

AnacondaTimes

APRIL 2, 2008

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes

Bombs right on target

Airmen doing more than loading bombs

Page 5



Photo by Sgt. Gary Hawkins

Digger Dawg

Music group rocks LSAA troops

Page 6



Photo by Sgt. Gary Hawkins

Winning hearts, minds

HA mission allows Soldiers to build trust, understanding

Pages 8-9



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

Soldiers from the 40th Transportation Company take control of a simulated riot during the Wedge Warrior competition here. The competition tested each participant both mentally and physically during the entire 13.5 mile course.

Soldiers keeping skills sharp

Story by Spc. Jay Venturini

Anaconda Times staff

CAMP AL TAQADDUM, Iraq – When most deployed servicemembers hear the saying “train as we fight,” they would think of the endless hours of training at home station to prepare for a deployment.

However, every leader will tell you their personnel can never be over trained. Keeping in this frame of thought the 129th Combat Services Support Battalion created the Wedge Warrior competition for deployed servicemembers to keep their skills sharp based on real world scenarios.

“Wedge Warrior is a competition for servicemembers to experience real world situations in a training environment,” said Master Sgt. Dion L. Davis, 129th CSSB operations non-commissioned officer in charge. “It is a great opportunity for those who normally don’t go outside the wire to get a little taste of what it is like.”

Over a two day period, eight squad-size-teams complete a 13.5 mile course which includes mounted and dismounted situations. There are 19 different basic warrior tasks in

which the teams are evaluated on, both at the team and individual skill level. The tasks include a six mile tactical road march, riot control and evacuating a casualty.

“It was definitely a challenging event,” said Spc. Nicholas Eddy, 40th Transportation Company. “It made us think on our feet and we had to make some hard decisions. It was some great training.”

The wedge warrior competition is a quarterly event which is open to any unit that wants to participate. This quarter featured Soldiers from Al Assad and Al Taqaddum, plus a team consisting of Marine and Navy medics.

“We encourage other units and services to participate in the competition,” said Sgt. 1st Class Derrick Shields, 129th CSSB fuel NCOIC. “By working with different organizations, you see how they operate and vise versa, which makes working together a lot smoother.”

After all the hard work, sweat and blisters, the points were tallied and the top three teams were determined.

See **Skills**, Page 11

GT class opens education center in TQ

by Spc. Jay Venturini
Anaconda Times staff

CAMP AL TAQADDUM, Iraq – It’s a saying that you’ve probably heard from a battle buddy or have even said yourself, “I wish I would have taken the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) more seriously when I enlisted.”

A concerned command sergeant major of the 129th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion took it upon himself to enhance the opportunities of his Soldiers and further their career by opening up an education center here.

“When we first got into theater, we asked our Soldiers what they wanted, and many of them said they wanted to learn, so we started to build an education center,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Delbert L. Hoskins, 129th CSSB command sergeant major.

A few months later, the first general technical improvement class began in the newly constructed education center. Twelve Soldiers enrolled into the two week course, which began March 17.

“By improving a Soldier’s GT score he or she is opening a lot of doors that could really help their career,” said Hoskins. “A higher score could mean having more jobs available, a promotion... or many other things.”

The course covers basic math and writing comprehension, which are the two main components of the GT test.

Six noncommissioned officers volunteered to teach the class in addition to their normal responsibilities.

“This is my way of giving something back to the Soldiers,” said Sgt. 1st Class Alex Reyes, 129th CSSB. “I came in with a high GT score and a college degree so I thought I would be a good person to teach.”

Hoskins’ plan is to expand the curriculum and make the class more flexible for differing schedules. They also plan to dedicate 40 computers for Soldiers to do correspondence courses and distance learning.

In today’s Army of multiple deployments and limited time at home station, having educational opportunities for Soldiers in theater has become an essential factor for professional development and growth.



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

A Soldier works on a math problem during a GT improvement class at the new education center here. Twelve students enrolled in the inaugural class, which started March 17.

“We must educate Soldiers where they are, which is in the combat theater,” said Hoskins. “It is the only way these Soldiers will have an opportunity to advance their career and become the leaders of tomorrow, and that is what the education center is all about.”

Provost Marshal’s Office: Weekly police blotter

Week of March 17-23

The Provost Marshal Office conducted; (193) security checks, (13) traffic stops, issued (50) DD Form 1408 Armed Forces Traffic Tickets, registered (394) vehicles on the installation, and responded to (four) minor traffic accidents. Seventeen common access cards were reported lost, and (four) individuals were barred from LSA.

The Provost Marshal Office is currently investigating, (two) larceny cases, (one) breaking/entering, and (one) assault.

If you have any information about any of these crimes, please contact the crime stoppers line at 433-8602 or notify the Military Police Investigations at 443-6190

PMO Recommendations: LSA Anaconda Regulation 190-5: Personnel riding in vehicles without fixed seats, benches or side rails may ride in the bed of the truck after all cab seats

are utilized. They must be seated on the floor of the vehicle bed. Riding on the wheel well is not authorized. Personnel riding in the back will not lean against the tailgate. Personnel riding in vehicles with fixed seats or benches mounted inside the vehicle bed may ride on them only if there is a safety strap (troop strap) across the tailgate area to prevent personnel from falling out. If there is no functional safety strap across the tailgate area, then personnel must sit on the floor of the vehicle bed. All personnel riding in a tactical vehicle, regardless of seating position, must wear a Kevlar helmet, not a hard hat.

Lost & Found: Units are advised that the Lost and Found have various military items recovered. To find out if your lost item has been turned into PMO, contact PMO/Investigations at 443-6105.

By Staff Sgt. Mirta Jones



Photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch, commanding general of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), congratulates Air Force members of the Provost Marshal's office for their help with the Vice President's visit here. Couch then awarded a select few with coins for their hard work.

ANACONDA TIMES

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

Anaconda Times is authorized for publication by the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) for the LSA Anaconda community. The contents of the Anaconda Times are unofficial and are not to be considered the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, including the Department of Defense or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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7th Sustainment Brigade
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing
20th Engineer Brigade
213th Area Support Group
402nd Army Field Support Brigade
507th Corps Support Group
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Mission Statement: Produce a weekly newspaper that provides the command leadership team a means of disseminating command information to servicemembers on Logistical Support Area Anaconda and subordinate 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) units throughout Iraq. Contents of the paper will target enlisted servicemembers, officers, and civilian staff as well as primarily highlight the mission and experiences of 316th ESC units and personnel, with a secondary objective of detailing the activities of the LSA Anaconda community.

Female Soldier battles multiple deployments

by Spc. Charlotte Martinez
Anaconda Times staff



Sgt. 1st Class Amy M. Adams

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Women throughout history have overcome difficulties far and wide, and for the present day woman, those difficulties may have changed slightly, but still exist. Single mother, Soldier, student and accountant, Sgt. 1st Class Amy M. Adams, tells about her story as a present day woman.

Adams, who is a member of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), originally joined the Army to pay for college and is the first female in her family to join the military.

“I came in (the Army Reserve) while I was still in high school,” Adams said. “I have been a Reservist ever since. It’s always been a part-time thing for me.”

Adams has two uncles who served in the Vietnam War, one with the Marines and the other, a fellow Soldier.

“My family is) very proud of me. They are very supportive,” she said.

Adams had her 8-year-old daughter, Maisie, while she was in college and keeps in touch with her any way she can while deployed.

“She is very supportive and understanding, since this is her third deployment with me. She is just a strong child. We keep in touch a million different ways; e-mails, letters, phone calls,” Adams said with a smile. “Motherhood has made me the person that I am today.”

In the civilian world, Adams is an accountant. Though she is not licensed, she does have the degree to show for it she said.

“I am currently trying to further my education to teach high school math,” Adams said.

Adams is the casualty operations noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the 316th and spends most of her days in the Joint Operations Center.

“We track and report any wounded, deceased and anything else relating to ca-

sualties for all six brigades,” she said. “We track them out of theater for all their stages of medical care. Then we report it to the general, so he knows where his troops are and what their status is.”

Though being an accountant versus being in casualty operations are two completely separate roles, Adams said she was lucky to get the casualty operations position.

“On this deployment, it’s been very eye opening being in casualty operations,” she said. “A lot of people are oblivious, but when you spend all day, everyday reading about (casualties across Iraq and what has happened to them), this trip has definitely been an awakening experience.”

