

introducing the all new

# TAJI TIMES

5th Edition

December 2009

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**1ST LT. LANE RUSSELL'S INTERVIEW IN THE U.K.**



**A Guitar, a Heart a and Fedora**  
1st. Lt. Lane Russell's Interview in the U.K.



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**On the Cover: 1st. Lt. Lane Russell, photographed by Jonathon Jones**



**The PRY  
King wants  
your excess!**

**AMNESTY DAYS ARE HERE!**

**17-18 DEC from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**AT THE PACESETTER RETROGRADE YARD**

Items accepted: serviceable items with stock numbers, unserviceable/unrepairable, P9H, CL VIII, communication equipment. Items NOT accepted: trash, HAZMAT, ammunition, fire extinguishers, CL VII, theater provided equipment.

The Pacesetter Retrograde Yard (PRY) is located at the intersection of Razorback and 46th Street. Please bring a four-soldier detail for excess larger than a 20-foot equivalent (TEU) container. Point of contact is Capt. Carey "Mac" McIntyre at 834-3658 or 834-3030.



## Meet our new editor



### Dear readers,

It gives me great pleasure to bring you the all new Taji Times. In the past three weeks we have made some exciting changes that we hope will inform, entertain, motivate and delight you. To start with, you've probably already noticed the enhanced layout, but there is so much more. For starters, with the New Year right around the corner, we thought you might be interested in how much more Uncle Sam will be dishing out every month in your paycheck. Next, we put together the ultimate entertainment guide filled with a wealth of information on new movies, music, games and upcoming MWR events. The unit news you crave is still here, only streamlined. This month we are proud to feature an interview from one of our own Mississippi National Guardsmen, 1st Lt. Lane Russell, while he was on leave in Reading, England. It is a must read.

In addition to all of these new features, we could not make this possible without the full support of our command. To the units that fill our inbox with stories, we appreciate you paving the road for future military generations. If you want to see your story in the next edition of the Taji Times please do not hesitate to contact us. We would also like to know what you think, so if you've got something to say, we want to hear it. Until next month, enjoy, happy holidays and thanks for reading!

*Roy Freeman*

Sgt. Roy Freeman  
Managing Editor

## Preventative Medicine Units

# Transition at Taji

By Maj. Rob Edwards, 155th HBCT Public Affairs

Capt. Anthony Miranda and Master Sgt. Denver Mantooth, 61st Med Det, case their unit colors.



For the 61st Preventative Medicine Detachment, Wednesday Dec. 9, was a great end to a deployment which they commemorated by casing their colors, an age-old tradition marking the end of one unit's time in service.

The 61st PM Det., headquartered at Fort Campbell, Ky. and commanded by Capt. Anthony Miranda, had been providing preventative medical services for Camp Taji since arriving in December, 2008. For many of those Soldiers, this was their third deployment to Iraq. The unit has had a long history of service stretching from its formation on September 25, 1943, to include service in New Orleans during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and one prior tour here in Iraq which ended in 2007.

The 224th Medical Detachment has a lineage stretching from 1946 and includes tours in Somalia and Afghanistan where they earned the Meritorious Unit Citation. They also performed hurricane duty after Katrina in New Orleans in 2005. The 224th is based at Fort Hood and will perform preventative medi-

cine duties at Camp Taji.

The incoming commander of the 224th, Maj. Doug Whitaker, a resident of Danville, Ky., stated that his mission will not change from the 61st PM Det. However, it might be adjusted according to the priorities established in the drawdown of forces. He said that "as forward operating bases expand and contract, we will ensure that the public health needs are met on the base and that it is environmentally sound by ensuring that it meets military regulations so the base can be eventually transferred to the Iraqis."

The preventative medical detachments serve Soldiers and civilians by conducting inspections on base facilities that offer food and water to its residents. They also inspect air and soil for contaminants. The title implies that the unit is there to prevent illnesses from being spread among residents of the bases.

The 61st Medical Detachment 1st Sgt., Master Sgt. Denver L. Mantooth, a resident of McAlester, Okla., best described their mission of preventative medicine when he said

"if you don't hear from us, you know you are doing okay." The detachments are tasked to conduct quality assurance inspections on dining facilities and water bottles in conjunction with the civilian contractors who provide those services.

The detachments conduct entomological surveys looking for sand flies and mosquitoes by working with KBR vector control. They also conduct soil and air testing to ensure the safety of the residents of the base to ensure that they continue to be a combat multiplier.

Both units fall under the 118th Multi-Functional Medical Battalion, Conn. National Guard, which is at Balad and commanded by Col. Gerard Curran. A resident of Madison, Conn. and an emergency room doctor, Col. Curran presided over the transfer of authority held outside the preventative medicine building in Tomahawk Village at Camp Taji.

In a short speech to the detachments and onlookers, Col. Curran reminded his Soldiers that that it was two days after the 68th anniversary of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Like the Soldiers of the 1940's, the Soldiers in the medical detachments have left their families and jobs during a time of war to perform the essential function of preventative medicine.

Col. John Rhodes, garrison commander and deputy brigade commander for the 155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team headquartered in Tupelo, Miss. was on hand in support of the change of command. Capt. Miranda, a resident of Georgetown, Texas, thanked the Taji Garrison Command for their support of their unit, especially when they were so far away from their battalion headquarters in Balad. ■

## New Pay Charts

**T**he 2010 military pay-and-benefits plan reflects a year of modest successes — but little gain on some bigger, long-promised improvements.

The pay-and-benefits provisions are contained in the 2010 Defense Authorization Act, or Public Law 111-84, which cleared Congress on Oct. 22 and was signed by President Barack Obama on Oct. 28.

The biggest indication that lawmakers still reserve special treatment for service members is a 3.4 percent pay raise, which marks the 11th consecutive year Congress has approved a military raise slightly higher than the average increase for private-sector workers.

The act also orders a report that may lead to an overhaul of housing standards that underpin military housing allowances, a new special pay for troops catastrophically injured, several new leave and travel provisions, and enhancements to military medical care.

But there are signs that 2010 may be the end of the line for bigger pay raises, as the act orders a report that could conclude — as defense officials have long argued — that military wages already are competitive.



The Pentagon in Arlington, Va.

The final version of the 2010 Defense Authorization Act omits proposed improvements in reserve retired pay, free package shipment to troops on contingency operations, a boost in household goods weight allowances during moves and bigger housing payments for career enlisted members. Even Obama's support could not overcome a funding hurdle that has kept Congress from allowing disabled retirees to concurrently receive full military retired pay and veterans disability benefits.

### Highlights of the act:

#### Pay raise

The 3.4 percent pay increase for ranks included in the act applies to basic pay and drill pay for 1.4 million active-duty

troops and 838,000 drilling members of the National Guard and reserves.

This across-the-board raise is half a percentage point more than Obama requested and 1.4 percentage points more than the expected average raise for federal civilian employees. As a result, a perceived gap between military and private-sector pay that grew as large as 13.5 percent in the late 1990s would drop to 2.4 percent next year.

When: Effective Jan. 1 for mid-January paychecks.

#### Catastrophic injury pay

A new allowance is authorized for catastrophically injured or ill service members who need help performing everyday functions.



The injury or illness must have been incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, and must be so severe that the person would be hospitalized if he or she did not have assistance to perform tasks such as eating, bathing and dressing. A physician must certify that the assistance of another person is necessary.

Because most people with such severe injuries will be separated or retired, the provision includes an unusual feature that will continue the pay for up to 90 days after a member leaves the military, to provide time for veterans disability benefits — which also include a similar aid-and-attendance payment for the severely injured — to take effect.

The allowance, designed mainly to recognize efforts of the family member giving assistance, will be set at the same rate paid to a veteran with a similar disability, about \$2,000 a month for service members with dependents.

When: Effective Oct. 28, but at the discretion of the Defense Department, which can decide whether to implement it.

#### **Stop-loss allowance**

Authority to pay the relatively new \$500-a-month stop-loss allowance, due to expire at the end of 2009, is extended into 2011.

But lawmakers did not accept a proposal that would have authorized stop-loss payments during pre- and post-deployment periods for Guard and reserve members. Payments will continue to be made only for periods when retirement or separation is involuntarily delayed by military orders.

When: Extended through June 30, 2011.

#### **Afghanistan extension bonus**

A member with a critical skill, such as language proficiency, who agrees to Afghanistan service for three years or more could get additional assignment pay or special duty pay, under rules to be determined by the defense secretary.

When: The pilot program was authorized Oct. 28 and expires Dec. 31, 2012.

#### **Bonus extensions**

A number of bonuses set to expire Dec. 31 are extended. This includes enlistment and

re-enlistment bonuses and accession bonuses for active and reserve forces, bonuses for converting to critical skills, incentive pay for transferring between services, and bonuses and special pays for health care professionals and nuclear-qualified officers.

When: All the above bonuses are extended until Dec. 31, 2010.

#### **Supplemental subsistence**

The Special Supplemental Subsistence Allowance, paid to service members whose families are eligible for food stamps, will rise to a monthly maximum of \$1,100, up from the current \$500.

About 300 service members are expected to qualify for the allowance, which is paid to people who, because of their family size and income, are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, the new name for the federal food stamp program.

Payments are designed to be just enough so a military family no longer qualifies for

**See the rest of this story and  
the all new  
pay chart on pages 29-31.**

# MANAGING STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

By Master Sgt. James Bridwell, USAF, 55th Medical Company, CSC

**T**he holiday season is here and many service members may find themselves wrestling with a combination of stressors here and back at home. Perhaps you are missing your loved ones and knowing you are unable to share this time with them in person does not help matters. Or maybe you are stretching your dollars in tough economic times to get that special gift for a family member. Whatever the case, there is a delicate balance all service members must strive to attain to effectively cope with holiday stress.

Supervisors, senior leadership and battle buddies are encouraged to look for signs of stress, and to reach out to each other if things become a little overwhelming. Signs of stress may vary from person to person and situation to situation. Some of the signs may include but are not limited to:

- ★ 1. Behavioral changes - social isolation, deterioration in their appearance or work performance
- ★ 2. Cognitive changes - slow or poor decision-making, decreased memory or concentration
- ★ 3. Mood changes - continuously angry, sad or irritable, and/or frequent mood fluctuations
- ★ 4. Expressed feelings of hopelessness and helplessness

Follow these tips to help combat the holiday blues:

- ★ 1. Set realistic expectations - don't set the bar too high and ask yourself what the holiday means
- ★ 2. Start new traditions - if you can't be involved in traditions at home, start some new ones here
- ★ 3. Set differences aside - use the holidays to connect with family and friends in creative, new ways
- ★ 4. Be a kid again - enjoy yourself, do things that are fun and relaxing
- ★ 5. Get plenty of rest and exercise - it can be easy to forget the basics
- ★ 6. Prioritize - decide what the most important tasks are and work your way down
- ★ 7. Empathize - remember that others may be having a tough time, be a good battle buddy
- ★ 8. Get emotional support - reach out to family, friends, Chaplain, CSC or your battle buddy

**CSC**  
Combat Stress Clinic

## clinic

M-F 0800-1700  
SAT 0800-1600  
SUN CLOSED

closed for lunch  
1200-1300

## classes

Mon 1000 anger management  
Tue 1000 stress management  
Wed 1000 relaxation  
Thu 1000 conflict resolution  
Thu 1500 sleep  
Fri 1500 tobacco cessation

## contact

834-1050 OR 242-6950

taji.55thMedicalCoCS@iraq.centcom.mil



## A Guitar, a Heart and a Fedora

**E**arlier this week, I spoke with U.S. Soldier Lane Russell, 34, who very shortly will be back serving in Iraq. Last week, I saw him performing at an open mic night here in Reading, U.K. He was singing the blues and playing perhaps the strangest guitar I've ever seen. I knew I had to interview him.

**Lane, what made you come and see England?**

I've always been interested in the culture of the U.K. I read C.S. Lewis and I began to wonder why words that I knew such as 'colour' were spelled differently plus having read about the American Revolution, I became interested in the U.K.'s involvement with that.

**Where were you born?**

I was born in Las Cruces, N.M.

**Were you from a musical family?**

My dad is a great guitarist, from the Chet Atkins school. He's a fingerpicker and far better than I will ever be. My dad's brother was also a musician and he very nearly recorded an album. The men in the family are all pretty good musicians but none of the women are at all interested in music.

**What kind of musical influences did you have growing up?**

Neil Diamond. Also, Kris Kristofferson. I had a tiny record player. It was in a suitcase and folded out and on that I could play 33's and 45's. I can remember The Eagles around that time and listening to them. My dad loved The Eagles. In middle school, I was crazy for The Monkees. I liked the way they looked, the way they sounded. I really identified with them and also I was



1st Lt. Lane Russell, playing his heart out.

drawn to Davy Jones, it was the British accent which I found really soothing.

I also loved programs on the radio, anything from the 50's and 60's and I would record them relentlessly, sometimes waiting for several weeks to capture one song. I also love Rock 'n' Roll.

**Can you remember the moment when you realised you had to play guitar?**

Yeah, about the twenty-thousandth time I heard David Gilmour's guitar solo on "Comfortably Numb," I said to myself. "Okay, I have GOT to figure out how he does that."

**Who is your most important musical influence?**

Without a doubt, it is Lindsey Buckingham. I learned to play "The Chain," as it was featured on the live

album, "The Dance;" and after a while, I was fingerpicking everything--mainly because I could never find a pick when I wanted one.

**Was the guitar your first instrument?**

My first instrument was the flute in 6th grade. It came as something of a surprise to me when I realised that I would have to practice. I thought that that was why they gave us sheet music.

It was nearly 10 years later, 1994 when I first picked up the guitar and my brother taught me to play Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here." It took about 20 minutes or so because it's not all that hard to play.

**I must make mention of the guitar I saw you playing last week at The Butler and I see you've brought it along with you today. What type of instrument is it and what drew you**

**to this as the guitar of choice?**

It's a Blackbird Rider and it costs about \$1,500 or \$1,800 for the full-size version. I like it because it's almost indestructible and impervious to the elements. Because it has a carbon fibre body it won't shrink or warp. It has a brighter tone than most other acoustics and a wonderful sustain (which Lane ably demonstrates).

**I must ask. How did you, an American soldier, get to be standing on a tiny stage singing and playing the blues in a crowded pub in the middle of Reading on a Saturday night?**

Well, I was doing my laundry in Russell Street near to a convenience store. I took my guitar along and was playing it while waiting and this chap came along, heard me play and told me about the open mic night at The Butler. He couldn't guarantee I'd get the chance to get up and play but I thought I'd still have an interesting night whatever happened so I went along anyway.

**When you're playing the blues or just music in general, what are you feeling?**

When I went through my divorce it tore my heart out and so I could bring a lot to what I was playing but when I got back into the church I found that although I could still play Blues in the sense of the form I no longer felt it.

**That's interesting. So what's your view about the blues being the devil's music?**

Well, I'm of the belief that there's no such thing as good or evil music.

Like there's no such thing as a good or evil weapon. A weapon is there to save the life of the wielder and music is like that. Music is a gift to the musi-

cian. It can save lives. It can heal.

**Why do you think the blues still has relevance today?**

Because it speaks to something common in all humanity. It speaks to something inherent in the human condition.

**Obviously, the blues was a common thread in the lives of the people working on the cotton fields of the Mississippi Delta and was a way in which people could express their feelings and create something good out of the situations they found themselves in. Is there a fear that now things are better for so many of us, the heart will be torn out of the blues. That it will be diluted in some way?**

There will always be pain, always be misery so no I don't think so. The blues will always be relevant.

**Going back to when I first saw you play, I was struck by what I saw. You were very conservatively attired yet playing this wild guitar.**

Oh yeah, I like blowing people's minds. At some point when I get home I'm going to form a rock band and I'm going to call it One Trick Pony. People will come along and listen and think that they're only getting the one thing so it will come as a surprise when they hear country one minute and Spinal Tap the next, maybe even some Broadway. I love the song "Stars" from "Les Misérables." I'm moved by the character of Javert. He is a tragic figure who's essentially good but can't handle it when his quarry shows mercy so kills himself.

~~~~~

At this point, Lane shows me how he learned to play Sweet Caroline but by using the chords to Fleetwood Mac's Rhiannon. It's this eclectic approach which keeps his music so fresh and interesting to listen to and hard to believe that he's only been playing for a decade and a half. He tells me about the capo and how it's used to change key before demonstrating songs which use it. I look at the clock and can't believe so much time has passed.

It's time for me to say goodbye but not before he's played a song, by Bonnie Raitt, he loves. I take some photos of his amazing guitar and he and I chat some more. He tells me of a girl back home and I realise that so long as there are affairs of the heart, the Blues will never die. He puts on his overcoat and fedora. I shake his hand and wish him well. He picks up the guitar, clutches it to his chest and strides out into the evening rain. I watch him for a long moment then he's lost to the night. There's something quite dramatic yet perfectly fitting about that.

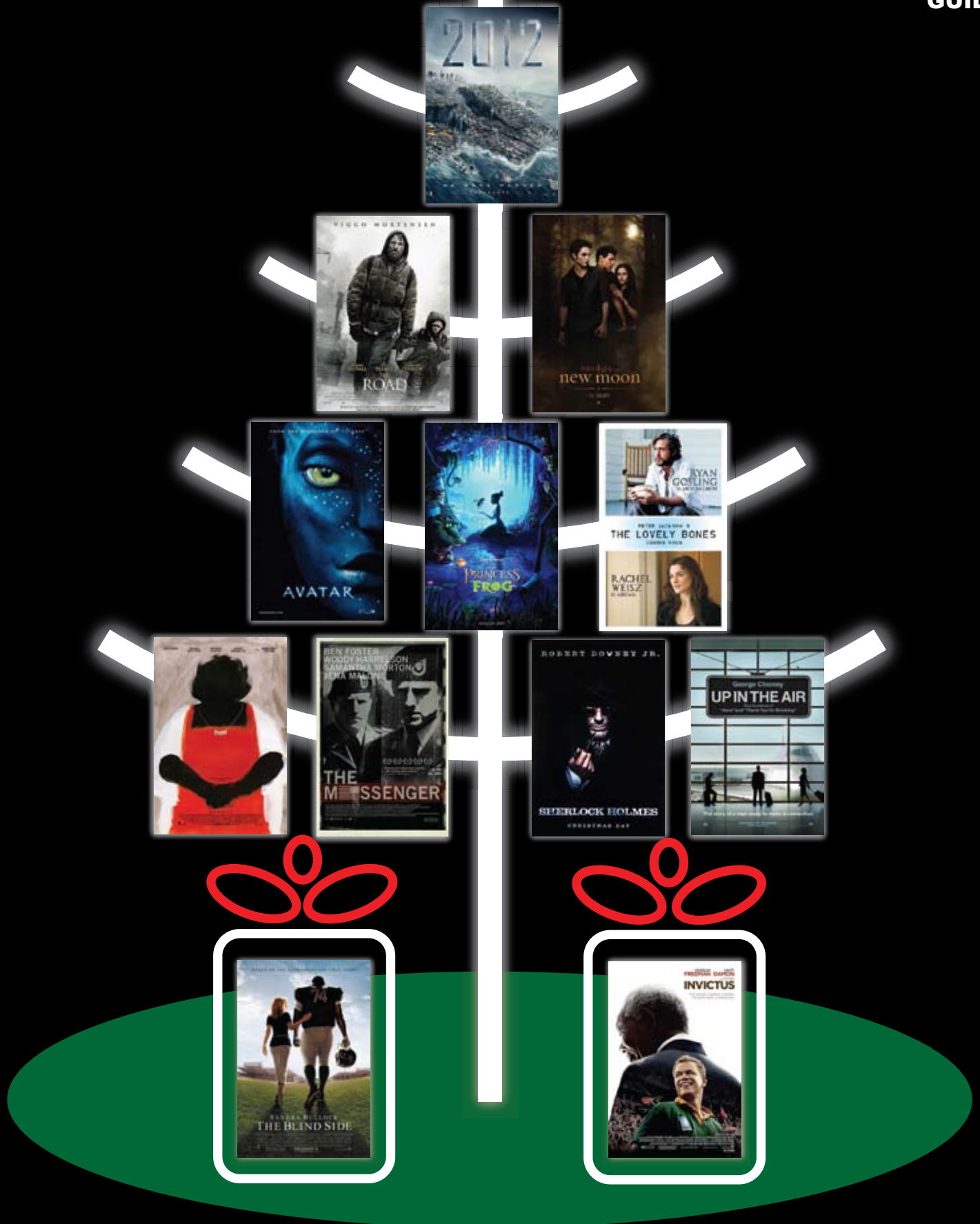
This interview was conducted Thursday, Nov. 12.

Jonathan would like to thank the staff of Picnic in the Butter Market for their hospitality and always friendly, polite service.



Jonathan Jones is a UK-based freelance writer and involved in artist management. He lives in Reading in the Royal County of Berkshire, England.

YOUR  
**ENTERTAINMENT** ★ **GUIDE**





# 2012

## Holiday Movies Review

**W**ith divisive politics, global unrest and bad economic news seemingly around every corner, it's nice to sink into your CHU, grab a bag of popcorn and take in a movie or two this holiday season. Except that the world is coming to an end -- onscreen at least.

The holiday movie season began with a bang four weeks ago as "2012," the latest blow-up-the-planet flick from director Roland Emmerich ("The Day After Tomorrow," "Independence Day"), exploded onto the scene with a \$230 million worldwide opening. The movie plays on the public's fears about 2012, which some say is foretold by ancient Mayans as doomsday.

It's not the only film this season that won't exactly be spreading holiday cheer with bright, happy themes. "The Road," adapted from Cormac McCarthy's novel about survival in a post-apocalyptic future, opened Nov. 25. The similarly themed "Book of Eli," starring Denzel Washington, opens Jan. 15. There are still plenty of movies opening during the holiday season that don't revolve around the concept of a dead Earth.

All over Camp Taji, hundreds of copies of "Twilight: New Moon," the second movie in the popular vam-

pire series based on the books of Stephenie Meyer have been sold. "My daughter is a huge fan," said Master Sgt. Jessica Halase, Camp Taji Garrison Command. "She's been anticipating this movie since the last movie came out (last year). It's an extremely popular film," Halase said, "and I think after the first movie, the popularity has grown immensely." It's certainly off to a good start. Nationwide, the midnight showings earned a record \$26.3 million.

Back home, the movie business has shown itself to be fairly resilient and that business from last year to now has remained fairly steady. According to the tracking service Hollywood.com, the national box office for the year through the Nov. 29 weekend is up 4.2 percent from the same period last year. This season's movie choices run the gamut, from crime stories and poignant dramas to animation and real-life stories. Many of the well-trumpeted releases of the holiday season are movies that should give audiences a positive feeling.

The much-hyped James Cameron adventure movie, "Avatar," opens Dec. 18. The movie uses pioneering 3-D and computer graphics technology and is one of the most anticipated films of the year. Also drawing a lot of attention is Disney's

"The Princess & The Frog," opened Dec. 11. That movie is noteworthy for a couple reasons: It marks the first major Disney release in traditional 2-D animation in several years, and it's the first Disney animated film to feature a black heroine.

In addition to crowd-pleasing titles, Hollywood also uses the holiday season to release movies expected to be Academy Award contenders. Among the more notable films expected to contend for Oscar gold are "Precious," which has already opened in limited release; "The Messenger," starring Woody Harrelson and Ben Foster, about military officers who have the duty of informing families when Soldiers are killed in action; "Invictus," which opened Dec. 11, starring Morgan Freeman as Nelson Mandela and is about the real-life story of South Africa's 1995 World Cup rugby team; and "Up In The Air," starring George Clooney as a corporate hatchet man, which opened Dec. 4.

Warrant Officer Denina Davis, 155th Brigade Combat Team, said she just finished watching "Precious," which was produced by Oprah Winfrey and Tyler Perry, and centers around the travails of a teenage, inner-city mother. "I'm really interested in seeing that way of the world, especially how things are going on in the world today," Davis said. "Those kind of stories interest me."

Other movies drawing attention include "The Lovely Bones," released Dec. 11 from director Peter Jackson; "Sherlock Holmes," which opens Christmas Day and features Robert Downey Jr. in the title role; and "The Blind Side," starring Sandra Bullock, which opened Nov. 20. It's the true story of a poor, oversized and under-educated teenager who is recruited by a major college football program, where he is groomed into an athletically and academically successful NFL prospect. ■

# The Chart - Box Office

MWR  
PRESENTS

## 1 The Blind Side

Warner Bros.

A poor, oversized and under-educated teenager is recruited by a major college football program where he is groomed into an athletically and academically successful NFL prospect.

WG \$20.4, NoS 3326, WiR 3, GtD \$129.3



|    |                                                            |           |             |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| 2  | <b>The Twilight Saga: New Moon</b><br>Summit Entertainment | WG \$15.7 | NoS 4124    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 3     | GtD \$255.6 |
| 3  | <b>Brothers</b><br>Lionsgate                               | WG \$9.7  | NoS 2088    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 1     | GtD \$9.7   |
| 4  | <b>A Christmas Carol</b><br>Buena Vista                    | WG \$7.5  | NoS 2546    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 5     | GtD \$115.0 |
| 5  | <b>Old Dogs</b><br>Buena Vista                             | WG \$6.9  | NoS 3425    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 2     | GtD \$33.9  |
| 6  | <b>Armored</b><br>Screen Gems                              | WG \$6.6  | NoS 1915    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 1     | GtD \$6.6   |
| 7  | <b>2012</b><br>Sony                                        | WG \$6.6  | NoS 3220    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 4     | GtD \$148.8 |
| 8  | <b>Ninja Assassin</b><br>Warner Bros.                      | WG \$5.0  | NoS 2503    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 2     | GtD \$29.8  |
| 9  | <b>Planet 51</b><br>Sony                                   | WG \$4.3  | NoS 2904    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 3     | GtD \$34.0  |
| 10 | <b>Everybody's Fine</b><br>Miramax                         | WG \$4.0  | NoS 2133    |
|    |                                                            | WiR 1     | GtD \$4.0   |

BACK  
BY  
POPULAR  
DEMAND....

WG=Weekend Gross, NoS=Number of Screens, WiR=Weeks in Release, GtD=Gross to Date

Source: Nielsen EDI

Weekend gross and gross-to-date figures in millions; includes some multiscreen theaters and prints shipped as well as individual screens



# Top 2009 TV

Looking for quality TV? We've selected five of our favorites to share with you and fill you in on why they made our list.

## Lost

Sure, *Lost*'s time-tripping fifth season was the most difficult to follow (at times even we had headaches and nosebleeds), but it also provided many weighty moments for the characters we've grown to love. Sawyer took on a leadership role and gave his heart to Juliet; Hurley helped Miles reunite with his long-lost father; Jack finally tested the water of being a man of faith; and John Locke is, well, still dead. Throw in the introduction of Jacob and the death of Daniel Faraday, and it's no wonder why we're so eagerly anticipating the next and final season.

## How I Met Your Mother

Five seasons in and this show is still awesome. Continuing to expand the limitations of a traditional multi-camera sitcom, *Mother* had a stellar year in which Barney and Robin finally got together, and offered the usual, time-jumping trickery and silliness along with surprisingly touching moments. It more than earned its first Emmy nomination for comedy series. If only there was a prize for best playful concealment of two actresses' pregnancies.

## True Blood

*True Blood* seduced even more viewers with its record-breaking, out-there second season. Creator Alan Ball expanded the show's world beyond Bon Temps, to take viewers deeper into the vampire-hating cult, The Fellowship of the Sun, and the general vampire hierarchy. Meanwhile, those back in town were bewitched by a maenad who turned everyone into black-eyed nymphomaniacs. Somehow, weirder equaled better.



## Dexter

Seeing Dexter as a daddy was interesting, but most of the credit for Season 4's success goes to the delightfully creepy John Lithgow as the Trinity Killer. Serving as both a mentor and nemesis for Dexter, Lithgow returned the show to its roots after an entertaining but cartoonish guest spot by Jimmy Smits. Deb (Jennifer Carpenter) also had a weighty arc to play out, as she recovered from being shot and searched for the person who murdered her lover.

## Sons of Anarchy

As Jax and Clay's personal battle ripped SAMCRO apart from the inside, an outside force (Adam Arkin as a white supremacist business man) pounded the club while it was down. Gemma's brutal gang-rape was heartbreaking, but seeing the club — and family — united was as satisfying as anything dramatic TV had to offer this season. ■





# The Chart - TV Ratings

MWR  
PRESENTS

**1** **Dancing with the Stars**  
ABC

The hit show pairs professional dancers with celebrities in an all out dance competition in which the viewers decide the winner.

V 20.4, LW 2



|           |                                         |        |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------|--------|
| <b>2</b>  | <b>NCIS</b><br>CBS                      | V 20.3 |
|           |                                         | LW 1   |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Dancing with the Stars</b><br>ABC    | V 19.3 |
|           |                                         | LW 4   |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Sunday Night Football</b><br>NBC     | V 19.2 |
|           |                                         | LW 3   |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>NCIS: Los Angeles</b><br>CBS         | V 17.2 |
|           |                                         | LW 8   |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>60 Minutes</b><br>CBS                | V 14.3 |
|           |                                         | LW 5   |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>The Big Bang Theory</b><br>CBS       | V 14.1 |
|           |                                         | LW 15  |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Sunday Night NFL Pre-Kick</b><br>NBC | V 13.9 |
|           |                                         | LW 16  |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Two and a Half Men</b><br>CBS        | V 13.9 |
|           |                                         | LW 12  |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Criminal Minds</b><br>CBS            | V 13.6 |
|           |                                         | LW 11  |

BACK  
BY  
POPULAR  
DEMAND....

AN  
EVENT  
THAT  
COULD  
MAKE  
YOU....

V=Viewers, LW=Last Week's Rating

Source: Nielsen Media Research, week of December 6, 2009

Figures in millions.

Visit <http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/schedulechart.aspx> for the AFN TV Schedule





## Boyle's Dream at No. 1

**S**usan Boyle's "I Dreamed a Dream" album continues its hold of the No. 1 slot on the Billboard 200 chart, selling 527,000 copies (down just 25%), according to Nielsen SoundScan. After two weeks of release, "I Dreamed a Dream" is now the 10th biggest-selling album of the year with 1.23 million sold.

Boyle fends off the advances of Andrea Bocelli, whose "My Christmas" holds at No. 2 for a fourth week with 428,000 (up 97%). Bocelli's set surpasses a million in total sales in its fifth week (1.12 million) and becomes his best-selling album since the release of "Amore" in 2006 (1.66 million).

Conventional wisdom indicates that with Christmas just a little over two weeks away, sales of "My Christmas" should increase as the date inches closer to Dec. 25. Thus, the album has a chance of approaching the total sales racked up by Bocelli's two best-selling sets: "Romanza" (1997; 4.2 million) and "Sogno" (1999; 2.5 million).

While Boyle and Bocelli fought for the top slot, the highest debut on the Billboard 200 chart belongs to R. Kelly's "Untitled", which arrives at No. 4 with 114,000. All nine of Kelly's solo studio albums

have reached the top four positions on the chart, stretching back to his solo bow with 12 Play in 1993.

Kelly's "Untitled" is the lone debut in the top 10 this week -- the next-highest entry comes from the soundtrack to "Alvin and the Chipmunks: the Squeakquel," at No. 28 with 39,000. The week following Thanksgiving each year is usually a bit quiet on the Billboard 200, as most major releases drop before the holiday. Additionally, a number of albums on this week's chart post sizable weekly sales declines as the tally adjusts itself after the busy shopping period two weeks ago.

Taylor Swift's seemingly unstoppable "Fearless" spends its 47th week in the top 10, rising from No. 8 to No. 3 with 127,000 (up 2%), while Lady Gaga's "The Fame" moves up one spot to No. 5 with 84,000 (down 45%). Carrie Underwood's "Play On" slides up three positions to No. 6 with 81,000 (down 35%), Norah Jones' "The Fall" rises three rungs to No. 7 with 80,000 (down 27%) and Michael Jackson's "This Is It" climbs from No. 11 to No. 8 with 75,000 (down 31%).

Rounding out the top 10 are the soundtrack to "New Moon" at No. 9 (up three slots with 72,000; down 31%) and Michael Bublé's "Crazy Love" at No. 10 (up from No. 18 with 72,000 with a sales increase of 6%).

Overall album sales in this past chart week (ending Dec. 6) totaled 10.14 million units, down 5% compared to the sum last week (10.72 million) and down 10% compared to the same sales week of 2008 (11.31 million). Year to date album sales stand at 330.3 million, down 13% compared to the same total at this point last year (381.3 million). ■

# The Chart - Albums

MWR  
PRESENTS

## 1 I Dreamed a Dream\*

Susan Boyle

She has been called the "Cinderella of Pop" and now with her new album, Boyle is an overnight sensation. Wild Horses is the most popular tune on the new record, and Susan puts spring in the chorus that sweeps you up. - John Kays, theSOP.org

LW N/A, WoC 1



|    |                                                  |        |
|----|--------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 2  | <b>My Christmas</b><br>Andrea Bocelli            | LW 2   |
|    |                                                  | WoC 4  |
| 3  | <b>For Your Entertainment*</b><br>Adam Lambert   | LW N/A |
|    |                                                  | WoC 1  |
| 4  | <b>Rated R*</b><br>Rihanna                       | LW N/A |
|    |                                                  | WoC 1  |
| 5  | <b>The Fame Monster (EP)*</b><br>Lady Gaga       | LW N/A |
|    |                                                  | WoC 1  |
| 6  | <b>The Fame</b><br>Lady Gaga                     | LW 34  |
|    |                                                  | WoC 57 |
| 7  | <b>The Time Of Our Lives (EP)</b><br>Miley Cyrus | LW 29  |
|    |                                                  | WoC 14 |
| 8  | <b>Fearless</b><br>Taylor Swift                  | LW 10  |
|    |                                                  | WoC 55 |
| 9  | <b>Play On</b><br>Carrie Underwood               | LW 9   |
|    |                                                  | WoC 4  |
| 10 | <b>The Fall</b><br>Norah Jones                   | LW 3   |
|    |                                                  | WoC 2  |

BACK  
BY  
POPULAR  
DEMAND....

AN  
EVENT  
THAT  
COULD  
MAKE  
YOU....

AN  
IDOL....

(on Camp Taji at least)

LW=Last Week, WoC=Weeks on Chart, N/A=Not Applicable, \*=Debut

Source: Billboard 200, week of December 12, 2009





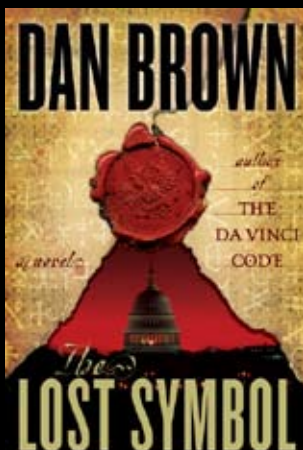
## Book Review:

### The Lost Symbol

**L**et's start with the question every Dan Brown fan wants answered: Is The Lost Symbol as good as The Da Vinci Code? Simply put, yes. Brown has mastered the art of blending nail-biting suspense with random arcana (from pop science to religion), and The Lost Symbol is an enthralling mix. And what a dazzling accomplishment that is, considering that rabid fans and skeptics alike are scrutinizing every word.

The Lost Symbol begins with an ancient ritual, a shadowy enclave, and of course, a secret. Readers know they are in Dan Brown territory when, by the end of the first chapter, a secret within a secret is revealed. To tell too much would ruin the fun of reading this delicious thriller, so you will find no spoilers here. Suffice it to say that as with many series featuring a recurring character, there is a bit of a formula at work (one that fans will love). Again, brilliant Harvard professor Robert Langdon finds himself in a predicament that requires his vast knowledge of symbology and superior problem-solving skills to save the day. The setting, unlike other Robert Langdon novels, is stateside, and in Brown's hands Washington D.C. is as fascinating as Paris or Vatican City (note to the D.C. tourism board: get your "Lost Symbol" tour in order). And, as with other Dan Brown books, the pace is relentless, the revelations many, and there is an endless parade of intriguing factoids that will make you feel like you are spending the afternoon with Robert Langdon and the guys from Mythbusters. ■

*Review by Amazon.com*



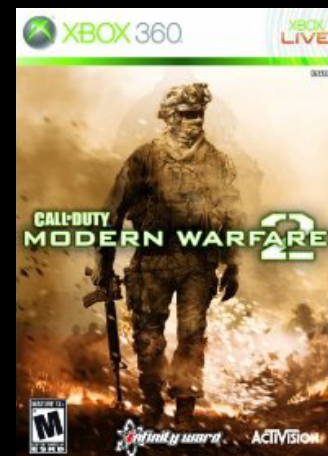
## Game Review:

### Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2

**M**odern Warfare 2 is a first-person tactical shooter and the sixth entry in the popular Call of Duty series. True to its name and following the lead of its predecessor, Call of Duty: Modern Warfare, it places players in modern combat settings, as opposed to the WWII environments of the earlier Call of Duty games. This modern approach brings with it new weapons, action and options. Coupled with a variety of gameplay modes including single player, multiplayer and the co-op Special Ops Mode, it is destined to be one of the most popular games of 2009 and a worthy addition to the Call of Duty series.

The storyline of Modern Warfare 2 picks up where the events of Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare left off. The ultranationalist Russian leader Zakhaev has been eliminated, but it seems that his lieutenant, Vladimir Makarov, is an even bigger danger. Having made a successful play for power, Intel indicates that he is extending the reach of his influence well beyond the borders of Mother Russia, causing a stir in the international community and prompting the involvement of Task Force 141. Task Force 141 is an elite multinational unit made up of Navy Seals, Delta Force operatives, British SAS and CIA. In the single player campaign you are Sergeant Gary "Roach" Sanderson, with the hero of Call of Duty 4, "Soap" MacTavish, promoted to Captain, making an appearance as an NPC (non-player character) and your commanding officer. The elimination of Makarov and his underlings at any cost is your number one priority, regardless where the fight occurs. ■

*Review by G4TV.com*



# 12.31.09



Prizes for  
Top  
Participants!

*Camp Taji  
Idol*

Camp Taji Idol will be a talent/variety show, held at Jon Schoolcraft Pavilion on 12.31.09 at 2000 hrs.  
To participate you MUST attend one of the rehearsals on 12.28.09 or 12.29.09 (1900 to 2100 hrs).  
POC: [brent.lindley@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:brent.lindley@iraq.centcom.mil)

# New Year Resolutions

**Did yours make our top ten?**

**N**ew Year's Eve has always been a time for looking back to the past and more importantly, forward to the coming year. It's a time to reflect on the changes we want (or need) to make and resolve to follow through on those changes.

## Family and Friends

Recent polls conducted by General Nutrition Centers, Quicken and others show that more than 50% of Americans vow to appreciate loved ones and spend more time with family and friends this year. Make plans to meet up with friends for an evening of camaraderie at the AAFES Food Court, and be sure to maintain communication with your family while deployed.

## Fit in Fitness

The evidence is in for fitness. Regular exercise has been



Times Square in New York City celebrates the New Year.

associated with more health benefits than anything else known to man. Studies show that regular exercise reduces the risk of some cancers, increases longevity, helps achieve and maintain weight loss, enhances mood, lowers blood pressure and even improves arthritis. In short, exercise keeps you healthy and makes you look and feel better. Why not make this the time to start getting in shape for the next Camp Taji run?

## Tame the Bulge

Over 66% of adult Americans are considered overweight or obese according to recent studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, so it is not surprising to find that weight loss is one of the most popular New Year resolutions. Setting reasonable goals and staying focused are the two most important factors in sticking with a weight loss program, and the key to success for



**4-227th ARB "GUNS" HOSTS CAMP TAJI'S  
BRAVE WARRIOR 5K JINGLE BELL RUN  
25 DEC 09 @ 0715 HRS**

EARLY REGISTRATION 18-24 DEC @ BLDG 6 OFF 30TH ST., NEXT TO AVERAGE JOES GYM. FIRST 100 FINISHERS RECEIVE T-SHIRTS. PRIZES FOR 1ST PLACE MALE/FEMALE, CERTIFICATES FOR 1ST, 2ND, 3RD PLACE MALE/FEMALE. RAFFLE PRIZES (AFTER RACE). DRINKS AND FRUIT AVAILABLE BEFORE AND AFTER RACE. GREET YOUR LOVED ONES, HAVE YOUR PICTURE TAKEN TO SEND HOME ON CHRISTMAS DAY. MUSIC PLAYING THROUGHOUT. FIRST 50 REGISTERED RUNNERS RECEIVE CHRISTMAS HATS! APACHE'S WILL HONOR ALL RUNNERS WITH FLY OVER.

POC: MSG MEYER, J    [jovana.meyer@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:jovana.meyer@iraq.centcom.mil)    834-3059



those millions of Americans who made a commitment to shed extra pounds.

### **Quit Smoking**

If you have resolved to make this the year that you stamp out your smoking habit, over-the-counter availability of nicotine replacement therapy now provides easier access to proven quit-smoking aids. Even if you've tried to quit before and failed, don't let it get you down. On average, smokers try about four times before they quit for good. Start enjoying the rest of your smoke-free life! Many cities and towns in the U.S. have passed smoke-free laws. Camp Taji has a variety of free support services and smoking cessation classes to help you kick the habit.

### **Enjoy Life More**

Given the hectic, stressful lifestyles of servicemembers, it is no wonder that "enjoying life more" has become a popular resolution in recent years. It's an important step to a happier and healthier you! Consider one of the many activities on Camp Taji to bring balance to your body, mind and soul. Or just get out of your CHU and try something new! Take up a hobby or head to the MWR. Taji offers a wealth of recreational activities to meet just about

anyone's wishes.

### **Quit Drinking**

While many people use the New Year as an incentive to finally stop drinking, most are not equipped to make such a drastic change all at once. Many heavy drinkers fail to quit cold turkey but do much better when they taper gradually, or even learn to moderate their drinking. If you have decided to quit drinking, there is a world of help and support available.

### **Get Out of Debt**

Was money a big source of stress in your life last year? Join the million of Americans who have resolved to spend this year getting a handle on their finances. It's a promise that will repay itself many times over in the year ahead.

### **Learn Something New**

Have you vowed to make this the year to learn something new? Perhaps you are considering a career change, want to learn a new language, or just how to fix your computer? Whether you take a course or read a book, you'll find education to be one of the easiest, and most motivating New Year resolutions to keep. The Camp Taji Education Center offers a wide variety of courses that can be completed online.

### **Help Others**

A popular non-selfish New Year resolution, volunteerism can take many forms. There are many nonprofit organizations that could really use your help. If your time is in short supply, you might consider donating furniture, clothing, or other items that you no longer need.

### **Get Organized**

On just about every New Year resolution list, organization can be a very reasonable goal. Getting organized requires a motivated attitude, time to plan, and time to execute your plan. ■

**IT'S BACK!**

**POWDER PUFF**  
Flag Football

**BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!**

**01.01.10**

Powder Puff Flag Football is back by popular demand for a single elimination tournament on January 1, 2010 at 1000 hours. Individuals and teams must register no later than 12:29:09. The game(s) will be played on the south field at the Taji track.

POC: GPT Brent Lindley    [brent.lindley@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:brent.lindley@iraq.centcom.mil)

# Soldiers Celebrate Veterans Day

## With Back To School Supply Mission



Col. John Rhodes (bottom left) from Corinth, Miss., the 155th Brigade Combat Team garrison commander and deputy commanding officer of the 155th BCT, an Iraqi Army officer and others pose with children from the Al Abbas school following an Operation Back to School mission.

By Capt. Brent Lindley  
155th HBCT

**N**ov. 11. In a joint operation with Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 37th Iraqi Army Infantry Division, U.S. Soldiers made the third Operation Back to School delivery to a rural school in Iraq, northwest of Camp Taji, Iraq.

Nov. 11th was chosen to conduct the mission by veterans at Camp Taji as a way to celebrate Veterans Day.

After a security briefing, prayer from Chaplain (Capt.) Chris Weinrich of the 1-227 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, final words from Lt. Col. Kent Wong, Operation Back to School Chairperson and director of operations for the 821st Expeditionary Training Squadron, the patrol conducted pre-combat inspections and left Camp Taji, Iraq en route to link up with Iraqi Army Soldiers with the 37th Iraqi Army Division at Joint Security Station Al Awad.

The patrol consisted of multiple U.S. Army units including the 155th Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Tupelo, Miss. and Delta Co.,

1/5 Cavalry (1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division) from Fort Hood, Texas.

Upon reaching the Joint Security Station, members of the Operation Back to School rehearsed the delivery with the Iraqi Army, setting up security upon reaching the school and distribution of the school kits. From the beginning of the Operation Back to School program in Aug. 2009, the steering committee wanted to ensure that the Iraqi Army was included in the distribution of the school supplies. Conducting the operation with the Iraqi Army not only helps to continue solidification of the partnership between Coalition and Iraqi forces, but shows the school children that such a partnership exists.

At the Al Abbas school, northwest of Camp Taji, Iraq, 475 students in 8 classrooms patiently awaited to receive school supplies. Capt. Brent Lindley and others went to each classroom, talking to the children through an interpreter, "you are the future of Iraq, in this classroom are the future teachers, doctors and leaders. People from the United States send their best

wishes to you along with the school supplies. It is important to study and learn." The Soldiers also passed candy out to the school children while the supplies were being handed out in other classes.

Reconnaissance of the school had revealed nearly one hundred children in each elementary classroom. The count of children revealed that this was accurate. Even though the children were cramped, it was amazing how polite and calm the children were.

Iraqi Army officers and U.S. Army Soldiers distributed the school kits to each child. "After receiving the school kits, the children's faces lit up," said Staff Sgt. Jonathan White from Taylorsville, Miss. "The Operation Back to School committee targets rural schools which do not have a lot of support. Basic school supplies made the difference to the children of this school," said Lindley.

In addition to the school kit provided to each student, Col. John M. Rhodes from Corinth, Miss., deputy commander of the 155th Brigade Combat Team and Command Sgt. Maj. Sylvester Bolton of Pope,



Miss., command sergeant major of the 155 Garrison Command at Camp Taji, met with the headmaster of the school and presented "teacher kits" containing more school supplies as well as twenty soccer balls.

Sgt. Robert Balla of Madison, Miss., combat medic with the 155 Brigade Combat Team, worked alongside an Iraqi Army medic to evaluate and treat 15 school children with minor injuries, such as cuts and bruises. Sgt Balla said that this was the most memorable thing he had done during his deployment.

"These types of endeavors help build relationships with the Iraqi citizens. Years from now, these children will remember the generosity and kind acts demonstrated by Americans. This event also offered people back home an opportunity to play a critical role in the success of this venture. Without their donations, this would never be possible. Many U.S. schools donated supplies for Iraqi schools. This brought both cultures together which will facilitate a better understanding of the different cultures" said Rhodes.

After the mission, the Operation Back to School Soldiers took a group picture with the school children and returned to Camp Taji. "In a deployed area, days off for holidays don't exist. But, having the opportunity to leave Iraq better than you found it for these veterans is even better. Perhaps the biggest reward for the veterans on this day was seeing the smiles on the children of Iraq. The donation of school supplies from those in the United States has made a huge difference" said Lindley.

Operation Back to School Kits are in a 2.5 gallon Ziploc bag and include: one composition notebook, one small box of colored pencils, three plain folders with pockets, one pack-



Chief Warrant Officer 3 John Bailey, 155th Brigade Combat Team, from Hattiesburg, Miss., helps pass out Operation Back to School kits with Iraqi Army Soldiers (not pictured).



Sgt. Robert Balla, 155th Brigade Combat Team medic from Madison, Miss., assists Iraqi Army medics (not pictured) in providing minor medical care for children at the Al Abbas school mission.

age of wide rule paper, one pair of blunt tip scissors, one ruler, one small pencil sharpener, one large eraser, one zipper pencil pouch and one dozen pencils. ■

Find us on Facebook at Operation Back to School Camp Taji, or email Capt. Brent Lindley at [brent.lindley@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:brent.lindley@iraq.centcom.mil).

# AROUND TAJI

## A COLLECTION OF PHOTOS FROM AROUND TAJI

From far left top, moving clockwise. Staff Sgt. Carlos Lucero, 38th HR Co., serves as the warehouse and technical inspection NCOIC. Hooters' Girls, LeAngela Davis (left) and Raechel Holtgrave (right), pose backstage during their show at Taji. Soldiers of the 498th Transportation Co. await the start of their combat patching ceremony. Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby (left), commander MNC-I, and Col. Tobin Green (center), commander of the 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., meet with Capt. Michael Doyle during a visit to Taji.





From far left top, moving clockwise. WWE superstars pose with members of 1st Air Cavalry Brigade. Sgt. Beverly Price, 155th HBCT, poses with the Cracker band members. Col. John Rhodes (left), 155th HBCT deputy commander and garrison commander, awards Pfc. Donald Francia (center), 26th Military Police Detachment, while Cpt. Taran Myrick (right), 26th Military Police commander, proudly looks on. Brokedown Cadillac performs at Jon Schoolcraft Pavilion. Last Minute Up, a Powder Puff Flag Football team, with coach Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Feazell, garrison command billeting NCOIC.



# From the Frontlines

By Sgt. Seandale Jackson, 1st ARB, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div.



Spc. Alisha Rene Kaiser, (right), AH64-D Apache Mechanic, of Farm Burg, SC. stands with reenlisting officer Capt. Jacques Fontenot of Baton Rouge, LA., commander Company D, 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division on one of the John Deere tractors used to reposition aircraft on the flight line at Camp Taji, Iraq after scheduled maintenance. (US Army photo by Sgt. Seandale Jackson, 1st ARB, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div.)

## Southern Charm

**T**he United States takes great pride in seeing its citizens serve in the Armed Forces. The particular branch of service takes great pride seeing one of its own continue to serve.

When a civilian joins the Military, the initial oath of enlistment is more often than not, administered in a large room with a group of future service members. You've known them for a few hours if at all, and will in some cases never see again, all with an enlisting officer who may or may not be in your intended branch. However generic, it may seem all service members remember the day, date and time and in some cases what they were wearing as it was the last civilian outfit before

putting on a uniform. Whatever the circumstances, enlistments and reenlistments hold a special place in the hearts of service members and some go to extra ordinary lengths to make it memorable.

The military is in a heavy cycle of deployment and its becoming increasing difficult to retain service members. Along with choice of duty stations, money and job changes, the military will assist in making your reenlistment an event to remember.

Spc Alicia Rene Kaiser of Farm Burg, South Carolina, an AH64-D Apache Mechanic and Aviation Life Support Equipment (ALSE) maintainer, stationed at Fort Hood, TX. with 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division has had one such reenlistment.

The eldest of 7, Kaiser wanted more than what her surroundings had to offer. "Well I didn't want to stay home, do nothing and go nowhere and I wasn't ready for college" said Kaiser. After weighing options she enlisted in the Army in July of 2004 and was stationed at Fort Hood, TX.

After serving with First Attack, Kaiser was moved to Korea where she spent over a year as an Apache helicopter maintainer and becoming familiar with ALSE. She then returned to Fort Hood and has deployed to Camp Taji, Iraq.

This is Kaiser's second reenlistment and stability was the

driving force behind her decision. "I wasn't sure about getting out and going to school because of the economy and wanted to be closer to home, I said if you get me Savanna or Bragg I'll do it." At this point Kaiser is uncertain if she will continue to serve and thought this would be her last chance. "I wanted to make something memorable and decided to go with the John Deere."

**"I thought what the heck I'll represent the south."**  
- Spc. Alisha Kaiser

On the flight line at Camp Taji, various members of First Attack gathered around a John Deere tractor, used to reposition aircraft on the ramp, park next to a 28 million dollar AH64-D Apache Attack Helicopter armed with Air-to-ground Hellfire Missiles, 2.75in rockets and a loaded 30mm chain gun.

Kaiser wanted to show how far she's come and how very close to home she still is. "I knew my step father would get a kick out of it so I thought, what the heck I'll represent the south." She didn't grow up on a farm but has a bit of experience on products from the company. "My family owned a lawn mower and a few other things from them but never a tractor so I reenlisted on the back of one." Kaiser has now turned her attention to furthering her career as she prepares to leave for the next unit. "I'm going to try to get promoted to Sergeant soon and get more involved in aircraft maintenance once I get to my new unit, my goal is to stay positive and I'll be a lot closer to home so it'll be better for me" she said. ■



# The Drawdown

By Spc. Jason Everett, HHC, 541st CSSB, 96SBDE

## Pacesetter Retrograde Yard

**A**fter six years of operations in Iraq, the time for drawdown has begun. This in itself is a major operation that requires focus, teamwork and smart Soldiers in the right places.

Maj. Arturo Lincon, a native of Eagle River, Alaska and the 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion's (CSSB) support operations officer said, "Units have accumulated a great deal of stuff; this equipment has been handed from unit to unit as forces continue to redeploy, but as we drawdown the forces in Iraq, there is no unit to hand it off to – we have to do something with it."

Recently a spotlight shone on one of the Army's unique support operations – the Pacesetter Retrograde Yard (PRY), an innovative method of dealing with this equipment and miscellaneous items. The PRY is located on Camp Taji, Iraq and serves as a one stop shop to drop off serviceable parts, unserviceable repairables, medical equipment and communication equipment that is no longer needed by the units.

The PRY works in conjunction with the 541st warehouse to put the serviceable items back into the Army system for reuse. The warehouse has a team of Soldiers located at the PRY to do the initial sorting and identifying of the equipment being turned in. This job belongs to Foreman, Sgt. Terry Sachs, of the 96th Sustainment Brigade, and a Sandy, Utah native, who sends the serviceable items back to the 541st warehouse to be processed and distributed back into the Army Supply System. Sgt Sachs said, "This mission is not a race, it is a marathon."

Spc. Jeff Halligan, from Chicago, Ill., and a job processor working in the PRY stated, "When we got here the yard needed much improvement and we can see the product of our hard

work as the systems we put into place take effect".

Once the items are sorted and sent back to the warehouse, they fall under the control of Noncommissioned Officer in Charge, Sgt. Scott Todd of Florence, Ariz., with the 3666th Maintenance Co., 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. Sgt. Todd explains their mission focus.

"It is our responsibility to process the parts; once they are deemed serviceable they go back into the army supply system. In just three and a half weeks we have processed over three million dollars worth of equipment. That is a huge dollar amount that the Army does not have to spend on replacing items that we are still finding out here from Operation Iraqi Freedom 1 in 2003-2004. The credit goes to the Soldiers; they have really made this mission their own" said Todd. The morale is high as you walk through the busy warehouse. The team has figured out how to make the whole operation work with a limited number of Soldiers.

Spc. Delilah Ruiz, of Bagdad, Ariz., an administrative clerk said, "We really click together as a team and our NCO's guidance and mentorship really contribute to our positive work environment."

"We can see the outcome of our

mission and understand we are accomplishing a great amount for the Army," said Spc. Lorraine Perez, from Meza, Ariz., an administrative clerk with the 3666th. The positive work environment and the interaction of each Soldier at the warehouse and the PRY reflects not only that the Soldiers have really thrown themselves into their mission but that each Soldier understands the importance of their mission.

Units can also come to the yard and warehouse to find parts or equipment that they need.

"Units here on Camp Taji can get critical items in minutes, rather than the months that it usually requires through the traditional supply system, and it saves money since these items have already been purchased and are ready for immediate use" commented Sgt. Todd, as he conducted a tour through his team's operation.

When Morgan City, La. native, Lt. Col. Paul Dismar, the 541st Battalion Commander, toured the area with the Soldiers, he bestowed upon Sgt. Todd a coveted battalion coin for the impressive work his team is putting forth. The team truly pulls their weight as they continue to supply units with items essential to their mission, turn in excess, and prepare for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq. ■



Spc. Lorraine Perez, a mechanic with the 3666th Maintenance Company, inventories supplies at the Pacesetter Retrograde Warehouse to be processed back into the system for units to use.

# Soldier in Focus: Never Quit

By Staff Sgt. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div.



Light emphasizes the left side of Sgt. 1st Class Pierce Williams' face where, along with his upper torso, he took the brunt of an improvised explosive device, Dec. 10, 2006. Williams, of Sturgis, S.D., an intelligence sergeant of future operations, for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, recovered from second degree burns to his face, neck and hands, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder and bi-lateral hearing loss. He still has a couple dozen pieces of shrapnel still in his body – reminders of his days as a battle-hardened infantryman.

**M**ore than most, Soldiers know about never quitting, it is in their ethos and creed – a code they have embedded in their hearts from the beginning of their military careers.

Sgt. 1st Class Pierce Williams, once a young infantry staff sergeant, has had moments in his life where quitting was given as an option, but instead, he chose the ethos.

Williams, a native of Sturgis, S.D., an intelligence noncommissioned officer for future operations for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, now on his third deployment to Iraq, never thought he would be shuffling through intelligence reports—not after one fateful day in 2006.

He joined the Army in May 2002, six days after he graduated high school; following in his older brother's footsteps. In February 2003, less than four months after arriving to his first duty assignment with the 82nd Airborne Div. in Fort Bragg, N.C., he deployed to Iraq.

"I was 19 years old and coming over here to Iraq was crazy. You're shooting at people, you're getting shot at," he said. "It was nothing that you'd experience back in the States." With one deployment behind him and after a year-long training period with his new unit, the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, he was on his way back to Iraq.

For the first 65 days of his new deployment, he wasn't very impressed with the amount of enemy action. It was a welcome lull in fire fights and daily rocket attacks of his last deployment.

That all changed the night of Dec. 10, 2006 – day 66. Williams volunteered his Soldiers to go on a patrol so that his comrades could get some much needed rest.

But his decision to do so almost immediately brought on uneasy feelings. What made it worse was his Soldiers had the same premonition.

"I had quite a few Soldiers coming up to tell me that they didn't feel comfortable going out on this patrol," said Williams. As a leader, you have to show that you have no fear and that everything will be okay, he said. "That part was probably a little difficult for me because I was such a young staff sergeant," said Williams. But none of that mattered; Soldiers have to put their feelings aside to accomplish their mission, said Williams.

Night fell and the convoy set out. While on the road, Williams was

constantly trying to radio his headquarters for an updated status of his route in regards to improvised explosive devices, but to no avail. "After I made my last radio call, I kind of looked over at my driver and team leader, who was also in my vehicle, and was getting ready to say, 'I can't get a hold of these [guys]!'" But before he uttered those words in frustration, he was blasted in the face by a giant fireball that slammed him violently against his door.

"My initial thought was, 'I've just been blown up by an IED,'" Williams said. As the daze from the blast began to clear, his brain started processing information normally. This brought into view the rest of his Soldiers still inside the vehicle.

Only Williams and his driver made it out alive.

After other Soldiers pulled his door off using another vehicle, his medic approached him and asked if he was okay. At the time he could not feel his left ear and thought his left shoulder was dislocated. "That was the first time, as soon as I stepped out of the vehicle, that I felt pain," said Williams.

The medic pulled down on his arm, which caused a stream of profanity to flow from William's mouth, but his shoulder was not separated. "I kept asking if my ear was still there and he said, 'yeah,' and kept wrapping," said Williams.

Shortly thereafter he was medically evacuated by the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, the very unit he now serves with, he said. It turned out that he did still have his left ear; it had been filleted from his scalp by a piece of shrapnel. The left side of his upper torso was pelted with numerous entrance wounds from the explosion

**read the rest on page 35**



## **New Pay Charts, continued from page 7**

. . . SNAP benefits, but Pentagon officials have learned that even with the increase, some exceptionally large junior enlisted families will still qualify for food stamps and thus for the allowance.

When: Effective Oct. 1. Retroactive payments will be made once regulations are updated.

## **Deduction repayment limits**

The maximum percentage of military pay authorized to be deducted when the government collects an overpayment from a service member will be capped at 15 percent, down from the current 20 percent. Also, service members may request a delay in repayment because of hardship, and the government also must delay collection from anyone injured in the line of duty as long as the member was not at fault for the injury.

When: Applies only to overpayments after Oct. 28, not prior debts.

## **Prorated special, incentive pay**

Monthly payment of hostile fire pay, imminent danger pay, hazardous duty pay, assignment pay and special duty pay will be prorated to reflect the actual number of days in a month that a member performed qualifying service. It will apply to active and reserve members, and could substantially reduce payments for some people.

When: Effective Oct. 28, but new regulations must be issued.

## **Leave carry-over**

Temporary permission to accumulate and carry over up to 75 days of leave from one fiscal year to the next, due to expire Dec. 31, 2010, is

further extended so that service members don't lose leave as a result of ongoing contingency operations.

When: The new expiration date is Sept. 30, 2012.

## **Family and Medical Leave**

Provisions of the landmark Family and Medical Leave Act aimed at military families are expanding in two ways.

First, families or caregivers of newly discharged disabled veterans will be able to take up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave for treatment-related issues, a benefit currently available only to families and caregivers of service members still on active duty. The time off will be available for five years after a service member separates or retires.

Second, exigency leave, which allows families time off for deployment-related issues, will be provided to active-duty family members who are not currently eligible, and the kinds of deployments meriting time off will expand to include any overseas deployment, not just the contingency operations covered in current law.

Exigency leave allows time off to attend briefings and arrival and departure ceremonies, to handle legal or financial matters on behalf of the deployed member, and to allow family members to take vacations with service members if they are able to arrange mid-deployment R&R.

When: Effective Oct. 28.

## **Respite leave pay**

Troops who did not get Post-Deployment/Mobilization Respite Absence leave earned after Jan. 19, 2007, could receive \$200 for each day of administrative leave they should have earned.

The Pentagon-created program, known as PDMRA, gives nonchargeable time off to those who have frequent deployments. The program took more than a year to get off the ground after it was announced, which meant some people who had earned administrative leave had left service before they could use the days off.

The program is especially valuable to Guard and reserve members because they receive full pay and benefits during the respite leave. There is no limit on the number of days of payment, which in some cases could be more than 40, and people who have left service will be eligible.

Service members who were or are offered respite leave and decide not to take it will not be eligible for the payment.

When: Authorized Oct. 28, but regulations on how payments will be computed must be approved. The \$200 benefit expires Oct. 28, 2010.

## **Travel to hospitalized troops**

Travel allowances will be provided for up to three people to make up to three trips in a 60-day period to visit a hospitalized service member who is severely wounded, injured or ill, including serious mental disorders.

Authorized visitors will not necessarily have to be immediate family members; they can be anyone designated by the service member. If a service member is unable to make a designation, the attending surgeon or head of the medical facility may designate someone with a personal relationship to the member whose presence might offer aid and support during inpatient treatment. 60 days of hospitalization, another three visits for three people are authorized.

When: Effective Oct. 28.

### Travel for nonmedical aides

Similar in some ways to the travel benefits for visitors of hospitalized veterans, travel and transportation allowances will be provided for one person serving as nonmedical attendant for a seriously injured service member.

In this case, an attending physician or hospital commander must determine that a nonmedical attendant would be good for the hospitalized service member's health and welfare, and that the would-be attendant is appropriate and qualified for the job. Benefits include round-trip travel and a per diem.

When: Effective Oct. 28, but requires prior authorization by medical officials.

### Specialty care travel

Active-duty members requiring specialty care under exceptional circumstances would be eligible for reimbursement of travel costs for them and their dependents, an expansion of current policy that limits payment to travel of 100 miles or more when a primary care doctor approves the specialty care.

When: Authorized Oct. 28, but this is a discretionary measure that would become available only if the Defense Department decides to implement it.

### Guaranteed health evaluations

Two provisions in the act address the medical exams that must be done before discharge or separation. One says Guard and reserve members who have been receiving imminent danger pay during deployment must be kept on active duty until they receive a physical or mental disability evaluation, unless they request to be demobilized. Anyone who asks to demobilize without an evaluation would have to

be counseled on the consequences.

The second provision says a medical exam is required before anyone diagnosed or reasonably claiming to have post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury could receive an involuntary administrative separation.

When: The Guard and reserve provision took effect Oct. 28 and lasts for five years. The PTSD and TBI provision is a permanent change in law that will apply to administrative separations after Oct. 28.

### Pre-mobilization Tricare

Reservists who previously were eligible for Tricare coverage 90 days before the start of their active duty if they have received advance orders will now have 180 days of pre-mobilization coverage.

When: The extra days took effect Oct. 28 and will apply to anyone who is under current orders or who receives new mobilization orders.

### Reserve dental care

Reservists using transitional dental care after they have been on active duty for 30 days or longer in support of a contingency operation will have the same priority for appointments as active-duty members. Guard and reserve members have 180 days of post-mobilization eligibility for dental benefits.

When: Effective Oct. 28.

### Survivor dental coverage

Dental coverage for surviving children is increased beyond the current limit of three years after a service member's death. Children's coverage will be whichever is longer: three years, until their 21st birthday or until their 23rd birthday if they remain full-time students. This

change makes survivor dental coverage the same as survivor Tricare benefits.

When: Effective Oct. 28, so some surviving children whose coverage stopped could have benefits restored.

### Tricare for 'gray area' retirees

Reservists who qualify for military retired pay but are not yet drawing it because they have not reached age 60 will become eligible for Tricare Standard health coverage for themselves and their dependents. Coverage will terminate when they reach age 60 and become eligible for regular retiree health benefits. Premiums for the coverage would be determined by the defense secretary.

When: Nominally took effect Oct. 1, but there is no deadline by which the Defense Department must set premiums and enrollment rules. ■





# 2010 Basic Pay Chart

## 2010 BASIC PAY: 20 YEARS OF SERVICE AND BELOW

| Paygrade | YEARS OF SERVICE |           |           |           |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|----------|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|          | < 2              | 2         | 3         | 4         | 6          | 8          | 10         | 12         | 14         | 16         | 18         | 20         |
| O-10     | --               | --        | --        | --        | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | 15,188.100 |
| O-9      | --               | --        | --        | --        | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | 13,283.700 |
| O-8      | 9,399.000        | 9,706.800 | 9,911.100 | 9,968.400 | 10,223.400 | 10,649.100 | 10,748.400 | 11,152.800 | 11,268.600 | 11,617.200 | 12,121.200 | 12,586.200 |
| O-7      | 7,809.900        | 8,172.900 | 8,340.600 | 8,474.100 | 8,715.600  | 8,954.400  | 9,230.400  | 9,505.500  | 9,781.800  | 10,649.100 | 11,381.400 | 11,381.400 |
| O-6      | 5,788.500        | 6,359.400 | 6,776.700 | 6,776.700 | 6,802.500  | 7,094.100  | 7,132.500  | 7,132.500  | 7,537.800  | 8,254.800  | 8,675.400  | 9,095.700  |
| O-5      | 4,825.500        | 5,436.000 | 5,812.500 | 5,883.300 | 6,117.900  | 6,258.600  | 6,567.600  | 6,794.100  | 7,086.900  | 7,535.100  | 7,748.100  | 7,959.000  |
| O-4      | 4,163.700        | 4,819.800 | 5,141.400 | 5,213.100 | 5,511.600  | 5,831.700  | 6,230.100  | 6,540.600  | 6,756.600  | 6,880.200  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  |
| O-3      | 3,660.600        | 4,149.900 | 4,479.300 | 4,883.400 | 5,117.100  | 5,373.900  | 5,540.100  | 5,813.400  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  |
| O-2      | 3,162.900        | 3,602.400 | 4,149.000 | 4,289.100 | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  |
| O-1      | 2,745.600        | 2,857.500 | 3,454.200 | 3,454.200 | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  |
| O-3E     | --               | --        | --        | 4,883.400 | 5,117.100  | 5,373.900  | 5,540.100  | 5,813.400  | 6,043.500  | 6,175.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  |
| O-2E     | --               | --        | --        | 4,289.100 | 4,377.300  | 4,516.800  | 4,752.000  | 4,933.800  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  |
| O-1E     | --               | --        | --        | 3,454.200 | 3,688.800  | 3,825.000  | 3,964.800  | 4,101.600  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  |
| W-5      | --               | --        | --        | --        | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | --         | 6,726.600  |
| W-4      | 3,783.000        | 4,069.500 | 4,186.500 | 4,301.100 | 4,499.100  | 4,695.000  | 4,893.000  | 5,191.800  | 5,453.400  | 5,702.100  | 5,905.500  | 6,104.100  |
| W-3      | 3,454.500        | 3,598.500 | 3,746.100 | 3,794.700 | 3,949.500  | 4,254.000  | 4,571.100  | 4,730.100  | 4,892.700  | 5,070.900  | 5,390.400  | 5,606.700  |
| W-2      | 3,057.000        | 3,346.200 | 3,435.300 | 3,496.500 | 3,694.800  | 4,002.900  | 4,155.300  | 4,305.900  | 4,489.500  | 4,633.200  | 4,763.400  | 4,918.800  |
| W-1      | 2,683.500        | 2,971.800 | 3,049.800 | 3,213.900 | 3,398.100  | 3,694.200  | 3,827.700  | 4,014.300  | 4,197.900  | 4,342.200  | 4,475.400  | 4,636.800  |
| E-9      | --               | --        | --        | --        | --         | --         | 4,570.800  | 4,674.300  | 4,804.800  | 4,958.400  | 5,112.900  | 5,361.600  |
| E-8      | --               | --        | --        | --        | --         | 3,741.600  | 3,907.200  | 4,009.500  | 4,132.500  | 4,265.400  | 4,505.400  | 4,626.900  |
| E-7      | 2,601.000        | 2,838.900 | 2,947.500 | 3,091.800 | 3,204.000  | 3,396.900  | 3,505.500  | 3,699.000  | 3,859.500  | 3,969.000  | 4,085.700  | 4,131.300  |
| E-6      | 2,249.700        | 2,475.300 | 2,584.500 | 2,690.700 | 2,801.400  | 3,051.000  | 3,148.200  | 3,336.000  | 3,393.600  | 3,435.600  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  |
| E-5      | 2,061.300        | 2,199.300 | 2,305.500 | 2,414.400 | 2,583.900  | 2,761.800  | 2,906.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  |
| E-4      | 1,889.700        | 1,986.300 | 2,094.000 | 2,199.900 | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  |
| E-3      | 1,705.800        | 1,813.200 | 1,923.000 | 1,923.000 | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  |
| E-2      | 1,622.100        | 1,622.100 | 1,622.100 | 1,622.100 | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  |
| E-1      | 1,447.200        | 1,447.200 | 1,447.200 | 1,447.200 | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  |

Note: Monthly pay for O-7s through O-10s in 2009 is capped at \$14,750.10 under Level II of the Executive Schedule. The cap for 2010 is not yet known.

Source: Congress, Military Times calculations

## 2010 BASIC PAY: MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

| Paygrade | YEARS OF SERVICE |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |            |
|----------|------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
|          | 22               | 24         | 26         | 28         | 30         | 32         | 34         | 36         | 38         | 40+        |
| O-10     | 15,262.200       | 15,579.600 | 16,132.500 | 16,132.500 | 16,939.200 | 16,939.200 | 17,785.800 | 17,785.800 | 18,675.600 | 18,675.600 |
| O-9      | 13,475.100       | 13,751.400 | 14,233.800 | 14,234.100 | 14,946.000 | 14,946.000 | 15,693.300 | 15,693.300 | 16,477.800 | 16,477.800 |
| O-8      | 12,896.700       | 12,896.700 | 12,896.700 | 12,896.700 | 13,219.200 | 13,219.200 | 13,549.800 | 13,549.800 | 13,549.800 | 13,549.800 |
| O-7      | 11,381.400       | 11,381.400 | 11,439.300 | 11,439.300 | 11,668.200 | 11,668.200 | 11,668.200 | 11,668.200 | 11,668.200 | 11,668.200 |
| O-6      | 9,334.800        | 9,577.200  | 10,047.000 | 10,047.000 | 10,247.700 | 10,247.700 | 10,247.700 | 10,247.700 | 10,247.700 | 10,247.700 |
| O-5      | 8,198.400        | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  | 8,198.400  |
| O-4      | 6,951.900        | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  | 6,951.900  |
| O-3      | 5,955.600        | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  | 5,955.600  |
| O-2      | 4,377.300        | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  | 4,377.300  |
| O-1      | 3,454.200        | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  | 3,454.200  |
| O-3E     | 6,355.800        | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  | 6,355.800  |
| O-2E     | 5,069.100        | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  | 5,069.100  |
| O-1E     | 4,289.100        | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  | 4,289.100  |
| W-5      | 7,068.000        | 7,322.100  | 7,603.500  | 7,603.500  | 7,983.900  | 7,983.900  | 8,383.200  | 8,383.200  | 8,802.600  | 8,802.600  |
| W-4      | 6,396.000        | 6,635.400  | 6,909.000  | 6,909.000  | 7,047.000  | 7,047.000  | 7,047.000  | 7,047.000  | 7,047.000  | 7,047.000  |
| W-3      | 5,736.000        | 5,873.400  | 6,060.000  | 6,060.000  | 6,060.000  | 6,060.000  | 6,060.000  | 6,060.000  | 6,060.000  | 6,060.000  |
| W-2      | 5,021.400        | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  | 5,102.700  |
| W-1      | 4,636.800        | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  | 4,636.800  |
| E-9      | 5,571.300        | 5,792.400  | 6,129.900  | 6,129.900  | 6,436.200  | 6,436.200  | 6,758.400  | 6,758.400  | 7,096.500  | 7,096.500  |
| E-8      | 4,833.900        | 4,948.500  | 5,231.400  | 5,231.400  | 5,336.400  | 5,336.400  | 5,336.400  | 5,336.400  | 5,336.400  | 5,336.400  |
| E-7      | 4,282.800        | 4,364.400  | 4,674.600  | 4,674.600  | 4,674.600  | 4,674.600  | 4,674.600  | 4,674.600  | 4,674.600  | 4,674.600  |
| E-6      | 3,484.500        | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  | 3,484.500  |
| E-5      | 2,924.700        | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  | 2,924.700  |
| E-4      | 2,293.800        | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  | 2,293.800  |
| E-3      | 1,923.000        | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  | 1,923.000  |
| E-2      | 1,622.100        | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  | 1,622.100  |
| E-1      | 1,447.200        | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  | 1,447.200  |

Note: Monthly pay for O-7s through O-10s in 2009 is capped at \$14,750.10 under Level II of the Executive Schedule. The cap for 2010 is not yet known.

Source: Congress, Military Times calculations



**Enroll in December or January  
and UMUC will waive your \$30  
application fee!**

# Education Center News

*By Randy Phelan, Education Director*

The grand opening of the Camp Taji Education Center was held on Oct. 5, and there was a strong turnout for the first on-site classes offered by University of Maryland University College (UMUC).

"We're honored to offer courses right at the site where soldiers are stationed downrange," said Jason Ormsby, the downrange community field representative with UMUC Europe. "Students can get started with UMUC even while deployed."

UMUC will be offering MGST 398Z Creative Problem Solving at Camp Taji from Dec. 31 to Jan. 3, at 1730-2130, taught by special guest faculty Stephanie Styll. The one-credit seminar will cover innovative techniques that students can use to break through mental blocks and solve problems creatively.

"We really want to thank the faculty for helping fellow servicemembers reach their educational goals," said Amy AhYo, UMUC field representative at Camp Taji. "During the January-February session, students can choose from on-site courses in business, government, and history."

UMUC Europe has long been the leading provider of educational opportunities to the U.S. military and offers the award-winning distance education program with 24-hour online services and on-site support at over 150 locations including Iraq and Afghanistan.

## **UMUC Seeks Faculty**

University of Maryland University College is always seeking qualified faculty to teach in a variety of subject areas at downrange locations. Interested individuals should contact the UMUC field representative.

For more information, please visit [www.ed.umuc.edu](http://www.ed.umuc.edu) or contact the UMUC office in Camp Taji at DSN 318-834-3336 (office hours: 0800-2000) or the Downrange Office in Heidelberg, Germany, at DSN 314-370-6762.



**University of Maryland University College *Europe***

## **UPCOMING COURSES AND SEMINARS**

Microeconomics (3 credits, T/Th/Sa, 01.05.10-02.13.10, 1800-2040)  
Intro. to Pub. Admin and Policy (3 credits, T/Th/Sa, 01.05.10-02.13.10, 1800-2040)  
History of the US since 1865 (3 credits, M/W/F, 01.04.10-02.12.10, 1800-2040)

Creative Problem Solving Seminar (1 credit, 12.31.09-01.03.10, 1730-2130)

# **CENTRAL TEXAS COLLEGE**

## **UPCOMING COURSES**

Criminal Deviance (1 credit, Sa, 01.02.10-01.09.10, 0800-1600)  
Setting Goals and Objectives (2 credits, M/W/F, 01.04.10-01.27.10, 2000-2300)  
Military Science (2 credits, T/Th/Sa, 01.19.10-02.04.10, 0800-1200)

**ARMY STUDENTS - You must be registered on [GoArmyEd.com](http://GoArmyEd.com) before enrolling for classes.**



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY NATIONAL GUARD



## Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11, 2009 – Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued a message commemorating 373 years of service by the National Guard.

Here is the text of the chairman's message:

On the Thirteenth of December each year, we celebrate the creation of one of America's most enduring institutions – our National Guard. The Guard has a proud history of serving and protecting the American people at home and defending our allies abroad.

Now, more than any time in our history, our National Guard keeps our military, our Nation strong. We would not have been able to maintain over eight years of sustained combat operations without this incredible service and the sacrifices of Guard families and employers who also contribute.

During World War II, National Guard units were among the first in the fight. America's Citizen-Soldiers and Citizen-Airmen performed valiantly during the Cold War in far away places from Korea to Europe. Over 20,000 Guardsmen served on active duty in the Vietnam War, and over 75,000 answered the Nation's call in support of Operation Desert Storm.

Today over 70,000 of you are currently supporting expeditionary operations in locations around the world while still maintaining vigilance and crisis response stateside. Your efforts are making a remarkable difference at a critical time in our country's history. We could not do it without you.

On behalf of your fellow service members of the Armed Forces, the Joint Chiefs and I thank you and your families and employers for 373 years of courageous sacrifice and service to our Nation. Because of you, the National Guard is Always Ready, and Always There.

Sincerely,

M.G. MULLEN  
Admiral, U.S. Navy

# Where's My Holiday Sign

By Chaplain (Capt.) Chris Weinrich, 1-227th ARB



As the holiday season rapidly approaches, we become more flustered with the preparations for this time of the year. Decorations for the tree, the sweet smells of fresh baked cookies and the joy of grabbing presents brings a newness of life into our bodies. This newness drives us to give of ourselves with our families and friends. Yet, to make this a great holiday season, what are some signs we must uncover with our loved ones?

With the awesome Soldiers on Camp Taji, Iraq, we find this holiday season more difficult to handle with our loved ones living on the other side of the world. Though, even with this distance, we must communicate with our spouses, children and friends to celebrate our holiday beliefs and traditions.

Some signs to watch for during the holiday season are: isolating oneself from his/her family due to the pain and/or guilt of not physically being home, depression with missing the family gatherings, and mentally "checking out" of the mission in Iraq. Watching for these signs will help your spouse, parent and/or child with the separation during the holiday season.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. –Isaiah 7:14

Remember the best sign – Immanuel, God with us...

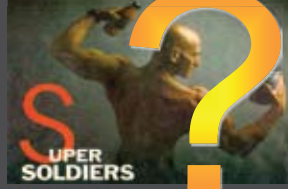
Season's Greetings,  
Chaplain (Capt.) Chris Weinrich

"Attack" the Truth

## SUPPLEMENT SENSE?



A class on the use, efficacy and potential dangers of dietary supplements



Instructor: CPT Julie Hess, RD

When: 18 DEC 2009 @ 1600

Where: Main Post MWR: Bldg #103 next to Mayor Call

SIGN UP: call PT Clinic: 834-1210 (seated space available)

## CHRISTMAS FEST 2009

Jon Schoolcraft Pavilion  
at  
Dec. 25 at 7 p.m.

Traditional Christmas Story & Singing  
Bring an Ornament to Decorate the Tree  
Lighting of the Tree  
Hot Coco & Cider  
Featuring Many of the Taji Praise Teams

POC: geoffrey.wagner@iraq.centcom.mil

# Soldier in Focus: Never Quit (cont'd)

continued from page 28

and debris. The list of injuries goes on: second degree burns to his face, neck and hands, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder and bi-lateral hearing loss. He even has a couple dozen pieces of shrapnel inside his body – some the size of quarters.

Month by month ticked away as he made his way through therapy for both his body and mind. Like many soldiers in his place, he felt the pang of fear and pain, a reminder that it would be so much easier to relent, but he pushed back. Williams was not going to let anything stop him.

The IED did not take his life, so he had a heightened fervor to become the best Soldier he could in lieu of his injuries. His goal was to come back stronger than ever and continue to fight as an infantryman.

It took 22 months of surgeries, physical therapy and counseling for him to finally go before a medical board which held his military career in its hands. They then handed down an opportunity which was, to him at the time, a devastating ultimatum. He could medically retire or stay in the Army, but he could no longer be an infantryman. "After 22 months of healing and fighting to get better [only] for them to tell me that I can't live my dream of being an infantryman was absolutely crushing," said Williams.

"I was contemplating on whether or not I was just going to get medically retired or if I actually wanted to continue on [with] active duty," he said. But his wife reminded him of his ultimate goal to become a sergeant major—something he would be giving up on if he chose to get out.

Instead of quitting, he became an intelligence sergeant, which was an intimidating idea at first, he said. However, it turned out he already

had a knack for the intelligence field.

"I was the type of squad leader that wanted as much intel as possible on whatever operation I was doing – whether it was training or real life," he said of his days as an infantryman.

"Little did I know, at that time, that I was doing an intelligence job," he said. While in training, he passed along his personal story to other Soldiers – a story about never quitting and never leaving a fallen comrade.

Many of the Soldiers he came in contact with during his time at school still keep in contact with him as he helps motivate and mentor them through their Army careers.

Now, sitting in an office chair surrounded by multiple computer screens with red secret stickers on them, he feels the direct impact he makes on the Soldiers – in this case aviators – who go outside the wire.

"I've gone out on missions where I've had bad intel ... where things have gone horribly wrong," he said. "So I know ... that if I don't do the job to my best abilities, then something could go horribly wrong; that's what drives me every day."

Williams puts all of his energy into making sure Soldiers are safer on the streets and in the skies of Baghdad. He never leaves a fallen comrade by not letting them fall in the first place – giving them intelligence to do their jobs. His story and his actions motivate the Soldiers around him as he puts a hundred percent of himself into his work. "I don't like to fail. I like to be first in everything I do, whether it's being an infantryman or doing intelligence," said Williams.

As for his goal to become a sergeant major, well, he has not quite made it yet, but like most of his life thus far, quitting may be an option, but it is not one he will choose to take. ■

## EDITOR'S PHOTO PICK OF THE MONTH



CAMP TAJI, Iraq—After conducting a cordon and search training exercise, Soldiers from 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, along with 34th Iraqi Army Brigade Soldiers, position themselves to be picked up by a UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter, here, Nov. 19. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)



# CAMP TAJI INFORMATION

## December Safety Tip

### Keep Warm the Right Way

By Sgt. Matthew Russell  
155th HBCT

With the temperature starting to drop at night you may find yourself looking for a space heater. Here are the facts on using one:

*Only approved electric space heaters may be used, provided the building electrical utilities are sufficient. They must be approved, equipped with an automatic (tip-over) cutoff switch, and authorized by the Building Manager. