army was right to ask for more NBCRVs.

"This is a good vehicle, with a lot of sensors and a lot of capability," he said. "It can run in multiple situations and purposes. For example, one of the better capabilities it has over the Fox is the weapons system. Instead of being mounted and outside of the vehicle, you have a remote weapon system. You sit inside the vehicle with a joystick and aim a .50 cal machinegun. At the same time, you remain protected inside a pressurized compartment even if there is a chemical environment on the outside."

The NBCRV features a

suite of nuclear, chemical and biological sensors that enable it to test for a wide range of contaminants that could prove hazardous for ground troops. One such feature is a set of two tiny rubber wheels on robotic arms that roll along the ground behind the vehicle. As the NBCRV moves, the wheels automatically lift up off the ground and transfer to an external sensor any dust they have accumulated. In turn, the sensor determines if that dust contains any potential contaminants. The effect of such a sensor is that the vehicle doesn't have to stop moving to do spot checks along a route.

"While we are rolling down the route, the wheels come up to the probe, then it gets vaporized and put into a sensor," Case said. "So instead of having to stop each time, we can keep rolling until we get a hit."

Another feature of the NBCRV is its automated connection to a larger communications grid. That connection

makes the vehicle a moving, net-centric warfare enabled sensor that can clear routes for ground troops or alert commanders to places where they shouldn't send their Soldiers without appropriate protection.

"When this thing runs into a contaminate, it plugs that information into a preformatted message without anybody even touching it," Spoehr said. "It includes weather data, the time and the location in that message. The vehicle commander simply needs to press a button and that information is out there on the grid for everybody else to see. All you have to do is push one button and a ground or operation commander's situational awareness will be populated with knowledge of that hazardous material."

Being able to put that kind of information on tap for commanders is what makes the NBCRV a key component in ensuring Soldiers remain safe and effective while executing their mission, said Spoehr.



# Alaska unit assumes convoy security mission

by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Anaconda Times staff

**LSA ANACONDA, Iraq** – The 297th Combat Support Company (CSC), a National Guard unit from Fort Richardson, Alaska, is on ground here and has assumed the convoy security mission from the 755th Chemical Company, an Army National Guard unit from Nebraska.

The 297th CSC will be under the command and control of Task Force 106, which is responsible for overseeing the planning and execution of combat logistics patrols (CLP) here.

“Our first mission was a little wild,” said Cpl. Brian Christopherson, a truck commander with the 297th CSC. Christopherson described the adjustment between running training missions with the outgoing unit and escorting a convoy on their own without yet having a strong knowledge of other forward operating bases.

“The run itself was error-free, but getting in and out, finding fuel points, was a little rough,” he said.

About half of the Soldiers in the unit are infantry, said 1st Sgt. Shawn McLeod, the company first sergeant and team leader of the 297th.



Photos by Spc. Thomas Keeler

(Above) After finishing repairs on their convoy vehicles, Pfc. David Noy (center) and Pfc. Manuel Caguiat, mechanics with the 297th Combat Support Company, perform routine maintenance on a M998 utility vehicle.

(Below) Cpl. Brian Christopherson, a truck commander with the 297th Combat Support Company, packs supplies and ammunition into his Armored Security Vehicle prior to a mission to Baghdad International Airport.

“We have three different platoons that operate,” said McLeod. “Each platoon has two groups: ‘A’ clip and ‘B’

clip. Half the platoon will go out at a time.”

McLeod says everyone in the company, not just infantry, contributes to the convoys.

“We’ve got cooks, mechanics, clerks that are out on the road,” he said. “Supply, logistics, they’re gunners and drivers, and 11 medics who are out there as gunners and drivers as well.”

“We’re a good, diverse group,” said McLeod. “We’ve got guys from every corner of the state, from bush villages to Anchorage.”

Though many of the Alaskan Soldiers are from the main hubs – Juneau, Anchorage and Fairbanks – McLeod said accommodations are made for Soldiers who come from afar.

“A lot of times they actually fly in to their drill site,” said McLeod about training during non-deployment periods. “They’ll do four- or five-day drills at a time.”

For a few Soldiers in the unit, the two-month mobilization at Fort Richardson was their first experience performing convoy operations or driving military vehicles. But Soldiers like Christopherson, a truck driver in his civilian job, took well to driving the

long hours required of convoy security.

Spc. Enrico Sanchez is a gunner with the 297th. He said convoys rarely stay overnight at their destination, instead turning around when their mission is done. A convoy might not arrive back at base until as late as 1000 hours, he further said.

Pfc. Jeanette Derry, a mechanic with the 297th CSC from Eagle River, Alaska, stands ready for the vehicles when they come back in.

“We do a stand-down,” said Derry. “The operators come in, do a PMCS (preventive maintenance checks and services), and any faults that they find, we fix there on the spot.”

By late afternoon, the mechanics are finished with their essential work. As one infantry platoon is making their final preparations for that evening’s convoy, the platoon for the next night’s run comes to pick up their vehicles for the following night.

“We’ll do a pre-mission the day before for a couple hours, check the truck out, load it up, then the next day we’ll come in about four hours before our SP (start point) time,” said Christopherson.

Most convoys leave the

wire sometime after sunset, and Christopherson’s crew runs about two or three missions a week.

“Any more than that, you won’t have any time,” he said.

Overall, McLeod praised his Soldiers and the Soldiers of the previous unit.

“The 755th did a really good job,” he said. “Our guys walked into something that’s really nice.”

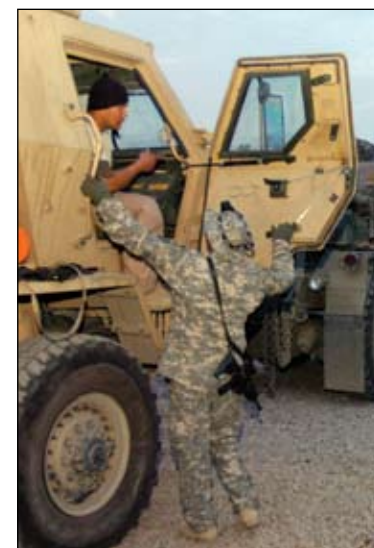


Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Spc. Ati Faaaliga, a truck commander with the 297th Combat Support Company (CSC), gives instructions down to gunner Spc. Enrico Sanchez prior to a convoy escort mission to Contingency Operating Base Speicher.





