

Ramadi Star



Camp Ramadi Command Information Newsletter

APRIL 28, 2009

The eight-man "Comm till it Hurt" team from CLB-4 pulls a 14-ton MRAP as part of the Firemen's Challenge held on Camp Ramadi, Iraq, April 19, 2009. For more on the Challenge see page 3. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



CAMP RAMADI TAKES ON THE CHALLENGE

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SAFETY NOTES

By Army Maj. Kasey Vu
Camp Ramadi Safety Officer

Hello Tenants of Camp Ramadi!

As I sit and draft this article, I can't help but realize that it has suddenly gotten hot in this little slice of heaven! I would venture a guess that the days of cool temperatures and overcast skies are over. For the next several months, we can look forward to long, hot and dusty days and nights. With this recent increase in temperature, our safety focus obviously turns to those things we can do to avoid being victims of heat injuries.

The simplest thing we can and should do to avoid heat injuries is to simply hydrate our bodies. Drinking water is the best method to hydrate ourselves, although flavored water and sports drinks such as Gatorade will also work. Try to avoid caffeinated drinks such as sodas, energy drinks and coffee. These drinks may contain liquid, but the caffeine in them will dehydrate you more than the liquid will help.

A close second to drinking water to prevent heat injuries is to eat a balanced diet. As the temperature increases and your body sweats through physical activities, you are losing nutrients and salts, in addition to water. Eating a balanced diet will help replenish your body with the salts and nutrients you lose through sweating. Whatever you do, DON'T skip meals and then try to make it up by drinking energy drinks to keep going. That combination is a guaranteed heat casualty waiting to happen!

Last month, I talked about the continued problem we have of vehicles speeding on this camp, and reminded everyone to slow down. It appears that this call went

unheeded. To gain compliance, we are looking into installing a number of speed bumps around camp, especially in those areas with heavy pedestrian traffic. Be on the look out for these speed bumps as you drive around camp in the next several weeks.

Another reminder I would like to put out is for pedestrians to not walk out in front of vehicles driving down the road. Many of the vehicles on camp are large, very heavy, have big blind spots and cannot stop on a dime. Some of these vehicles, such as ambulances and QRF, are on their way to respond to critical emergency situations. If they have to slow down to avoid running into you, they lose valuable response time. So please be cognizant and stay to the sides of the roads if you are a pedestrian.

One last reminder – the next Camp Ramadi Safety Council Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 5 at 10:30 a.m. It will be held in the Mayor Cell Conference Room by building 2610 (next to Army Finance). All unit safety officers and representatives are requested to attend.

As always, Chief Warrant Officer Curry and myself are available if you have any questions or concerns. Our contact information is as follows:

Office: Bldg 2610, Room 5

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Continue to integrate safety into your everyday activities and operations. Have a safe and productive month! 

**In case of any emergency: Fire- Medical -Security
CALL..... 911**

AVAILABLE
THROUGH ALL
DSN PHONES



Members of the Camp Ramadi Fire Department gather for a photo April 26, 2009.
(Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

The Camp Ramadi Fire Department gives Fire Warden classes every Saturday at 2 p.m. at the Camp Ramadi Fire Station. Classes are meant to teach Camp Ramadi tenants proper use of a fire extinguisher, how to identify fire hazards and fire safety.

If you have general questions about fire safety, extinguishers, smoke alarms or fire warden training, call: DSN: 344-0770

If you find an unexploded ordnance, or for any other emergency, call the Ramadi Operations Center: VOIP: 696-5966/5967 DSN: 344-0696/2179

TROOPS COMPETE IN FIREMEN'S CHALLENGE

By Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr
81st BCT Public Affairs

With the hot Ramadi sun beating down on them and a crowd of people cheering, 80 Marines, Soldiers and Sailors from across Camp Ramadi, Iraq, navigated their way through a grueling seven-event Firemen's Challenge April 19, 2009 designed to challenge their strength, endurance and spirit.

"I think people had a good time," said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Tara Smith, a psychologist from Philadelphia working at Camp Ramadi Combat Stress. "It was challenging. Some people aced the course, some people really struggled, but I think for the average person it was difficult and fun at the same time. People were able to cheer on their teammates and build that unit camaraderie and have a good time."

The idea for a Firemen's Challenge materialized after Army Lt. Jeffrey Edelman of Surprise, Ariz., the officer in charge of Combat Stress, decided he wanted to do something for the camp.

"Lt. Edelman really cared about doing something positive for the base to build morale, build unit camaraderie, have some fun competition, help people get to know each other and also to advertise what Combat Stress does for the base," said Smith.

Edelman took his idea to the Camp Ramadi Fire Department who ran with it. Twelve firefighters spent three weeks designing the course and preparing for the challenge.

"I've been out here before and I had a uniform on before," said Fire Chief Willie Wardy of Dover, Del., a 22-year veteran of the Air Force, "so I know how it is to be out here away from loved ones. I thank [the servicemembers] for everything they do and we're here to support them."

On the day of the challenge, the firefighters walked through the course 30 minutes before it began, giving participants the first glimpse of what they had agreed to.

The 1-158th Field Artillery's team, the "Anteaters", kicked off the competition.

"We didn't know what to expect," said "Anteater" Army Sgt. 1st Class Vincent Moscatello from Lawton, Okla. "We wanted to set the standard. It hurt at the end. It was grueling."

"The tire pull was deceptively hard," added Army Capt. David Peyok from Boise City, Okla., who was one of the very first competitors. "I didn't think it was too bad during the actual pulling, but when I turned to run to the next event I had some wobbly knees. Guess it took more out of me than I thought."

Each member of
See CHALLENGE page 21



Army Spc. Shane Zoellmer from Seatac, Wash., a member of the 81st BCT, aims a fire hose at targets as firefighter Mike Whittle guides him during the Firemen's Challenge April 19, 2009 at Camp Ramadi. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Marine Lance Cpl. Frances Garcia from Brooklyn, N.Y., a member of CLR-27, pulls a 125-pound tire behind her as her team, the "WES Team", and other participants cheer her on during the Firemen's Challenge April 19, 2009 on Camp Ramadi. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Army Capt. David Peyok from Boise City, Okla., a member of 1-158th FA, pulls a fire hose as Lt. Scott Sheehan and Firefighter Chad Thompson look on during the Firemen's Challenge April 19, 2009 on Camp Ramadi. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)




Marine 1st Sgt. Brian Priester of Detroit, a member of 1st Radio Bn., drags a 160-pound dummy to the finish line of the Firemen's Challenge. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)

Marine Corps Commandant visits Ramadi Marines

By Marine Cpl. Ryan Turnage
RCT-6 Public Affairs

Morale was high for the Marines and Sailors of Regimental Combat Team 6 when the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. James T. Conway, and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, Sgt. Major Carlton Kent, visited Camp Ramadi, Iraq, April 9, 2009. Eager to speak to the Marines of RCT-6, Conway congratulated

them for continuing to make progress in Iraq. The commandant went on to say operations in Iraq have drastically changed in the past two years and we are reaching the final five yards of our mission. The two leaders spoke to the Marines and Sailors about upcoming Marine deployments and structuring the force to meet future challenges, to include the use of reserve forces and new equipment that will be utilized in future operations. 



Gen. James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, are escorted off the flight-line on Camp Ramadi April 9, 2009. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Ryan Turnage)



Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James T. Conway greets Col. Matthew A. Lopez, commanding officer of RCT-6, on Camp Ramadi April 9, 2009. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Ryan Turnage)



Gen. James T. Conway, Commandant of the Marine Corps, and Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, visit with Regimental Combat Team 6 Marines and Sailors aboard Camp Ramadi April 9, 2009 to discuss finishing current operations in Iraq and upcoming deployments to Afghanistan. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Ryan Turnage)

HEALTH CORNER

By Army Lt. Col. Stephen Anderson
81st BCT Surgeon Cell

The Art of Sleep

About half of all Americans don't get enough sleep. In our busy life, we often trade sleep time for other activities, work, TV, video games, etc. The benefits of getting adequate sleep far outweigh the extra hour or two squeezed out of our day. The hormones that regulate your appetite, blood sugar and mood function much better when you are not sleep deprived. Try some of these simple steps to improve your quality of sleep.

Take time to relax

- It is important to take the time to wind down and relax before trying to sleep.
- Relaxing signals your body that it is time to slow down and rest.
- Establish a relaxing night time ritual, such as soothing music, reading or meditation.
- Avoid stimulating activities such as internet surfing, TV or phone calls.

Darker is better

- Your body regulates your sleep cycle in response to the presence or absence of light.
- Try dimming the lights as evening progresses.
- When it is time to sleep, try to make the room as dark as possible.
- Light can suppress the production of melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep.


Put your thoughts to bed

- We all need time to think about and process our day, however the bed is not the place to do it.
- If you have problems "turning off your thoughts" at bedtime, try taking 10-15 minutes a couple of hours before bedtime to record your thoughts in a notebook or journal.
- Sorting out your thoughts for the day and recording them can help keep you organized and also keep you from lying awake at night thinking about your day.

No sugar or caffeine before bed

- Do not use any stimulants before bed. They cause your adrenal glands to produce cortisol, which wakes you up.
- If you need a snack before bed, make it protein. Try turkey or cheese.

Try to get more sleep

- Try an experiment. Get an extra hour or two of sleep every night for a week and see how you feel.
- Chances are you will notice a big improvement. 

CAMP RAMADI INSPECTOR GENERAL




By Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul Scott
81st BCT IG

It is everyone's right to contact an Inspector General. Some key things to keep in mind before contacting the IG are:

- What do you want the IG to do for you?
- Have you given your chain of command an opportunity to address the problem?
- Have you requested assistance from any other source or agency?
- Do you have supporting documentation?

Some issues are not IG appropriate, such as:

- Equal opportunity complaints. See your EO representative.
- Hazardous work conditions. Contact your local safety representative.
- Criminal allegations. Contact your chain of command, CID, NCIS or PMO

When in doubt, ask and we can work to get you to the appropriate person or agency to work your issue. 

Camp Ramadi IG:

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Scott

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The 9th Annual Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon at Camp Ramadi


By Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr
81st BCT Public Affairs

Army Lt. Dax Thomas, a member of 1-158th Field Artillery from Enid, Okla., wanted to do something special for his state.

"I have always wanted to run the Oklahoma City Marathon," he said, "but I ran track in college and it always was ran during season so I could not run it. I also thought it would be a nice way to remember the 168 people that were lost that April 19, 1995."

With the help of 25 volunteers from the Oklahoma National Guard's 1-158th FA, Thomas, a graduate student at the University of Oklahoma, organized his own Oklahoma City Marathon on Camp Ramadi, Iraq, April 24, 2009. Though a sand storm was blowing throughout the race, more than 100 participants from across the camp showed up to run the 26-mile marathon.

Marine Maj. Brian Mullery from RCT-6 took first place in the full marathon, Marine Lt. Patrick Murphy from RCT-6 took first place in the half marathon, and Army Lt. Col. James North, Army Maj. Kasey Vu, Army Maj. Kurt Shevalier, Army Maj. Kurt Rorvik and Army Sgt. Tobais Suhr, all from the 81st BCT, took first place in the relay competition.

"I really hope that people will remember why we fight," said Thomas who ran the entire marathon and placed third. "Prior to 9/11, OKC was the spot on America's soil for the worst act of terrorism. Today we are still fighting people who want to destroy our way of life. I ran the marathon for not only all the people that were killed in OKC or on 9/11, but all servicemen and women that have given their lives for all. It was an honor to run the marathon in their name." (Photos by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr) 



RCT-6's Marine Maj. Brian Mullery placed first in the full marathon.



1-158th FA's Army Lt. Dax Thomas greets the crowd prior to the start of the race at 0400.



81st BCT's Army Sgt. Tobais Suhr finishes the last leg of the marathon as his relay teammates and Col. Ronald Kapral, the Camp Ramadi and 81st BCT commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Sweeney, the command sergeant major for the 81st BCT, cheer him on.

Chaplain's Corner

By Navy Cmdr. Gary Clore

RCT-6 Chaplain

"In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:5

Every day that we live, we have an opportunity that comprises literally hundreds of decisions from the moment we awake to the moment we sleep. What will I do in the course of this day? Some of the things that we will do are based on strong forms of habit, so much so, that we are not aware we are making decisions. I call these "autonomic decisions." That reminds me of the humorous story someone e-mailed me about a new disorder called AAADD—Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder:

"I decide to water my garden. As I turn on the hose in the driveway, I look over at my car and decide it needs washing. As I start toward the garage, I notice mail on the porch table that I brought up from the mailbox earlier. I decide to go through the mail before I wash the car. I lay my car keys on the table, put the junk mail in the garbage can under the table, and notice that the can is full. So, I decide to put the bills back on the table and take out the garbage first. But then I think, since I'm going to be near the mailbox when I take out the garbage anyway, I may as well

pay the bills first. I take my checkbook off the table, and see that there is only one check left. My extra checks are in my desk in the study, so I go inside the house to my desk where I find the can of Pepsi I'd been drinking. I'm going to look for my checks, but first I need to push the Pepsi aside so that I don't accidentally knock it over. The Pepsi is getting warm, and I decide to put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold. As I head toward the kitchen with the Pepsi, a vase of flowers on the counter catches my eye—they need water. I put

the Pepsi on the counter and discover my reading glasses that I've been searching for all morning. I decide I better put them back on my desk, but first I'm going to water the flowers. I set the glasses back down on the counter, fill a container with water and suddenly spot the TV remote. Someone left it on the kitchen table. I realize that tonight when we go to watch TV, I'll be looking for the remote, but I won't remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to put it back in the den where it belongs, but first I'll water the flowers. I pour some water in the flowers, but quite a bit of it spills on the floor. So, I set the remote back on the table, get some towels and wipe up the spill. Then, I head down the hall trying to remember what I was planning to do.

At the end of the day: The car isn't washed. The bills aren't paid. There is a warm can of Pepsi sitting on the counter. The flowers don't have enough water. There is still only 1 check in my checkbook. I can't find the remote. I can't find my glasses and I don't remember what I did with the car keys. Then, when I try to figure out why nothing got done today, I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day, and I'm really tired."

Let us pray: Gracious God, we take a moment to acknowledge you and ask that you direct our thoughts, our habits, our decisions and our paths. Please grant us your blessings as we seek to honor you with good decisions and good behavior. Bless all hands aboard Camp Ramadi with peace, a good attitude and contentment. Protect all our loved ones with your protection, guidance and care. Amen. 🙏



Servicemembers from across Camp Ramadi celebrate Easter



CAMP RAMADI AT A GLANCE



Catchpenny performs for Camp Ramadi April 1, 2009. (Photo by Army Maj. Paul Fison)



Two Marines enjoy a comedy show from the front row April 13, 2009. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Caroline Picard performs her comedy routine for Camp Ramadi April 13, 2009. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Nell Bryden sings for Camp Ramadi April 24, 2009. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



Bill Dykes performs his comedy routine for Camp Ramadi April 13, 2009. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Army Spc. James Dunn, Army Sgt Gerald Ritter and Army Spc. Cassandra Cabanag enjoy a comedy show Apr. 13, 2009. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Nell Bryden invites a Marine on stage during her show April 24, 2009. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

Recon teams with Iraqi scout platoon in search of caches

By Marine Sgt. Dorian Gardner

RCT-6 Public Affairs

Dogs barked as four Iraqi soldiers advanced toward a house nestled between dirt fields outside Tharthar, Iraq. Once at the house, an Iraqi soldier questioned the male occupant as another soldier kept a watchful eye during a cache sweep in the vicinity of Al Kharma, Iraq, March 23, 2009.

A select group of soldiers from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, formed the Quick Reaction Force Scout Platoon, which led the way in one of the last integrated missions alongside Marines from 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 6, would conduct.

Marines and Iraqis set out early that morning, utilizing CH-53E Super Stallion transport helicopters for transit into the rural farmlands east of Kharma, a small area in eastern Al Anbar province. Once there, they conducted a detailed search for arms caches and evidence of terrorist activity.

After the two helicopters departed the landing zone just beyond the edges of the farmland, reconnaissance Marines working with the Iraqi scout platoon divided their small force into two teams and proceeded north toward houses scattered across the rural landscape. Sweeping from house to house, Marine Gunnery Sgt. Timothy Davis, platoon sergeant of 3rd Platoon, watched as the same Iraqi soldiers who were sitting in his classroom a month prior now conducted searches without the aid of Marines.

"It was a success. [Scout platoon] is ready to go out on their own," he said, taking note of the abilities dis-



Marines and Iraqi soldiers sit in the fuselage of a CH-53E Super Stallion transport helicopter after a cache sweep near Al Kharma, Iraq, March 23, 2009. The two units worked together to annihilate any threat of improvised explosive devices and caches in a designated part of Iraqi farmlands. (Photo by Marine Sgt. Dorian Gardner)

played that morning.

Iraqi Army Sergeant Major Mohanad Najah Abuod led his unit as they successfully conducted tactical searches and demonstrated small-unit leadership, Davis added.


Some of the soldiers of scout platoon have been operating together since 2003 in different conflicts throughout Iraq. A seasoned unit, they came to the reconnaissance battalion in search of specialized training.

"What they needed was proper training and better methods to conduct operations and that's what we gave them," said Davis.

While the scout platoon combed through houses and fields, Iraqi Security Forces and Marines with 1st Battalion, 7th Marines continued the search in a similar rural setting further south, near Al Dayb Al Hasayn. These two sweeps formed a larger Iraqi Security Force operation, and such missions have become more frequent as the command and control capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces have increased.

Although the mission did not reveal any significant finds, Iraqi units throughout the country have demonstrated their abilities to successfully conduct sweeps and searches without aid.

Even though the time Davis and his Marines spent training the Iraqi scout platoon was short, Marines and Iraqi soldiers grew fond of one another during their working partnership.

"Previous work led to unit cohesion, more so with this unit than any other" according to Cpl. David "La Fleur" Montemayor, a reconnaissance Marine with 3rd Battalion. 



Marines and Iraqi soldiers walk to a rally point after an integrated cache sweep, March 23, 2009. Iraqis and Marines worked hand in hand to accomplish this mission as their individual groups broke in two integrated teams and screened houses and farmlands near Al Kharma, Iraq. (Photo by Marine Sgt. Dorian Gardner)

Welcome to Camp Ramadi University

By Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier
81st BCT Public Affairs

Servicemembers on Camp Ramadi can take college courses and complete exams necessary to receive certifications thanks to a resourceful Army specialist with a need, some motivation and a few friends.

Army Spc. Ryan Severson from the 81st Brigade Combat Team and a couple of his friends from the 81st BCT spent countless hours after work and in their down time over several months getting a testing and education center up and running on Camp Ramadi. It can all be credited to Severson's drive, desire to accomplish something during this deployment and frustration with the lack of resources available on Camp Ramadi.

"Coming into the deployment I was bound and determined to go home with more than I came with. Whether that's college, certifications or whatever," said Severson. "Then showing up to Ramadi and finding there's nothing pretty much sucks. But I took some of the Central Texas College courses, fumbled through Go-Army Ed and figured all that out. I was planning to fly to Balad to get [information technology certifications]. I started to look into whether I could just do it here and one thing led to another. I filled out the paperwork and got the approval and it has kind of gone from there. It went from Pearson Vue to Pro Metric to all of this other stuff."

During his off hours and at night he decided to work toward the creation of a testing and education center for the entire base. Severson contacted the testing company Pearson Vue and after extensive research and a long, arduous process became registered to open one of only five testing centers in Iraq, according to Army Capt. Aaron Garner, the assistant S-6 for the 81st BCT and supervisor for several of the Soldiers who created the center. Soon



Army Spc. Ryan Severson spends his off time working at the Camp Ramadi Testing and Education Center he initiated. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

the testing center expanded to offer two separate testing companies, Pro Metric (<http://prometric.com/>) and Pearson Vue (<http://pearsonvue.com/>). It now offers certifications in more than 90 career fields including information technology, insurance, medical and real estate, and an education center and computer lab

**"I saw a Soldier
with a dream and
wanted to help fa-
cilitate that dream"**

**Sgt. Timothy
Kettlewell**

for studying and homework.

Near the beginning of the processes Severson realized he was going to need some help so he began recruiting volunteers. It wasn't long before he had several.

81st BCT Soldiers Sgt. Timothy Kettlewell and Sgt. Bruce Nguyen were the first ones to jump onboard and help out in their spare time.

"I saw a Soldier with a dream and wanted to help facilitate that dream,"

said Kettlewell.

Army Sgt. Brian Nelson, Army Sgt. Tobias Suhr and Army Chief Warrant Officer Philip Keeler, all from the 81st BCT, soon stepped up to offer their support as well.

"They put in a lot of long hours, mostly on their own time, to make something happen for the camp that was originally assigned to an officer who got pulled away for other functions," said Army Maj. Paul Fison, the 81st BCT S-6.

The task of getting the building ready was not easy. Since the group was doing this in their spare time, a lot of the supplies came from unwanted scraps.

"We have had to scrounge computers, parts, chairs, lumber, plug adapters and anything you could think of," Severson said.

Almost immediately upon opening the testing center Severson had servicemembers wanting to take certification tests. In the first week alone he proctored seven tests for Marines and Soldiers on Camp Ramadi.

The education center is a 10-seat computer lab with internet access for education use only. Servicemembers can gain access by having their

See EDUCATION page 22

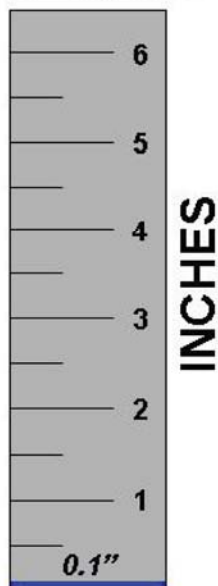


Ar Ramadi, Iraq Climatology (May)



PRECIPITATION

Monthly Mean



Extreme Max: 1.0"
Extreme Min: 0.0"

SKY CONDITION



.5 % ≤ 3,000'
5 % ≤ 10,000'

MONTHLY

Day(s) with:
Rain

2

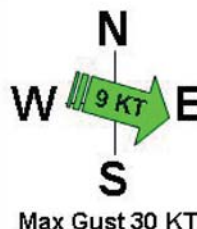
Thunderstorms

2

RH: 54 % (0600D)

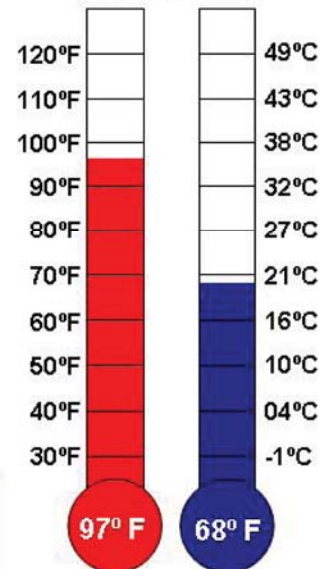
RH: 21 % (1500D)

WINDS

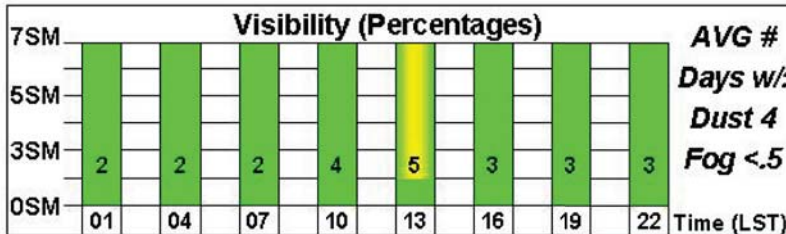


TEMPERATURE

Monthly Mean



Extreme Max: 116°F/47°C
Extreme Min: 50°F/10°C



- The heat Lows over the interior of Iran and SE Saudi Arabia continue to intensify.
- Frontal systems and associated upper level troughs cross Iraq every 5-7 days, but by late May these systems are weak and very rare.
- Ceilings below 3,000 feet are very rare and ceilings below 1,000 feet do not occur.
- By late May the low level northwesterly winds become sustained and slowly strengthen, while dust and haze become more common.
- Low level turbulence is moderate for UAV's and helicopters.

Latin singer Rocio Llamas live at Camp Ramadi!

Date and Time TBD

Keep an eye out for fliers from the 81st BCT MWR



Armed Forces Day 10K Run

MAY 16 MEET AT 0645 AT MWR GYM
RUN KICKS OFF AT 0700



Sponsored by Exchange New Car Sales



HELP US MAKE THE RAMADI STAR BETTER!

What type of things is your unit doing? We want to know! Send your stories, story ideas and/or photographs to emily.suhr@ar.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil by the 23rd of each month.

Photographs need to be in a JPEG or TIFF format. Please include a Microsoft Word document identifying who is in the photo (Identification = full name, rank, unit, duty position and hometown), what they are doing, when and where.

Don't forget to tell us who took the photos and/or who wrote the story!



MNC-I and I Corps Command Sergeant Major Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe speaks to National Guard Soldiers stationed on Camp Ramadi April 27, 2009 during his visit. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

MNC-I Command Sergeant Major visits Camp Ramadi

By Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier
81st BCT Public Affairs

Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, the command sergeant major of Multi-National Corps-Iraq and the Army's I Corps, visited Camp Ramadi, Iraq, April 27, 2009.

Upon his arrival he was greeted at the gate by Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Sweeney, the command sergeant major of the 81st Brigade Combat Team and Washington Army National Guard. This is not the first time the two have met; in fact they are neighbors of sorts. The Washington Army National Guard is based out of Camp Murray, Wash., which is located directly adjacent to I Corps' Fort Lewis home.

During his visit, Grippe met with servicemembers and commands stationed across Camp Ramadi. He ate lunch with Soldiers from 1-158th Field Artillery, Oklahoma National Guard and the 81st BCT. He told the

National Guard Soldiers how important their role is to the War on Terror and that, "the strength of America is its Citizen Soldiers." He also reminded all servicemembers that though "peace is breaking out all over Iraq," they still needed to maintain their vigilance and never become complacent.

After lunch Grippe met with Command Sgt. Maj. Jimmy Venable, the command sergeant major for 1-158th FA, and other senior NCOs from 1-158th FA to discuss issues and concerns. He also met with Marines from Regimental Combat Team 6 who briefed him on the current Marine Corps operations in Al Anbar Province and their possible future operations. They also talked about how far the Iraq government and Iraqi security forces have come in the province.

Grippe let each unit know that they were accomplishing great things and promised to return to Camp Ramadi later on in his Iraq tour. 🇺🇸



Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, the command sergeant major for MNC-I and I Corps, is greeted by Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Sweeney, the command sergeant major for the 81st BCT, upon his arrival on Camp Ramadi April 27, 2009. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



MNC-I and I Corps Command Sergeant Major Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe gives Petty Officer John Sholos, a corpsman at Camp Ramadi's Shock Trauma, a coin for excellence April 27, 2009 during his visit to Camp Ramadi. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)



May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Sheletha Quillin
81stBCT Equal Opportunity Advisor

Many people think of Asian Americans as one large group with little difference between those in the group. Actually, Asian Americans are one of the most diverse groups of all. As described in DoD Directive 1350.2, an Asian or Pacific Islander is a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. Some of the origins include China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands and Samoa.

This article will focus specifically on the Asian Americans of the Philippine Islands.

History: The Philippine Revolution against Spain began in 1896, ending two years later with a proclamation of independence and the establishment of the First Philippine Republic. However, the Treaty of Paris transferred control of the Philippines to the United States. U.S. rule of the Philippines began in 1899. Partial commonwealth status was granted in 1935. The plan for granting full independence was interrupted by Japanese occupation of the islands during World War II when the Bataan Death March was conducted in the Bataan Province. Finally, full independence was granted to the Philippines in 1946.

Social structure: Certain behaviors or occurrences that are deemed inappropriate or less likely in the U.S. are more acceptable or normal in the Philippines. Some of these include sexual preference, marriage primarily for economic stability and females in leadership positions. Also, unwed mothers and divorce are highly discouraged; getting and staying married are paramount.

Family: The Filipino family structure is different from other Asians because of many outside influences. Malaysian trade routes brought contact with Muslims. Spanish influence continued for over 378 years until the U.S. ousted Spain. Spouses share parental responsibility, authority, and decision making, similar to American culture. Filipinos have an extended family similar to the Chinese, which includes god parents. However, the family is less formal in its relationships. Love, respect, loyalty and responsibility bond the family unit. It is

tremendously important.

Language: The most prominent language is Tagalog. However, there are over 300 different dialects in the Philippines. The others are usually a spin-off of Tagalog but vary depending on the region of the country. One of the interesting aspects of Tagalog is there are no sounds for F, V, or Z. This can create some problems for Filipinos during their language orientations.

Religion: The Catholic religion is the most prominent, again due to the Spanish influence. Approximately 80% of Filipinos are Catholic. The other predominant religion is Islam (7%). The religious values and ceremonies of the Filipinos are not significantly different from other Americans. However, they are significantly different from other Asian Americans.

Education: Philippine education includes realistic training like gardening, quilting and other marketable skills. Teachers incorporate raising the national flag and prayer into the school day. Children sometimes use these creative skills after school to make up games and build their own toys. The school year is also different than in the U.S.; it starts in June and runs through March.

Interesting fact: The yo-yo was invented in the Philippines, but not as a toy, as a weapon! 🙌

Quotes from not so famous, but really nice Filipinos:

"Family is important. It's common to find an entire family all living on the same street. It's cool that I can go to the Philippines and take my family out to eat and party so cheaply. \$1 equals somewhere around 55 pesos. A McDonalds' meal is like \$1, so I can treat five people for only \$5."

Army Capt. Buddy Francisco, 81st BCT

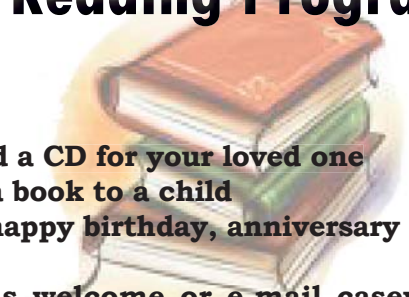
"I am definitely going back there to live when I retire. I love [the Philippines]; it's where my heart is. I miss fish balls [chopped fish rolled into balls and deep fried] and being able to get food or a snack from the vendors in their shacks or on their bikes. The food is much fresher."

Army Staff Sgt. Ronald Cardenas, 81st BCT

Emergency Chaplain Services are available 24/7

To get a hold of the on-call chaplain call
3440-834 or 3440-652 from any DSN.

Camp Ramadi Memorial Chapel United through Reading Program

- 
- ~Record a CD for your loved one
 - ~Read a book to a child
 - ~Wish happy birthday, anniversary or say hello

Walk-ins welcome or e-mail casey.holbrook@ar.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil to schedule an appointment

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings Every Tuesday and Friday at 7 p.m. at the Camp Ramadi Memorial Chapel

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a worldwide fellowship of more than one hundred thousand alcoholic men and women who have banded together to solve their common problems and to help fellow sufferers in recovery from that age-old, baffling malady, alcoholism" (Twelve Steps and Twelve Solutions). It is estimated that over two million men and women have recovered through A.A. Whether it is called "Friends of Bill," "Serenity in the Sand" or A.A., the focus is the same, to help men and women overcome their addiction to alcohol.

If you are struggling with your addiction, I want to invite you to Camp Ramadi A.A. on Tuesday and Friday nights at 7:00 in the Camp Ramadi Memorial Chapel (Bldg 2900). Tuesday nights will be more informal, Friday nights will walk you through the 12 steps of recovery. For further information, call Staff Sgt. Shelley Cline at DSN 318-344-0835.

Chapel Service Times

Sunday

- 0930 Communion Service (Fellowship Hall)
- 0930 Roman Catholic Mass (Chapel)
- 1100 Contemporary Protestant Service
- 1400 Gospel Service
- 1600 Contemporary Worship Service
- 1900 Five Love Languages
- 2000 LDS – Lay Leader
- 2100 Evening Praise

Monday

- 1930 Bible Study (Fellowship Hall)
- 2000 Ugandan Choir Practice

Tuesday

- 1900 AA meeting (Fellowship Hall)
- 2000 Contemporary 1600 Band Rehearsal

Wednesday

- 1900 Gospel Bible Study
- 2000 Gospel Choir rehearsal

Thursday

- 1900 Contemporary 1100 Band Rehearsal
- 2100 Roman Catholic Eucharistic Adoration and Rosary

Friday

- 1245 Muslim Service "Juma'a" prayer
- 1700 Jewish Service
- 1900 AA 12 steps/12 traditions (Fellowship Hall)
- 1900 Gospel Intercessory Prayer
- 2000 Gospel Choir rehearsal

Saturday


- 0900 RCIA (RCT-6 Alamo)
- 1730 Contemporary 1600 Band Rehearsal
- 1800 RCIA (RCT-Alamo)
- 1830 The New Testament Challenge
- 1900 Contemporary 1100 Band Rehearsal
- 2100 Roman Catholic Mass

The Five Love Languages

Every Sunday, at 7 p.m. in the
Ramadi Chapel Fellowship Hall
learn how to enhance the relationships in your life.

New Testament Challenge

Read and study the New Testament. Meetings will be held every Saturday, at 1830 in the Chapel Fellowship Hall.
Do you have what it takes?





C Btry, 1-158th FA claims victory in softball league championship

By Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier
81st BCT Public Affairs

The 2009 Ramadi Softball League season came to an end April 26, 2009 with Charlie Battery, 1-158th Field Artillery's team taking home the trophy following the championship game against the 81st Brigade Combat Team's Team 2.

The winning team's first sergeant, Army 1st Sgt. Dennis R. Cooper, was proud of how his team came from behind in some of their games to win the season 12-1 and their final game with a score of 14-2.

"They play better when they're behind so that they can come back and feel victorious," said Cooper. "They give me a heart attack sometimes because they like to boggle some plays, but they're a good bunch of guys."

Army Staff Sgt. Derrick Grasty from 81st BCT MWR set up the league and organized all the games. A total of 16 team from 12 units stationed on Ramadi started out the season and ten competed for the trophy.

"Staff Sgt. Grasty put all of the schedules together, looked up all the rules, contacted all the captains, held all the meetings, came out to all the games and made sure everyone was fair," said Army Master Sgt. Mark Deandrea, the NCOIC for the 81st BCT MWR.

The league had to put their games on hold for several weeks mid-season due to heavy rain turning the field to mud. Even with several weeks sitting on the bench, all the teams finished strong and league members felt it was worth the wait.

"It was a great season and we've got a great group of guys that we played with," said Army Staff Sgt. Jackie Bruesch from C Btry, 1-158th FA's team. "We all played hard and we're all dedicated. We overcame our adversities and just cruised through to the tournament to take the championship. This is great, with the environment that we're in. We got some time to relax and take a little stress off and spend a little time with our friends out here." 🍷



Members of C Btry, 1-158th FA's softball team pose with their trophy after their championship 14-2 win over the 81st BCT team April 26, 2009 on Camp Ramadi. (Photos by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier and Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Marine Lt. Col. Thad R. Trapp, commanding officer of 2/9 Marines, listens to a translator after Col. Saleh Mahdi Shaheen, Ramadi District Chief of Police, discusses his security concerns in eastern Al Anbar province during a security conference aboard Camp Ramadi, April 6, 2009. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Ryan Turnage)

Iraqi Security Forces discuss security concerns with 2/9, 2/23

By Marine Cpl. Ryan Turnage
RCT-6 Public Affairs

Marine Lt. Col. Thad R. Trapp, the commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, 9th Marine Regiment, recently hosted a security conference aboard Camp Ramadi, Iraq, with several Iraqi Police chiefs from precincts throughout eastern Al Anbar province. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce local Iraqi police chiefs to the Marines of the 2nd Bn., 23rd Marines, the unit that will be replacing Trapp and his Marines.

The event gave Marine Lt. Col. Joe A. Cabell, the commanding officer of the 2/23 Marines, an opportunity to meet key Iraqi leaders he will be working with throughout his deployment.

During the conference, Iraqi security force officials and the two battalion commanders agreed that safeguarding the populace would continue to be the main concern in the eastern Al Anbar province. Even though Iraqis have increased their presence throughout the region, the local populace still fears the possibility of improvised explosive devices on the roads in rural areas, according to an Iraqi official.


"We are currently discussing methods for Iraqi Police to effectively sweep these areas to ensure the

safety of civilians," said Trapp.

The city streets have become safer due to the increased presence of Iraqi security forces, and now the focus has shifted to providing the same level of security in rural areas, said Trapp. Security conferences, such as this, allow Iraqi Security Forces to increase their coordination and cooperation while accomplishing this task.

Trapp and his battalion have fostered an outstanding relationship with the Iraqi security forces, enabling 2/23 Marines to further the progress of a responsible withdrawal of troops, said Cabell. Cabell went on to say he predicts Iraqi Security Forces will make noticeable progress during his battalion's deployment.

"Iraqi Security Forces have matured tremendously since working with the unit before us and throughout our deployment," said Trapp. "If they continue down this path with Lt. Col. Cabell, they will be more than capable of conducting completely independent operations in the next year and a half or so."

According to Trapp, the conference met all his expectations and he has complete confidence in the new battalion's ability to support the Iraqi Security Forces as they increasingly become self-sufficient. 

Crazy Laws

✂ In Thomasville, North Carolina, no airplanes are allowed to fly over the town on Sundays during the hours of 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

✂ In Youngstown, Ohio, it is illegal to run out of gas.

✂ In Oklahoma Females are forbidden from doing their own hair without being licensed by the state

✂ In Willowdale, Oregon; No man may curse while having sex with his wife

✂ In Fountain Inn, South Carolina, Horses were once required to wear pants at all times.

✂ In Texas it is illegal to raise alligators in your home.

✂ In Danville, Pennsylvania all fire hydrants must be checked one hour before all fires.

✂ In Pennsylvania, no man may purchase alcohol without written consent from his wife.

✂ in Eureka, Nevada, Men who wear moustaches are forbidden from kissing women.

✂ In Helena, Montana, A woman cannot dance on a saloon table unless her clothing weighs more than three pounds, two ounces

✂ In Michigan, A woman's hair legally belongs to her husband, consequently she's not allowed to cut her own hair without her husband's permission

✂ In Rochester, Michigan, Anyone bathing in public must have his or her bathing suit inspected by a police officer.

✂ In Massachusetts, Goatees are illegal unless you first pay a special license fee for the privilege of wearing one in public.



Army Capt. Wesley Carter, Army Spc. Christopher Solis, Army Spc. Scott Schroeder and Army Spc. Gerald Spangler, all from 1-158th FA, perform with their band Doublewide April 3, 2009.

(Photos by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)



Army Staff Sgt. Derek Dixon and Army Capt. Buddy Francisco, both with the 81st BCT, perform with their band The Ravens April 3, 2009.

Troops entertain Troops on Ramadi



Marines get into the spirit of the show as four local bands from around Camp Ramadi perform for a packed crowd April 3, 2009.



Army Spc. Taylor Green from 1-158th FA performs with his band House of Black April 3, 2009.



House of Black, made up of Soldiers from 1-158th FA, perform for the crowd of about 200 April 3, 2009.



Marine Lance Cpl. Jacob Allen of RCT-6 opened the show with his band In Fear and Fate April 3, 2009.

Camp Ramadi Phone Numbers

Support

Camp Mayor: 344-0986
KBR Operations: 344-0884
Chaplain's Office: 344-0834
Staff Judge Advocate: 344-0918/919
Public Affairs Office: 344-0767
Safety Office: 344-0920

Medical

Sick Call: 344-0376
Combat Stress: 344-0998

Emergency Services

Fire Emergency: 344-0911
Marine Fire Station: 344-0997
KBR Fire Department: 344-0770

Services

Post Office: 344-0515
MCX / PX: 344-0885
Marine Finance: 344-0886
Army Finance: 344-0763

Camp Ramadi Hours of Operations

Sick Call

0900-1000 & 1600-1700 Monday - Friday
1300-1400 Saturday and Sunday
24 Hours / 7 Days for emergencies

Combat Stress

0800-1700 Monday - Saturday

Dining Facility

0530-0830 Breakfast
1130-1400 Lunch
1730-2000 Dinner
2330-0100 Midnight Chow

MCX / PX

0900-2000 Monday - Saturday
1100-1900 Sunday

Green Beans Coffee

24 Hours / 7 Days

Barber Shop

0900-1900 Daily

Subway

0900-2300 Daily

Alteration Shop

0900-1900 Daily

Gift Shop

0900-1900 Daily

AT&T Calling Center

24 Hours / 7 Days

Laundry Facility

0500-1900 Drop Off
24 Hours / 7 Days Pick Up

Post Office

0830-1700 Monday - Saturday
0900-1400 Sunday

Finance Office

0900-1600 Wednesday and Thursday



Sexual assault awareness and prevention

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Sheletha Quillin
81stBCT, Camp Ramadi SARC

The Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. George W. Casey Jr., addressed leaders at the Army Sexual Assault Prevention and Risk Reduction Training Summit. His words were short, to the point and left a lasting impression.



"When you recognize a threat to a fellow soldier, I expect you to have the personal courage to INTERVENE and prevent sexual assault. As a warrior and a member of a team, you must INTERVENE."

"As a brother, a sister, a fellow Soldier, it is your duty to stand up for your battle buddies, no matter the time or place. Take ACTION. Do what's right."

"We are Soldiers, MOTIVATED to engage and keep our fellow Soldiers safe. It is our mission to prevent sexual assault and to live the Army Values and take care of our fellow Soldiers. We are strongest...together."

Gen. George W. Casey Jr. was right on target with these wise words. However, they are easier said than done. It can be overwhelming to step out of the comforts and security of belonging to a group that sticks together. Warriors don't snitch, right? WRONG!! Warriors do what is legally and morally right. Think of that victim as your mother, sister, wife, son or brother.....then decide what you would do. 🚫

cathyjo.wings@ar.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil

DSN 344-0932

VOIP 696-5171

sheletha.quillin@ar.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil

DSN 344-0919

Camp Ramadi Legal Office

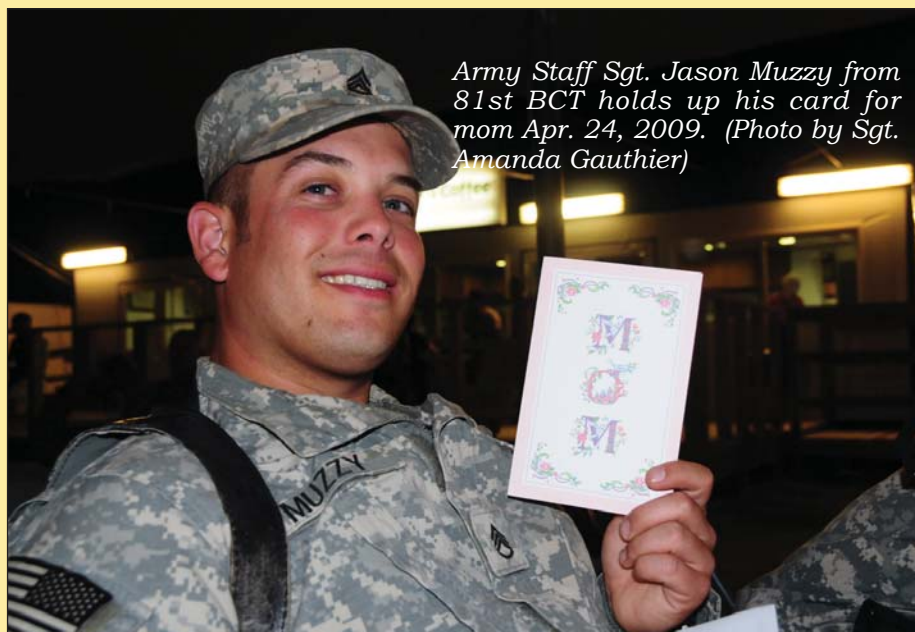
Legal Assistance (bldg 2250) Walk-in hours



Thurs: 0900-1200 & 1300-1700

To make an appointment for another time contact: Staff Sgt. Keeley Weeks, NCOIC, Keeley.weeks@us.army.mil or Keely.weeks@ar.mnf-wiraq.usmc.mil. DSN number 318-344-0919.

Don't forget Mother's Day May 10



Army Staff Sgt. Jason Muzzy from 81st BCT holds up his card for mom Apr. 24, 2009. (Photo by Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

Comics Ready to Entertain

Come see Comedian Scott Kennedy and his "Comic's Ready to Entertain" tour featuring Jack Mayberry from the Tonight Show with Jay Leno and Alonzo Bodden, the winner of NBC's Last Comic Standing

May 5, 2009 at 8 p.m. at the Green Beans Stage

CAMP RAMADI PHOTOS ARE POSTED

We are now posting Camp Ramadi photographs on NIPR. Please copy the following link into "Run" under the start menu to view photos from the 5K Shamrock run, MWR shows, softball games and more.

\\arn02c\AR_Shares\Camp Ramadi\PAO

What makes your mom so special?

Marine
Lance Cpl.
Aundre
Lindsay of
Harrisberg,
Pa., CLB-4



"She's the women who raised me, taught me everything I know, brought me up to be as good as I am now, taught me right from wrong."



Marine
Lance Cpl.
Justin
Simandle
of Santa
Barbra,
Calif., 2/23
Marines

"I really appreciate that my mother showed a lot of leadership in my life as I was growing up. She was always there for me... She's a very strong woman and very loving and tender at the same time."



Marine
Lance Cpl.
Larry John-
son of Mt.
Prospect, Ill.,
CLB-4

"I am adopted. There is a reason she picked me so I feel special and she stuck with me."

This month in history

May 4, 1970 - At Kent State University, four students were killed by National Guardsmen who opened fire on a crowd of 1,000 students protesting President Richard Nixon's decision to invade Cambodia.

May 6, 1937 - The German airship Hindenburg burst into flames in Lakehurst, New Jersey. Thirty six of the 97 passengers and crew were killed. The inferno was caught on film and also witnessed by a commentator who broke down amid the emotional impact and exclaimed, "Oh, the humanity!"

May 8, 1945 - After Soviet leader Joseph Stalin refused to recognize the German surrender document signed at Reims, a second signing ceremony was held in Berlin. Declaring hostilities would end as of 12:01 a.m. on May 9.

May 10, 1994 - Former political prisoner Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as president of South Africa.

May 11, 1969 - During the Vietnam War, the Battle of "Hamburger Hill" began. While attempting to seize the Dong Ap Bia Mountain, U.S. troops repeatedly scaled the hill over a 10-day period and engaged in bloody hand-to-hand combat with the North Vietnamese. After finally securing the objective, American military staff decided to abandon the position, which the North Vietnamese retook shortly thereafter. The battle highlighted the futility of the American military strategy.

May 13, 1846 - At the request of President James K. Polk, Congress declared war on Mexico. The controversial struggle eventually cost the lives of 11,300 U.S. Soldiers and resulted in the annexation of lands that became parts of Oklahoma, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, Utah and Colorado.

May 14, 1607 - The first permanent English settlement in America was established at Jamestown, Virginia, by a group of royally chartered Virginia Company settlers from Plymouth, England.

May 14, 1804 - Meriwether Lewis and William Clark departed St. Louis on their expedition to explore the Northwest. They arrived at the Pacific coast of Oregon in November of 1805 and returned to St. Louis in September of 1806, completing a journey of about 6,000 miles.

May 14, 1796 - Smallpox vaccine was developed by Dr. Edward Jenner, a physician in rural England. He coined the term vaccination. Within 18 months, 12,000 people in England had been vaccinated and the number of smallpox deaths dropped by two-thirds.

May 17, 1792 - Two dozen merchants and brokers established the New York Stock Exchange. In good weather they operated under a buttonwood tree on Wall Street. In bad weather they moved inside to a coffeehouse to conduct business.

May 17, 1954 - In Brown v. Board of Education, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that segregation of public schools denies black children "equal educational opportunity". Thurgood Marshall had argued the case before the Court. He went to become the first African American appointed to the Supreme Court.

May 18, 1980 - Mount St. Helens volcano erupted in southwestern Washington State spewing steam and ash over 11 miles up into the sky. This was the first major eruption since 1857.

May 20, 1862 - President Abraham Lincoln signed the Homestead Act opening millions of acres of government owned land in the West to "homesteaders" who could acquire up to 160 acres by living on the land and cultivating it for five years, paying just \$1.25 per acre.

May 20, 1927 - Charles Lindbergh, a 25-year-old aviator, took off at 7:52 a.m. from Roosevelt Field, Long Island, in the *Spirit of St. Louis* attempting to win a \$25,000 prize for the first solo nonstop flight between New York City and Paris. Thirty three hours later, after a 3,600 mile journey, he landed at Le Bourget, Paris.

May 20, 1932 - Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. She departed Newfoundland, Canada, at 7 p.m. and landed near Londonderry, Ireland, completing a 2,026-mile flight in about 13 hours.

May 21, 1881 - The American Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton.

May 22, 1972 - President Richard Nixon became the first American president to visit Moscow.

May 24, 1844 - Telegraph inventor Samuel Morse sent the first official telegraph message "What hath God wrought?" from the Capitol building in Washington to Baltimore.

May 27, 1937 - In San Francisco, 200,000 people celebrated the grand opening of the Golden Gate Bridge by strolling across it.

May 28, 1961 - Amnesty International was founded by London lawyer Peter Berenson.

CHALLENGE continued from page 3

the eight-person team had to drag a 125-pound tire behind them for about 50 meters, pull the length of a fire hose, carry two 40-pound buckets of water another 50 meters, strike a wood board stuck in a platform repeatedly with a mallet until it gave, shoot water from a fire hose at two targets and finally drag a 160-pound dummy to the finish line.

"We were expecting a physically challenging course," said Marine Master Sgt. James Hillyer from East Palestine, Ohio, a member of 1st Radio Battalion's "King Pin" team. "What we weren't expecting was when we were all done with the course that we'd all be lying on the ground gasping for air."

Still, everyone agreed they would do it again in a minute.

"It's a good way to meet other people and do something different," said Marine Sgt. Jeremy Berg from New Braunfels, Texas, a member of Combat Logistics Regiment 27. "I mean, how many people can say they've done a mock firemen's training course?"

The Firemen's Challenge comes from a stateside tradition in which fire departments challenge one another for fun. They are meant to build camaraderie and give firefighters an outlet to blow off steam. They also demonstrate the physical demands of the job and are often used in training. So how did the servicemembers compare to trained firefighters?

"They did good," Wardy said. "I was surprised, especially by the females. In the fire service you don't have that many females and you don't see too many females doing the Firefighter

Challenge. But, the females here, especially that little short girl with all the heart, Garcia, really impressed me. The servicemembers did great."

Marine Lance Cpl. Frances Garcia from Brooklyn, N.Y., a member of CLR-27, won the "Most Motivated and Dedicated" award after relentlessly giving it everything she had and showing the true spirit of the competition.

"Once you actually start doing it, you're there, you don't give up," said Berg, a teammate of Garcia's.

"Seeing the 125-pound mean machine run through there, showing up everybody, that was something," he added.

Garcia was one of only a handful of women competitors in the highly physical competition.

"The biggest advice that I can give females trying to do something like that is to just have personal pride and know that we've got the heart to at least be able to finish an event like that," said Army Sgt. Rhonda Buffington from Greenville, S.C., a member of 81st BCT. "We might not always come out on top, we might not always have the best score, but we've got just as big a heart as the men do when it comes to finishing the event."

After each of the teams made their way through the timed course, they still had one final event – pulling a 14-ton Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle as a team.

"The best part was pulling the MRAP because it got the whole team together to do one event. Plus it ended up being a lot easier than pulling the tire," said Army Spc. Steven Latre from the "Anteaters".

While their combined times were calculated, the exhausted participants and the devoted crowd made



Navy Lt. Cmdr Tara Smith holds onto the Firefighter axe trophy just before the winners are announced at the luau. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)

their way over to the Green Beans stage area where the 81st BCT MWR had a luau waiting for them. Servicemembers put on leis, kicked back, and enjoyed burgers, kabobs, fruit and karaoke before finding out who the winners were.

With an impressive overall time of 9:42, the "King Pins" took home first prize – gift cards donated by Edelman's wife and church and a firefighter's axe trophy.


"We are treating the trophy kind of like the Stanley Cup," said Hillyer. "Each Marine that participated in the Challenge will get his week with the trophy to do what he wants. He gets to take it to his Hooch [and] show it off to his friends and family over the internet, take pictures with it. He just gets to enjoy the victory. Plus we have a place for it on our wall."

"This was just another example of Marines coming together, having a great time and accomplishing a mission," he added.

Regimental Combat Team 6's "Fightin' Sixth" came in second with a time of 11 minutes and CLB-4's "Comm Till it Hurt" snagged third with a time of 11:04.

Overall, the day was meant to give tenants of Camp Ramadi a day of team building, stress relief and fun.

"We all had a good time," said Wardy. "We talked about it afterwards, and everybody agreed that it was probably one of the best days we've had being in country."

"I'm extremely grateful for the fact that someone even came up with this and I think it should continue to be something the base looks into doing every year," added Buffington. 



After dominating the course, "King Pin" team members Marine Cpl. Thomas Lee, Marine Cpl. Drew Griffith and Marine Staff Sgt. Michael Saxe catch their breath. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr)

Education continued from Page 10

education NCO contact Severson or Kettlewell, or send an e-mail to artestcenter@gmail.com. Soldiers, Marines and Sailors can come in and do school work, whether it's college related, skill soft or military development. There are also some materials and resources available to take courses with the University of Maryland University College and assistance with setting up those classes. A few books are available to help with studying for some exams such as the ASVAB.

The testing center offers an opportunity for servicemembers to walk away from deployment with a better outlook for their future, whether they plan to stay in the military or move on to a civilian career.

"In the Army, for example, to be a network administrator, you have to have Security Plus and Net Plus certifications," Kettlewell said. "These are civilian certifications that you are supposed to have as a mandate from DoD to be an IMO (information management officer). We offer those through Pearson Vue or Pro Metrics. We've had Soldiers and Marines get certified, ensuring that a lot of them meet the requirements of their billet or MOS (military occupation specialty). On the civilian side, these certifications are bullets that you are required to meet to obtain certain jobs. So the contractors, Marines and Soldiers here that are taking these tests are that much further ahead when they get home. They are doing it while deployed, and that's huge. Like Severson said, 'be able to go out of this deployment with more than you came in with.'"

"It gives me an opportunity to complete some distance learning courses that I can apply toward a graduate degree," said Army Sgt. Brian Nelson, a currently-enrolled student and certified test administrator. "So when I come away from this deployment I will have accomplished something that will contribute to my self-development. Instead of just spending a whole year in



Army Sgt. Timothy Kettlewell, a volunteer from the 81st BCT who helped get the Camp Ramadi Testing and Education Center started, helps Army Sgt. Nicholas Benfield navigate through his education choices at the center April 26, 2009. (Photo by Army Sgt. Amanda Gauthier)

limbo, I am able to progress a little bit."

There are some tests that are not yet available, but the volunteers at the education center are working to get more resources every day. More help is needed from the units on Camp Ramadi to make the educa-


"The full intention of the education center is to benefit everyone on Camp Ramadi, all the Marines and all the Soldiers." Sgt. Timothy Kettlewell

tion center a success. Expertise is needed from all branches of the military on maneuvering through the obstacles of the education system. Time is needed for manning the education center. The testing center, located in building 2330, (in front of Memorial Chapel), is currently open only when Severson is

available between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. Other testers and education officers and NCOs are needed from the units on Ramadi to assist in running the center to ensure regular hours.

"Right now we are trying to bridge the gap between the other units and see what they can offer as part of this joint resource for Camp Ramadi," said Kettlewell. "The full intention of the education center is to benefit everyone on Camp Ramadi, all the Marines and all the Soldiers. Unfortunately we are only one unit with limited resources. We have been trying to incorporate some of the Dantes training and testing, as well as some of the programs Dantes offers through the education center. We're also working on military tests, such as the ASVAB."

Servicemembers can be reimbursed through the Veterans Affairs. If it is a required certification for billet or MOS, units can purchase vouchers in bulk and give those to troops to take their exams.

The Testing and Education center is available for all servicemembers to use, however their education NCO needs to contact Severson or Kettlewell to get on the list and gain access to the computer lab. 

CAMP RAMADI COMBAT STRESS

Unit Level Classes:

- ~ Unit Climate Survey
- ~ Stress Management
- ~ Anger Management
- ~ Healthy Living
- ~ Tobacco Cessation
- ~ Critical Event Debriefing
- ~ Redeployment Education
- ~ Sleep/Relaxation



Clinic Services:

- ~ Anxiety / Depression
- ~ Insomnia
- ~ Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
- ~ Tobacco Cessation
- ~ Stress/Anger Management
- ~ Relationship Problems
- ~ Medication Management
- ~ Command Referrals
- ~ Individual Counseling

Call the Combat Stress Team at DSN: 344-0998 or SIPR: 696-5051, or stop by building 3100 to set up an appointment, get more information or just to visit

Resources for suicide prevention

<http://www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent/>

<http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/suicide/>

www.militaryonesource.com - 1-800-342-9647

National Suicide Hotline - 1-800-SUICIDE

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org - 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Tae Bo Inventor Billy Blanks live in Ramadi!

Come work out and learn about fitness with Tae Bo inventor Billy Blanks Apr. 30, 2009 and May 1, 2009.

Time and place to be determined



Look for more information from the 81st BCT MWR soon!

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