Adams has been in the Reserve for 11 years, has been deployed to both Afghanistan and Iraq and says her best year so far was while she was a platoon sergeant at company level with the 23rd Adjutant General Company under the 99th Regional Readiness Command.

“I am very ambitious,” she said, “I want to go all the way to the top, maybe Sergeant Major of the Army or something.”

When she does manage to get a moment to enjoy a hobby, Adams said she loves to play softball and also enjoys distance running.

“Between work, school, being a single parent and the Army, I don’t get much time for hobbies,” Adams said with a smile. “My life is (my daughter’s) life.”

While deployed this year, Adams has been re-enlisted by Gen. David Petraeus, the commander for Multinational Force-Iraq; had the opportunity to meet the Chief of the Army Reserve, Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz; greet the Vice President during his visit and received a presidential phone call, from President George Bush.

“I got the phone call by recommendation,” she said, “Someone recommended me and I made it through all the other levels. It’s kind of like an award.”

Adams continues to have a smile on her face, even through all the challenges she faces on a day-to-day basis. This mother, Soldier, student, and civilian maintains a good attitude and outlook on life.

“Walking away from this deployment, I have a better appreciation of life and how good we have it at home,” Adams said, “I have a better appreciation of everything I have been blessed with.”

Worship services

PROTESTANT – TRADITIONAL		
Sunday	7:30 a.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel
	9:30 a.m.	Provider Chapel
	10:30 a.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
	11 a.m.	Castle Heights (4155)
	5:30 p.m.	Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
	7:30 p.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel
PROTESTANT – GOSPEL		
Sunday	11 a.m.	MWR East Building
	Noon	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
	2 p.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel
	3:30 p.m.	Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
	7 p.m.	Provider Chapel
PROTESTANT – CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP		
Sunday	9 a.m.	MWR East Building
	10:30 a.m.	TOWN HALL(H-6)
	8 p.m.	Eden Chapel
	2 p.m.	Castle Heights (4155)
	7 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
	9:30 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
Wednesday	8 p.m.	Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
PROTESTANT – LITURGICAL		
Sunday	9 a.m.	EPISCOPAL Freedom Chapel
	11 a.m.	LUTHERAN (Chapel Annex)
	3:30 p.m.	EPISCOPAL (Tuskegee H-6)
PROTESTANT --MESSIANIC		
Friday	8:30 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)

PROTESTANT—SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST		
Saturday	9 a.m.	Provider
PROTESTANT—CHURCH OF CHRIST		
Sunday	3:30 p.m.	Castle Heights (4155)
ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS		
(Sacrament of Reconciliation 30 min prior to Mass)		
Saturday	5 p.m.	Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
	8 p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
	11 p.m.	Air Force Hospital Chapel
Sunday	8:30 a.m.	Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
	11 a.m.	Provider Chapel
Mon-Fri	11:45 a.m.	Provider Chapel
Mon,Wed,Fri	5p.m.	Gilbert Memorial
LATTER DAY SAINTS-(LDS)-(MORMON)		
Sunday	1 p.m.	Provider Chapel
	3:30p.m.	Freedom Chapel (West Side)
	7 p.m.	Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES		
Friday	6 p.m.	Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
ISLAMIC SERVICE		
Friday	Noon	Provider Chapel (West Side)
PAGAN/ WICCAN FELLOWSHIP		
Thursday, Saturday	7 p.m.	Eden Chapel
BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP		
Tuesday	7 p.m.	Eden Chapel

Please note, schedule is subject to change.

Do you have a story idea?

Contact the Anaconda Times anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil

Soldiers have reason to

Breathe easy

by Staff Sgt. Joy Pariente

13th Public Affairs Detachment

Personal health is always a concern while deployed. One major concern is the quality of air we're breathing everyday, everywhere we go. Servicemembers stationed around Iraq can breathe a little easier thanks to vigilant testing and monitoring of air quality standards by Multi-National Corps - Iraq's surgeon's office.

Testing is performed on a routine basis to measure the levels of particulates, metals, volatiles, semi-volatiles and other chemical contaminants in the local air, said Maj. Tara L. Hall, chief, Preventive Medicine, MNC-I. Air samples are taken around the country and sent back to the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine for analysis. Not only does the USACHPPM send back the results of the testing, but they include a risk assessment based on how the personnel are exposed to the air and the duration of the exposure, Hall explained.

"From a health perspective, there is currently no data to suggest that a long term or short term health risk exists from poor air quality," Hall said. If anything, Iraq tends to have a higher particulate contaminant load due to the large amounts of airborne dust and sand present, Hall added.

Much of the speculation about air quality in Iraq is due to perception, Hall said. "Burn pits are the primary method of trash disposal in Iraq," she explained. Most forward operating bases begin their trash control efforts by using burn pits. However, as the FOB develops, so does the waste management. "As the FOB matures, it moves to better long term solutions for dealing with trash in a way that meets our standards," Hall said. This means closed burning practices are used, including incinerators.

The health threat from burn pits has been assessed and is considered to be low and indicates no signs of short term or long term health concerns, Hall said. "Additional particulate load can come from smoke," she explained. The smoke acts as an irritant and may cause coughing or sneezing, Hall said.

"The body has tremendous mechanisms to clear itself of particulate contaminants," she explained. These defenses include mucus and cilia, which trap contaminants and purge them from the body, and the lungs' cough reflex is also helpful in removing particulates.

Many servicemembers have requested to wear masks to protect themselves from exposure, an act which Hall said may cause more harm than good. Unless the mask is properly rated and fit tested, it offers little to no protection. It also brings health risks such as making breathing more difficult and overheating.

Soldiers can still take a deep breath and feel safe, Hall assures. "Preventive medicine assets are working very hard to monitor exposure and institute controls for the protection of the Soldiers," Hall said. She added, however, if you are showing any type of symptoms of or have concerns about exposure related risks, see your medical care provider immediately.

Sheik signs agreement with Mayor



Photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Air Force Col. Ralph Romine, the Garrison Commander of LSA Anaconda, meets with Sheik Mohamad Abass Aliwi, from the village of Al Zor, March 17, to sign a contract that will allow a member of Sheik Aliwi's village to occupy a booth at the Iraqi Bazaar here.

SHOUT OUT!!!

TELL YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS HOW MUCH YOU MISS THEM AND HOW YOU CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK

Contact the 316th Public Affairs Office for scheduling.

E-mail Ronald.Reeves@iraq.centcom.mil

Iraqi engineers take lead on fixing road craters

by Spc. Jay Venturini

Anaconda Times staff

FOB WARHORSE, Iraq – As of late, the main goal of Coalition Forces has been transitioning sustainment missions back to the Iraqi Soldiers. While it has been a slow moving process, there has been progress on many fronts.

The 1203rd Engineer Battalion made history by being the first unit to work side by side with the 5th Iraqi Army Engineer Company. Their mission was to fill craters holes left by improvised explosive device detonations on a frequently traveled road by Coalition Forces.

"Our mission was to show the Iraqi Soldiers the proper steps of filling craters and then step back and just supervise," said Lt. Col. Tommy Vickers, the 1203rd Eng. Bn. commander. "After we filled in the first hole, the Iraqi Soldiers really took over and did a great job."

More than five craters were filled on a 500 foot stretch of Route Marybeth, where the mission took place. Once the asphalt was laid and smoothed, both units left their mark by stamping their unit number into each site. "The Iraqi Soldiers went beyond what we expected from them," said Capt. Mark Mouse, 224th Engineer Company Commander. "In fact, I think they tried to show off their skills a bit to show our Soldiers up."



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

American and Iraqi Soldiers work together to smooth freshly laid asphalt into a crater hole on Route Marybeth.

To fill the craters they used a cement truck to transport and mix the asphalt from the asphalt factory located on LSA Anaconda. This, however, will be a luxury that will often be unavailable for the Iraqi Soldiers. Bags of concrete and wheelbarrows will be more readily available to the Soldiers, so in future missions, that will be how they mix asphalt.

With the Iraqi Army taking over the road repair mission, the 1203rd will be able to focus their time on other issues.

"Having the Iraqi Soldiers running their own missions is a combat multiplier," said Vickers. "It will double our efforts and we will be able to concentrate more on route clearance."

To make the Iraqi engineers more versatile, they will train on every aspect of the road repair mission.

"Unlike our Soldiers who have one set job for the missions, their Soldiers will have to know everything from truck driving to pulling security, plus everything on the engineering side of it as well. These Soldiers will be very well trained and multi-talented," said Vickers.

Ultimately, the goal of Coalition Forces is to transfer all logistical missions to the Iraqi government. To accomplish this, Coalition Forces will have to first be confident in their abilities to sustain control of the country. For the Soldiers of the 1203rd this historic first mission with the 5th Iraqi Army Engineer Company was the first step to gaining the confidence.

"I am looking forward to the day where we can completely hand over the reins to the Iraqi people and we can all go home with the mission accomplished," said Vickers.

Bombs on target: loading the bomb

by Air Force Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Editor's note: This article is the second in a series.

The call goes out and people begin to scatter. There's a sense of urgency in the air that can almost be felt, like static electricity that makes the hair on your arms stand up. The pilots and crew chiefs are preparing for the mission -- to rumble like thunder overhead and strike their targets from the sky like lightning.

Thanks in part to armament systems specialists like those assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, the lightning strikes its target with precision.

"A lot of people think we just attach the bombs to the racks," said Master Sgt. Cliff Hamon, 332nd Viper aircraft maintenance unit noncommissioned officer in charge.

"There are a lot of things we do to ensure they actually hit their targets," said the sergeant deployed from Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

Armament systems specialists, commonly known as weapons loaders, are responsible for maintaining, loading and troubleshooting weapons systems, as well as loading them onto aircraft. They also load and service aircraft gun systems on F-16 Fighting Falcons, said Staff Sgt. Peter Yuenger, 332nd Viper AMU armament systems specialist, who is deployed from Hill AFB.

One particular component armament systems specialists maintain is alternate mission equipment, which attaches to the wings of an aircraft and, in turn, creates a means to attach munitions.

"When (aircraft) have scheduled maintenance, we'll turn them in and we'll completely strip the jet; there won't be any AME on it," said Tech. Sgt. Delbert Schoonover, 332 EAMXS Viper AMU armament systems specialist. "When we get it back, we have to reinstall the AME and do a reliability check before we can accept any bombs to hang on the

aircraft."

Each weapons loading crew consists of three members who fill positions numbered one through three.

The first position is the supervisor, who ensures the whole operation is going smoothly and according to checklist procedures. The person in the second position assists the supervisor and is responsible for the tools required for the load. The person in the third position transports the munitions to the aircraft. Together, the three Airmen perform function checks, load the bombs onto the aircraft and make sure they're properly configured, Yuenger said.

The entire loading process, on average, can take anywhere from 45 to 90 minutes.

"It all depends on the crew who's doing it, which munitions have to be loaded and if there's a press for the aircraft to be loaded in a specific amount of time," Yuenger said.

The mission requirements, directing which munitions should be loaded and in what configuration, are generated by the theater commander and relayed to the crews by the expeditor, Hamon said.

The expeditor manages the people on shift and sets loading priorities according to the flying schedule and timelines. He or she coordinates with munitions flight Airmen to get the bombs, missiles and bullets as well as chaff and flare (used as counter-measures when aircraft are fired at) required to load the aircraft.

While the weapons loaders need to be able to perform their duties in a fast and efficient manner, safety is a priority.

A lot of career fields train on an annual or semi-annual basis," Hamon said. "In our career field, we train and certify on weapons safety and handling on a monthly basis."

Another responsibility of an armament systems specialist is maintaining the avionics storage management system, which allows the aircraft to communicate with the load on board such as GPS-guided munitions.

"The aircraft has a computer box in it that sends



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes

Staff Sgt. Corey Smith, a 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron Viper Aircraft Maintenance Unit armament systems specialist, connects a bomb to the alternate mission equipment as it's supported by the jammer here, March 13. The jammer is the vehicle that is used to load munitions onto the aircraft. Sergeant Smith is deployed from Hill Air Force Base, Utah.

a signal throughout the aircraft," Schoonover said, describing the avionics storage management system.

Yet, sometimes problems arise with the mission-critical system. "You can have a malfunction anywhere through the wire harness or the wing span or a circuit card gone bad in the box," said Yuenger.

"It's like the engine light coming on in your car," Yuenger said. "You know something is wrong, but you don't know what it is."

It's the weapons loader's job to locate the problem and correct it.

With all their responsibilities, the armament systems specialists assigned to the 332nd Viper AMU are integral in helping the Air Force maximize its key capability of precision targeting.

"You feel like you have a really big part in what's going on [with the war]," Yuenger said. "There's a saying in this career field, without weapons it's just another airliner."

Iraqi Security Forces, U.S. Special Forces, detain 10 in overnight operations

Story by CJOSTF AP

CJOSTF Public Affairs

BALAD, Iraq – Iraqi Security Forces, advised by U.S. Special Forces, detained five suspected insurgents and five additional suspects during three separate operations March 17.

In Iskandariyah, north of Kalsu, the Hillah Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics unit captured three suspected insurgents who are believed to be responsible for facilitating a suicide attack at the Hateen apartment complex in Iskandariyah. According to intelligence reports, the suspects also participated in attacks against Iraqi and Coalition Forces in Babel province. Three additional suspects are being held for further questioning.

In Mosul, Ninewa ISWAT detained a suspected insurgent with ties to Al Qaeda in Iraq groups in the Kirkuk area. The suspect is reported to have knowledge concerning the transport and facilitation of foreign fighters and suicide bombers, as well as have knowledge about the financing of attacks against Iraqi and Coalition Forces. Two other suspects are being held for further questioning.

South of Suwayrah, 8th Iraqi Army Division Soldiers detained a suspected member of a vehicle-born improvised explosive device cell. Members of this cell have been linked to attacking Iraqi and Coalition forces in Babil and Wasit provinces.

Women's history wall



By Spc. Thomas Keeler

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Spc. Lamisha Foster (right), an automated logistics specialist with A Company, 168th Brigade Support Battalion, gives a tour of a wall she created featuring women from all cultures and time periods to commemorate women's history month to Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch, commanding general of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and Soldiers from the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

Digger Dawg rocks U.S. Troops

by Sgt. Gary Hawkins

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq –Digger Dawg, a country rock music band from Boston, performed for approximately 100 servicemembers at MWR east here March 19.

The six-member group is touring the Middle East to show their support to Soldiers serving in the Global War on Terrorism.

“It’s all about the troops because they are here and we need to support them,” said Jenn Bostic, lead singer for the group. “We wanted to give them some love and show them we care. That’s the least we can do.”

According to Bostic, the band had signed up with the USO for a tour and had been waiting word when they would be asked to go

“We signed up over two and a half years ago and had almost given up when the USO called and asked us when can we be ready to go,” said Bostic. “If there was a tour I wanted to do, it was to be a part of an Iraqi tour,” she said.

The band formed about 4 years ago in Boston, combining the talents of six Berklee College of Music graduates. In the short time they have been together they have opened for such stars as Alan Jackson and Reba McEntire. Long term goals aside, they have always been anxious to preform in Iraq.

“This is the biggest thing any of us has ever done,” said Bostic. “We could have gone to Hawaii, California or other places. But we really wanted to go to Iraq.”

According to Bostic they were excited to get a chance to perform in the Middle East. Their family and friends were happy for them and helped any way they could.

“When our friends found out about the tour to Iraq,



Photo by Sgt. Gary Hawkins

Jenn Bostic, lead vocalist of Digger Dawg, a country rock band from Boston, belts out a tune during a USO concert at here March 19.

they helped in many different ways and told us to give the troops our love,” said Bostic. “This is the only way we can support the troops, to share love through our music with them.”

Train in Taji starts moving cars to Baghdad

by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude

1st Sustainment Brigade

CAMP TAJI - The day started off with a stuck switch that needed to be repaired before Mustapha, the conductor for the Iraqi National Railways, could move his Chinese built, diesel-electric train down the tracks to collect the 54 flat cars destined for Baghdad’s central rail yard, March 20.

“We’re removing 54 old, defunct train cars from the Taji rail yard in an effort to clear up space for future rail moves,” stated Maj. Ira Baldwin, a Laurinburg, N.C., native and mobility chief for the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

The Taji rail spur project started weeks ago with the arrival of the first train since 2004, and continued with a crew of Iraqi National Railway workers cleaning tracks and repairing switches. Eventually this spur will be used by both Coalition Forces and the Iraqi Army as a place to move heavy cargo in and out of the Central Receiving and Shipping Point and the Taji National Depot.

“This proof of purpose does several things,” states Baldwin. “It serves as a test bed for the U.S. Army to conduct rail operations in Iraq, and builds confidence in the Iraqi National Railway. Eventually, having a viable rail system, the Iraqi Army will have a means by which they can transport equipment, provide good jobs for Iraqi workers, and aid in the overall growth of the Iraqi economy.”



Photo by Sgt. Stewart Brown

An Iraqi train conductor maneuvers a large number of flat cars up and down four sets of train tracks in an effort to line up 54 train cars that were pulled out of the Taji rail spur bound for Baghdad.

This optimistic approach was not just evident in the Soldiers, but the conductor and his crew as well.

“I’m very pleased with the way the railroad has returned,” said Mustapha.

A twenty-seven-year veteran of the rail business, Mustapha got his start from friends who encouraged him to become a driver. Now he operates a number of aging trains that were purchased years ago from places like Spain, Turkey, China, and Germany.

“I hope to get newer equipment and that the tracks will be improved and the depreciation to the equipment will slow down,” said Mustapha. “God willing, by which they can transport equipment, provide good jobs for Iraqi workers, and aid in the overall growth of the Iraqi economy.”

Staying connected



Photo by Air Force Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Andrew Smith of the 332nd Services Squadron, reads a book during a video session at the Red Tail Library here, March 22. The Read to Me program is a way for deployed servicemembers to record themselves reading books to their children at home. Many servicemembers have found that the program gives them the chance to communicate and be interactive with their children, even when they are far away. Smith, who has two children, is deployed from the Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station, N.Y.

Oasis wins DFAC of the Quarter



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Lt. Colonel Charles Frost, the G-4 Assistant Chief of Staff, presents members of the Oasis Dining Facility with the DFAC of the Quarter Award March 14.

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Soldiers field new protective vests in Baghdad

by Tech. Sgt. Amanda Callahan

Army News Service

BAGHDAD—After stomping around for a few days with the new Improved Outer Tactical Vest, 4th Infantry Division Soldiers came back with mixed reviews for the new tactical gear.

The new vest has several design differences and some added features, which keep the Soldiers in mind when they’re in times of trouble.

The first noticeable difference in the vest design is the way Soldiers don the IOTV. Rather than slipping into it like a jacket, as with the Interceptor Body Armor, they lift it over their head and pull down, which sometimes requires another person to help get the vest on properly.

Soldiers can also detach the fasteners on the wearer’s left shoulder, and slip into the vest from the side.

Another key design change is the addition of a quick release lanyard that reduces the vest to its component pieces, which allows the wearer to get out of the vest easily in case of an emergency situation.

Though the troops had mixed feelings about the new vest, they ultimately said the IOTV is a new piece of equipment they will work with the best they can.

“I noticed right away how the weight is more evenly distributed with the new vest,” said Pfc. Joe Piotrowski, a native of Chicago, who serves as an infantryman with the 4th I.D. Military Transition Team, Multi-National Division - Baghdad. “However, there’s more Kevlar on the inside of the vest, so it got twisted easily and made it uncomfortable.”

Piotrowski said he managed to fix the twisted Kevlar inside the vest and hasn’t had the problem since.

Soldiers also commented on the increased risk of heat rashes that develop from wearing a large, hot piece of equipment.

“The new vests are more ergonomically correct, but they don’t breathe very well,” said Sgt. Jayme Turner, a native of Salt Lake City, Utah, who serves as a combat medic with the 4th I.D. Military transition team. “With the old system, when it’s hot out, you get a little rash in the summer; however, with this system you get a much bigger rash all over.”

One of the perks of the new design was a flush front, where Soldiers have more room to attach accessories to carry weapon magazines and other necessary equipment.

“Tactically, it’s better because I have more places to put my magazine pouches to make them more accessible,” said Piotrowski. “Also, you don’t have two sides to worry about; you get to work with the whole front flap, which is nice. I like the built-in side plates



Photo by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans

Pfc. Joe Piotrowski, with the 6th Iraqi Army Division Military Transition Team, 4th Infantry Division, dons his Improved Outer Tactical Vest on March 14 before a mission in Baghdad. He said the new vest is more comfortable than the Interceptor Body Armor and has a better carrying system for his equipment.

as well. They’re a lot better than the other ones.”

Turner and Piotrowski both said the quick release system was a good feature to have in case of an emergency; however, it needed to be reworked to prevent it from pulling the vest apart when it wasn’t intended.

“The quick-release feature was a good idea to help Soldiers get out of their vest in an emergency situation, but I hear it’s a pain to put back together,” said Piotrowski. “If something does happen where you’re submerged under water or something like that, it’ll be a lot better to take this vest off rather than the other one where you have to take it off like a jacket. The new system will just fall off of you.”

He added that something needs to be done to make the quick-release system not as easy to pull, just to ensure the vest doesn’t fall apart during combat operations.

Soldiers have added tape to the cord on the quick

release system to prevent it from loosening when it wasn’t intended to.

Due to the added components of the IOTV, Soldiers now understand it’s not just their weapon and vehicle they need to properly maintain, but their armor as well.

Turner said it’s more important to perform preventative maintenance checks and services than with the old system. He explained how he had seen a vest malfunction on a Soldier while climbing into a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter.

The IOTV was issued to Soldiers who initially received the IBA for their deployment and have 120 days or more remaining on their tour. For the most part, Soldiers are adapting to the new system, and they are working with the IOTV to make it better as the days go on.

Maintaining triggers



By Air Force Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- Senior Airmen Derand Javier and Chris Moore, 64th Aircraft Maintenance Unit weapons specialists, test the head spacing of a .50-caliber machine gun on an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter. Head spacing is the timing at which the rounds flow through the machine gun. Both Airmen are deployed from Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

Humanitarian mission builds relationships, understanding

Story and photos by Sgt. Gary L. Hawkins

Anacanda Times staff

LSAANACONDA, Iraq – Members of the 213th Area Support Group, from Allentown, Penn., along with 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, handed out clothes, shoes, school supplies, soccer balls, toys, personal hygiene items and of course, candy to kids in Al-Sijla, Iraq, a town about 20 minutes west of here.

While deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, most attention is focused on trying to stop violence and help rebuild the nation. A different and often overlooked mission in a combat zone is the humanitarian mission. To see first hand some of the smallest victims of OIF is something everyone should try to experience.

“I came away with a better understanding of the Iraqi culture and people today,” said Sgt. 1st Class Todd Malloch, a member of the 213th ASG, “Interaction with the local people is a humbling experience.”

“These people don’t have much,” said Spc. Edwin Belvis, a member of the 213th ASG. “We’re coming into their country and want to help them any way we can. It makes our job easier and hopefully we make some friends along the way.”

While handing out supplies to approximately 50 kids, the village seemed to come alive to see what the commotion was about.

“This is not about myself, but about the people that

are happy,” said Sheik Sa-ad Hashim Altla. “My people are happy towards the US. We want to see America here everyday,” he said.

Humanitarian missions help build relationships with Iraqi people. They are designed to demonstrate that the Coalition Forces want to help as much as possible.

“A humanitarian mission is mainly about trying to help out the local people,” said Pfc. James Little, a member of the 2-320th. “Handing out books, school supplies, clothes and other stuff they need is important for us to show we care.”

After all the supplies had been distributed, the Soldiers enjoyed a traditional Iraqi meal with the Sheik and villagers of Al-Sijla. For Soldiers pulling security from the vehicles, food was brought out for everyone to share.

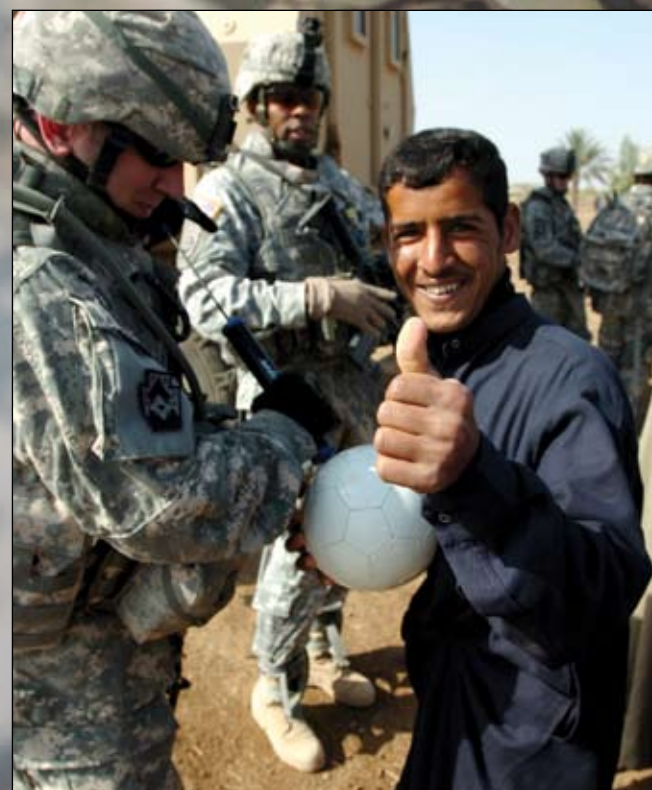
“You do hard job, we thank you very much,” said Sheik Sa-ad. “Visit more times, your guys are welcome in this safe town.”

The mission was a success for both the Army and citizens of Al-Sijla. It brought together a community of Iraqi people not often visited by Soldiers and a chance for the Iraqi people to show their gratitude to the Soldiers.

“We are coming into their community to try and befriend them,” said Belvis. “We want to win the hearts and minds of the people and it really makes you feel good when you accomplish that.”



Two Iraqi boys show off their new school supplies that were given to them by the 213th Area Support Group during a Humanitarian Mission in Al-sijla village March 14.



Sgt. 1st C. Jeffrey Malloch, a member of the 213th ASG, pumps life into a new Soccer ball for an excited Iraqi youth during a Humanitarian Mission in Al-sijla village.



Young Iraqi children receive toys, school supplies and clothes from the 213th ASG.



Sgt. 1st. Class Jeffrey Malloch, a member of the 213th ASG, sizes up a soccer shirt for a growing Iraqi boy.



Spc. George Simons, a member the 213th ASG, shows an Iraqi boy how to operate a toy.



Members of the 213th ASG, along with 2nd Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, sit down for a traditional Iraqi meal with Sheik Sa-ad Hashim Altla and members of the village of Al-Sijla after delivering much needed school supplies, clothes, soccer balls, toys and candy.

Members of the 213th ASG, along with 2nd Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, share a traditional Iraqi meal with Sheik Sa-ad Hashim Altla. Both units handed out school supplies, clothes, toys and of course candy and soccer balls.

Tex goes North: Interpreter earns visa, relocates to U.S.

by Spc. Thomas Keeler
Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Many years of difficult, dangerous work here has paid off for an Iraqi interpreter. “Tex,” as he is called, was recently granted a special immigrant visa and will be home – in the United States – by the end of March. “I am one of the luckiest guys, and I hope that I will act like a Soldier,” said Tex. Special immigrant status is available for Afghan and Iraqi interpreters and their families under section 1059 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 2006. Five hundred personnel are permitted into the United States this year under the program, an increase from 50 in previous years. Spouses and children are not counted against the number. Tex, an Iraqi native, has worked on Logistical Support Area Anaconda since the beginning of the war and has worked as an interpreter for Civil Affairs for more than three years. In addition to working for the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), he has also worked with the 3rd Corps Support Command and the 13th ESC. The 316th ESC is “the best, and full of energy,” said Tex, recalling the many missions taken out to the schools and into the communities. “(Iraq is) a free country now, but it still needs more work,” he said. “You can feel the freedom, but there are still some issues.” An Iraqi citizen can gain entry to the United States in three ways: through a lottery, as a refugee or an interpreter, or through marriage or with a spouse or family. Once admitted into the United States as a permanent resident, a person

can apply for citizenship. Perhaps the quickest way to gain citizenship is to join the United States Armed Forces, which Tex has expressed an interest in. Tex already has made contacts in the United States and has a place to stay when he arrives. Master Sgt. Steven Blue, noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the civil affairs section of the 316th ESC, was indispensable in helping Tex through the process of acquiring his visa. “I’ve been helping out with 11 guys who started their packets, and he’s the second one to get his appointment,” said Blue. Blue’s efforts do not go unnoticed by his co-workers. “Guys will come and look for him to find out what their status is,” said Sgt. 1st Class Leona Propson, who also works in civil affairs. “They’ve now hunted him down in the gym.” Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch, commanding general of the 316th ESC, even paid a visit to Tex before his first trip to the U.S. “The duty which you have taken on, helping us here in Iraq to make your home country better, is quite amazing,” said Couch. Tex is excited about his new life ahead. “I want to start a new job, a new career, a new everything,” he said. “I want to learn how to pay the bills, phone, credit card. We don’t have those things here.” Although Tex will be leaving his parents and siblings behind, he is confident he will see them again – perhaps soon. “Maybe I will invite them to the United States as tourists,” he said.



Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Interpreter and Iraqi native “Tex” tries on a belt buckle and Stetson hat presented to him by the civil affairs staff March 5, prior to Tex’s departure to the United States. After working for three years with three different sustainment commands here as an Iraqi interpreter, Tex earned a special immigration visa which allows him to live in the U.S.

Iraqi leaders visit injured SOI

by Spc. Anthony Hooker
Anaconda Times staff

LSA Anaconda, Iraq – Leaders of a local town of Duluyiah visited the Air Force Theater Hospital here March 16, to show support for two patients who are members of the “Sons of Iraq,” an Iraqi-based organization that performs watchdog duties in their respective neighborhoods. Duluyiah mayor, Mohammed Marwan, Iraqi Police Lieutenants Colonel Ishmael Faied Ali and Mohammed Khalid, and Mullah Najim, Duluyiah’s SOI leader, were the guests of Air Force Col. Timothy Halligan, the hospital’s deputy commander. All four were given a tour of the medical facility, allowed to mingle with Iraqi patients and their families, and sat down with Halligan to discuss some possible ways to improve the medical quality of life for American and Iraqi citizens. The SOI were injured in an incident earlier this month when a truck carrying 2,000 pounds of explosives was spotted by SOI members. The SOI engaged the truck and its driver detonated the explosives, killing two Iraqi policemen and three SOI. The two now at the hospital were critically injured in the attack. Local leaders were later informed the primary targets of the explosive laden truck were the SOI headquarters in Duluyiah, the Iraqi Police station and the Kaelaf mosque. The intervention by the SOI was speculated to have saved dozens of lives.

Cpt. Anthony Keller, commander of Bravo Troop, 1st Battalion 32nd Calvary Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, was the group’s guide during the visit, helping usher the way to the injured SOI and providing a familiar voice to the gathered procession. “After hearing what happened, the Mullah asked if he could visit,” Keller said. “He’d heard about the hospital and was interested in coming to see what kind of care the Americans were providing.” The leaders were given a full tour were they met hospital administrators, witnessed surgeries in progress, and learned how the care wards operate. When the leaders were able to meet with their fellow men-at-arms, they got to see first hand how much damage had been received and what efforts the hospital staff had made to stabilize the patients. Halligan also explained how the staff accommodates family members who wanted to remain with their loved ones. Hallinger made a point to share with the leaders that his workers remain dedicated to preservation of life, even under great duress. He told a story of how a rocket landed near the hospital, injuring five staff members. Najim expressed his thanks to Halligan, his staff, and the victims of the heinous bombing. “I can see that this hospital treats both Soldiers and insurgents the same,” Najim said through a translator. “If I get injured, I am confident the Americans will do what they can to help save my life.” Hallinger introduced the idea of forming a mentorship with local medical professionals, hoping that such a possibility could lead to greater care for Iraqis in their own communities.



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Major Deborah McCabe, a physician’s assistant, describes a patient’s injuries to local Iraqi leaders March 16 at the Air Force Theater Hospital here.

“By taking them through the hospital we are able to give insight to the things we do everyday,” Hallinger said. “We cannot sustain the effort we put forth indefinitely. . . there will need to be a transition at some point. We just want to be able to know that Iraqis will be able to provide a high level of care.” Air Force Cpt. Regina Tow, a registered nurse at the hospital, said the leaders’ visit was good for the patients and the residents. “This was great,” Tow said. “Just (for the leaders) to have contact with their own people was wonderful.” Tow agreed that some sort of mentor program involving Iraqis would bring big dividends. “We struggle with language barriers, customs – just a lack of familiarity. Having locals on staff could make a huge, huge impact.” Keller used the opportunity to implore the leaders to vigorously pursue the punishment of Al-Qaida operatives and sympathizers. He said events like the walk-through put a face on the problem he fights every day. “People in this country don’t envision things the way we have been taught,” Keller said. “If they don’t see it, it’s not there.” “This is only a speck,” Keller continued, “but it’s like the country kid who goes to the big city. They visit, and then come back and tell tales which influences their (friends and neighbors).” “The Iraqis need to know that we really are here to help,” Keller said. “I’d rather build hospitals than fight.”



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

Soldiers from the 40th Transportation Company prepare to clear a room during the Wedge Warrior competition here. The competition tested the Soldiers in 19 different basic warrior skills.

Messages From Home

Tell your Soldier how much you miss them and how you can't wait to see them.

Contact the 316th Public Affairs Office to print your message.

E-mail Anaconda.Times@iraq.centcom.mil

Emergency maintenance



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Garcia

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- Airman 1st Class Kyle Johnson, a 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron vehicle maintainer, performs preventive maintenance on a P-19 Emergency Vehicle.

America’s warrior

A snapshot of servicemembers in the Global War on Terrorism



Spc. Vanquilla S. Pinkney

Full name and rank: Spc. Vanquilla S. Pinkney.
Unit: 673rd Medical Company.
Job Title: Dental Assistant.
Time in service: 6 years.
Age: 26.
Hometown: Harlem, New York.
Family (By name and Relation): Evelyn Pinkney (grandmother).
Pastimes (Hobbies): Dancing, Singing, Shopping.
Life-changing event/moment: Losing my brother two years ago.
Lesson Learned: Never take life for granted.
The person I admire the most: My grandmother.
Why I joined the military: To better myself, and to take care of my grandmother, and to fight for my country.
If I wasn’t in the military I would be: Going to school, working, and supporting my family.

The one thing I would change about the Army: Less deployments.
The one thing I think the Army got right: Health care system for family members.
What makes a good Soldier: Having a good leader to mentor them.
What makes a good leader: Mentoring their soldiers to become better leaders.
Unusual fact about you: Loving life and living every moment of it.
Motivations in life: Knowing I have family at home and pride in everything that I do for my country and myself.
Goals: Finish school so I can become a nurse and take care of people.
Hardest part of my job here: Being away from my loved ones.
Best part of my life: Doing something positive for myself and my country.

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 Trials- 50m, 100m, 200m: Friday – 8 a.m.&p.m.	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.	day- 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.	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
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:		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. 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.	Saturday- 7:30 p.m. 6-on-6 volleyball tourney: Friday- 7 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:
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SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

Movie Times

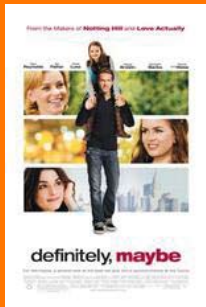
Wednesday, March 26
5 p.m. Strange Wilderness (PG-13)
8 p.m. Juno (PG-13)
Thursday, March 27
5 p.m. Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins (G)
8 p.m. Shutter (R)
Friday, March 28
2 p.m. Definitely, Maybe (PG-13)
5 p.m. Step Up 2 (PG-13)
8:30 p.m. 21 (PG-13)
Saturday, March 29
2 p.m. Fool's Gold (PG-13)
5 p.m. 21 (PG-13)
8 p.m. Step Up 2 (PG-13)
Sunday, March 30
2 p.m. 21 (PG-13)
5 p.m. Fool's Gold (PG-13)
8 p.m. Definitely, Maybe (PG-13)
Monday, March 31
5 p.m. Fool's Gold (PG-13)
8 p.m. 21 (PG-13)
Tuesday, April 1
5 p.m. 21 (PG-13)
8 p.m. Step Up 2 (PG-13)
(Schedule is subject to change)

Movies Coming Soon

Witless Protectin (PG-13)
Vantage Point (PG-13)
Nim's Island (PG-13)
Spiderwick Chronicles (PG-13)

New Movies

Definitely, Maybe (PG-13)



A political consultant in the midst of a bitter divorce attempts to delicately divulge the truth about his past relationships to his curious young daughter, who simply won't stop asking questions until she's satisfied with all the answers. Ten-year-old Maya (Abigail Breslin) is heartbroken to see her parents splitting up, but she's determined to find out precisely how it was that mom and dad came together in the first place. When Maya starts questioning her father Will (Ryan Reynolds) about his life before marriage, dad's memories soon drift back to the time when, as a naive Wisconsin native and aspiring politician hoping to work on the presidential election, he first arrived in New York City. In order to prevent his perceptive little girl from predicting the outcome before his story is told, Will carefully changes the names of his three romantic interests, creating a hopelessly romantic puzzle that highlights both the joys and hardships of true love.

Step Up 2 (PG-13)



Director Jon M. Chu takes the helm for this footloose sequel set at the Maryland School for the Arts and following the journey of a rebellious street dancer who struggles to fit in at the prestigious school. Andie (Briana Evigan) may show great promise as a dancer, but she just can't seem to let go of her old life and get a fresh start. With Baltimore's hottest underground dance contest looming on the horizon, Andie joins forces with top dancer Chase (Robert Hoffman) while simultaneously helping to sharpen the skills of her outcast classmates.

Fool's Gold (PG-13)



Ben "Finn" Finnegan (Matthew McConaughey) is a good-natured, surf bum-turned-treasure hunter who is obsessed with finding the legendary 18th century Queen's Dowry—40 chests of exotic treasure that was lost at sea in 1715. In his quest, Finn has sunk everything he has, including his marriage to Tess Finnegan (Kate Hudson) and his more-rusty-than-trusty salvage boat, "Booty Calls." Just as Tess has begun to rebuild her life, working aboard a mega-yacht owned by billionaire Nigel Honeycutt (Donald Sutherland), Finn discovers a vital clue to the treasure's whereabouts. Certain that his luck will change with the newfound information, Finn maneuvers himself aboard Nigel's yacht and, using his good-natured charm, convinces the tycoon and his Blackberry-wielding, celebrante daughter, Gemma (Alexis Dziena), to join him in the pursuit of the Spanish treasure. Against Tess' better judgment, the search rekindles her love...of discovery.

21 (PG-13)



Ben Campbell (Jim Sturgess) is a shy, brilliant M.I.T. student who needing to pay school tuition finds the answers in the cards. He is recruited to join a group of the school's most gifted students that heads to Vegas every weekend armed with fake identities and the know-how to turn the odds at blackjack in their favor. With unorthodox math professor and stats genius Micky Rosa (Kevin Spacey) leading the way, they've cracked the code. By counting cards and employing an intricate system of signals, the team can beat the casinos big time. Seduced by the money, the Vegas lifestyle, and by his smart and sexy teammate, Jill Taylor (Kate Bosworth), Ben begins to push the limits, and the challenge becomes staying one step ahead of the casinos' menacing enforcer: Cole Williams (Laurence Fishburne).

STUPID STATE LAWS

Ever wonder just how dumb things can be? Does your state have dumb laws? Read on and find out. The next few weeks, the Anaconda Times will have a series of dumb and stupid laws for each state. Many of the laws have been verified, but many have been taken from sources which do not include law citations. The laws cited below have been taken from news groups, web sites and city governments. Remember, something had to have happened to get these laws passed. Some laws have been repealed, but not all; some are still on the books.

Alabama

- Boogers may not be flicked into the wind.
- You may not have an ice cream cone in your back pocket at any time.

Alaska

- It is considered an offense to push a live moose out of a moving airplane.
- While it is legal to shoot bears, waking a sleeping bear for the purpose of taking a photograph is prohibited.

Arizona

- When being attacked by a criminal or burglar, you may only protect yourself with the same weapon that the other person possesses.
- Hunting camels is prohibited.

Arkansas

- The Arkansas River can rise no higher than to the Main Street Bridge in Little Rock.
- Alligators may not be kept in bathtubs.

California

- No vehicle without a driver may exceed 60 miles per hour.
- Nobody is allowed to ride a bicycle in a swimming pool.

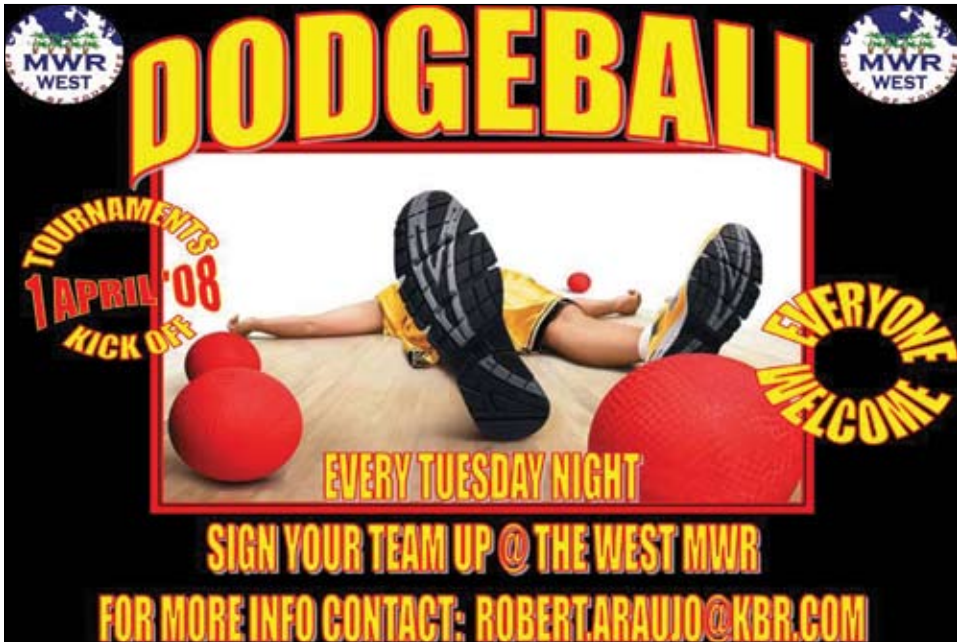
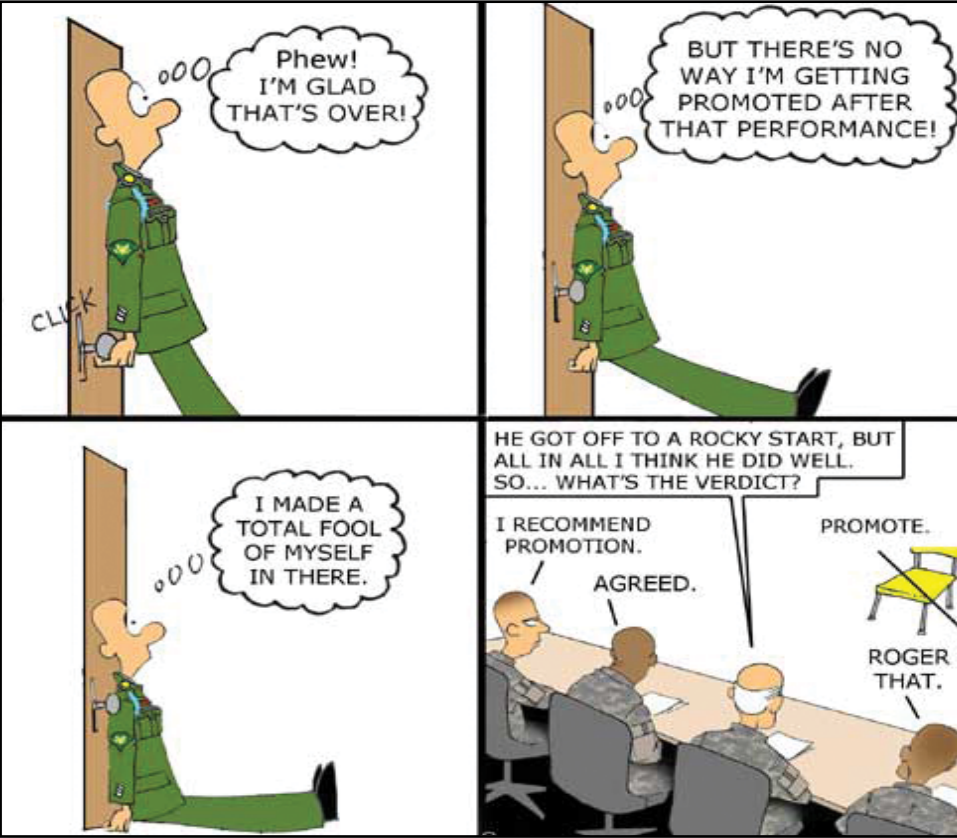
Colorado

- It is illegal to crash into obstacles on a ski slope.
- Throwing missiles at cars is illegal.

Connecticut

- It is illegal for fire trucks to exceed 25mph, even when going to a fire.
- You can be stopped by the police for bicycling over 65 miles per hour.

PVT. MURPHY'S LAW



Upcoming sports on AFN

Wednesday 4/2/08 NCAA BB: Women's elite 8 live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports NCAA BB: NIT semifinal live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra NCAA BB: Women's elite 8 live 5:00 a.m. AFN/sports NCAA BB: NIT semifinal live 5:30 a.m. AFN/xtra NBA: New Orleans @ Orlando replay 12:00 p.m. AFN/sports MLB: New York Mets @ Florida replay 5:00 p.m. AFN/sports MLB: Kansas City @ Detroit live 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports	Thursday 4/3/08 NBA: Indiana @ Boston live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports NBA: Golden State @ Dallas live 5:30 a.m. AFN/sports MLB: Texas @ Seattle live 6:00 a.m. AFN/xtra MLB: Colorado @ St. Louis replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/sports MLB: Toronto @ New York Yankees replay 5:00 p.m. AFN/sports MLB: Chicago White Sox @ Cleveland live 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports	Friday 4/4/08 NCAA BB: NIT Championship live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra; replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/sports NBA: Chicago @ Cleveland live 4:15 a.m. AFN/sports NBA: Houston @ Portland live 6:30 a.m. AFN/sports MLS: San Jose @ LA Galaxy live 7:00 a.m. AFN/xtra MLB: Toronto @ New York Yankees replay 4:00 p.m. AFN/sports MLB: Chicago White Sox @ Detroit live 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports
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Saturday 4/5/08 MLB: Philadelphia @ Cincinnati live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra MLB: Seattle @ Baltimore live 3:00 a.m. AFN/prime NBA: San Antonio @ Utah live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sorts MLB: Texas @ Los Angeles Angles live 6:00 a.m. AFN/xtra NBA: Dallas @ Los Angeles Lakers live 6:30 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/sports MLB: Tampa Bay @ New York Yankees replay 3:00 p.m. AFN/sports Tennis: Sony Ericsson Open, women's final live 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports MLB: Boston @ Toronto live 9:00 p.m. AFN/prime NASCAR: Nationwide Series: O'Reilly 300 live 11:00 p.m. AFN/xtra	Sunday 4/6/08 MLB: New York Mets @ Atlanta live 12:00 a.m. AFN/prime NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament final 4 live 2:00 a.m. AFN/sports MLB: Pittsburgh @ Florida live 3:00 a.m. AFN/prime NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament final 4 live 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports MLB: Texas @ Los Angeles Angels live 6:00 a.m. AFN/prime MLB: Houston @ Chicago Cubs replay 8:00 a.m. AFN/xtra NBA: Orlando @ Cleveland replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/xtra NBA: Washington @ Chicago replay 1:30 p.m. AFN/xtra MLB: Arizona @ Colorado replay 4:00 p.m. AFN/xtra NHL: Chicago @ Detroit live 8:30 p.m. AFN/prime NBA: Golden State @ New Orleans live 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports NASCAR: Sprint Cup Series: Samsung 500 live 9:30 p.m. AFN/xtra
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PGA Tour: Shell Houston Open live 11:00 p.m. AFN/prime NBA: Dallas @ Phoenix live 11:30 p.m. AFN/sports	Monday 4/7/08 NBA: San Antonio @ Portland live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra; replay 4:00 p.m. AFN/sports NCAA BB: Women's final 4 live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports MLB: Chicago White Sox @ Detroit live 4:00 a.m. AFN/prime NBA: Los Angeles Lakers @ Sacramento live 5:00 a.m. AFN/xtra NCAA BB: Women's final 4 live 5:30 a.m. AFN/sports Tennis: Sony Ericsson Open men's final replay 9:00 a.m. AFN/xtra AFL: Chicago @ Orlando replay 11:00 a.m. AFN/xtra NBA: Dallas @ Phoenix replay 12:00 p.m. AFN/sports Indy Car: Honda Indy Grand Prix of St. Petersburg replay 6:00 p.m. AFN/xtra MLB: Philadelphia @ Cincinnati live 8:30 p.m. AFN/sports	Tuesday 4/8/08 MLB: Tampa Bay @ New York Yankees live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament championship game live 5:15 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 2:00 p.m. AFN/sports; replay 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports MLB: Cleveland @ Los Angeles Angels live 6:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
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Turning wrenches



Photo by Sgt. Stewart Brown

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Spc. Alexis Sanchez, a generator mechanic and native of New Brunswick, N.J., with the 377th Transportation Company, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, works to repair a generator.

Rollout rolls on: MRAP fielding continues at LSAA

by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – The Mine Resistant Ambush Protected fighting vehicles keep coming.

The first MRAP shipment arrived here in October, and the Army Material Command has been fielding MRAPs to units in this sector regularly since December.

Overall, Soldiers are glad to be getting the vehicles.

“The Humvee is more maneuverable, but the MRAP provides better protection,” said Sgt. Daniel Grove, a military policeman with the 164th Military Police Company.

Units around the sector come here to exchange up-armored Humvees for MRAPs in a one-for-one swap. Also Soldiers spend a week in training: 30 hours of operator-drivers training, and 40 hours of maintenance training. On the final day, operators drive over unimproved roads within the base and take an exam, followed by an end-of-course-critique.

Alfredo DeJesus, a field service representative and instructor at the Army Material Command here, said most Soldiers come to his class with some knowledge of the vehicles already, but the training class gives them a better understanding.

“I’m very repetitious. I like reviewing all the stuff I’ve gone through from day one, all the way to day four,” said DeJesus. “We continue training and maintaining, and the same information we get is the same information we give to the boys.”

“I love working with the Soldiers,” he said. “That’s



Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Spc. Michael Morgan, a driver and gunner with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, performs preventative maintenance checks and services on his team’s Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle after a day of training here March 5.

the best part of the day, and that’s the main reason I’m here.”

Soldiers agree that although the MRAP is more top-heavy than the Humvee, the MRAP is also safer and more stable when it comes under attack.

“I’m always out on the road with EOD (explosive ordnance disposal). We’ve had one that was blown up... all that happened was a hole in the tire. Nobody was hurt,” said Pfc. Matthew Viebag, driver and gunner with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment.

“I’ve gotten to drive them before, but this time I’m getting the training on them,” said Viebag.

“With more teachers we have under our belt, the more easier the course is for us to explain, the more information we can put out to the guys,” said DeJesus. The safer they are will assist them in returning home to their love one.

Iraqi NCO academy graduates newest class

by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Anaconda Times staff

FOB Q-WEST, Iraq – More than 30 Iraqi Soldiers gathered at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center here March 25, to mark their graduation from the Iraqi Army Noncommissioned Officers Academy, Class 03-08.

The Iraqi course trains, teaches and mentors Iraqi Soldiers towards continuing the battle on their own, and the Soldiers are trained in more than 30 different subject areas, including physical fitness, marksmanship, first aid, Army values, and the duties and responsibilities of the noncommissioned officer.

The three-week course is similar to the Army’s Warrior Leader Course, which trains lower enlisted Soldiers to become leaders.

“It’s an honor to take part in the graduation ceremony today,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Hunt, the senior noncommissioned officer of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, in remarks made to the graduating Iraqi Soldiers.

“The Iraqi Army is diverse – it’s a melting pot of religions, ethnicities, and tribal affiliations, yet all Iraqi Soldiers wear the same uniform, as well as the same flag, and must be tolerant of those who do not share the same beliefs,” said Hunt.

Hunt said Iraq needs protection now more than ever, but suggested it’s the Iraqi’s turn to stand up to the insurgents bent on disrupting Iraqi society.

“Know that the Coalition Forces stand by your side, but make no mistake: it is your fight.”

Several individual Iraqi Soldiers were recognized for various achievements, such as excellence in the Army Physical Fitness Test, marksmanship, and also a competition called the Combative Gladiator.



Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Command Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Hunt, a member of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, congratulates an Iraqi Soldier who recently graduated from the Iraqi Army Noncommissioned Officers Academy here March 25.

“We try to teach them how to clear rooms and run checkpoints, said Sgt. 1st Class William Whidbee, commandant of the Iraqi Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy and a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

“They’ve come a long ways.”

“When they first get there, they don’t know too much, but when they leave, they know a lot more,” said Whidbee.

Three Coalition Forces instructors help Whidbee during the course, as well as two Iraqi instructors. Training is done at locations around the base, and at the end of each training cycle, the Coalition Forces likes to challenge the Iraqis to a soccer match.

“The last game, the beat us pretty bad,” said Whidbee. “It was 8-1.”

High praise for ASG




Photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch, commanding general of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), praises Soldiers of the 213th Area Support Group for their hard work during a deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The unit received 23 Bronze Star medals, 55 Meritorious Service medals and 45 Army Commendation medals in a ceremony held March 19 here.

Got Eggs?

by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – There are many words to describe them: poached, hard-boiled, sunny side up, over easy, fried; but in this case, eggs are described as one thing, here, again.

LSA Anaconda received the first shipment of fresh shelled eggs, March 21, to mark the end of a ban that started in March 2007, due to an outbreak of avian influenza in Kuwait.

Chief Warrant Officer Monifa Dickson, the Senior Veterinary Service Technician with the 43rd Medical Battalion (Veterinary Services) out of Fort Hood, Texas, played a key role in clearing up some misunderstandings with the eggs and the bird flu epidemic, in order to get shelled eggs back into dining facilities across Iraq.

Dickson said she started by contacting the Coalition Forces Land Component Veterinarian to get his guidance and support, who turned her over to his commander, who took her to Multinational Corps-Iraq’s C4 and from there, she said, they started to push to get shelled eggs back into theater.

“The MNC-I C4 helped submit a packet to the CFLC commanding general and it had my list of all approved sources that we can pull (eggs) from,” Dickson said. “We needed the MNC-I C4 food operations to draft a formal request to the USARCENT/CFLC for the commanding general’s recommendation to bring shelled eggs back.”

The ban was finally lifted on Jan. 11, this year.

“Since avian influenza is seasonal, (MNC-I) did not want to put the eggs back in prematurely with out making sure there were no more concerns or issues,” she said.

The truck delivering the shelled eggs arrived the

morning of March 21, and was greeted by two veterinary service technicians with the 43rd, Sgt. Rafael Tebar, from Puerto Rico and Staff Sgt. Joseph Fardella, from San Antonio, Texas, who immediately did a receipt inspection on the eggs.

To begin their inspection, Tebar and Fardella ensured the eggs stayed in the appropriate temperature range throughout the entire trip. The eggs must maintain a temperature of 37-41 degrees Fahrenheit. They also stuck a thermometer into an egg to check it’s internal temperature.

Next, the technicians chose random eggs out of the 110 cases delivered to check for flaws in the egg’s exterior.

The inspectors checked for cracked, leaking and dirty eggs. “They should not have stains or discoloration,” Dickson said. “We have to ensure that we are getting a quality product. Sgt. Tebar stated that they were an overall good lot.”

The inspectors also provide instruction on the inspection process to DFAC leadership.

“In case we are not there, our job is to educate the accountable officers and the dining facility managers on what to look for upon receipt of the eggs,” she said.

Now that shelled eggs are available, DFAC managers and accountable officers can order them through the distribution company Agility, who will pick one of seven approved sources to fulfill the supply and demand of the customer, Dickson said.

LSA Anaconda is one of 11 logistics hubs for Iraq and will be responsible for getting eggs to other DFACs and bases. Dickson says Anaconda serves 11 DFACs with eggs.

“Overall, there was a lot of confusion and miss-education on why there were not shelled eggs in the-



Photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

Sgt. Rafael Tebar, a veterinary food inspection specialist with the 43rd Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services) out of Fort Hood, Texas, checks eggs for deformities, here March 21.

ater,” Dickson said.

Though the process was long and tedious for Dickson and everyone else involved, she feels it was well worth the effort.

“I love hard-boiled eggs, that’s why I wanted them back so badly,” she laughed.

Doctor knows best



Photo by Air Force Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- Dr. (Capt.) Sasha Thomas, 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron flight surgeon, checks the ears of 1st Lt. Brent Beck, 777 EAS C-130 Hercules pilot, during an upper respiratory exam here, March 28. Dr. Thomas is responsible for the healthcare of all aircrew members. Both Dr. Thomas and Lieutenant Beck are deployed from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.



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LSAA Hard Bodies show their stuff



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Top Left: Shamieka Johnson, a civilian contractor employee, shows off her muscles for the judges at the Hard Body competition held at the MWR West March 22. Johnson was awarded first place for the female competition.
Top Right: Erik Kirby and Beau Taylor pose for the judges at the Hard body competition. Kirby (left) placed first in the men's category.
Bottom Left: Capt Marilyn Keene with the 56th Multifunctional Medical Battalion. Keene placed second and was awarded best routine.
Bottom Right: Anthony James flexes his muscles for the Hard Body competition. James placed second in the men's category.



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker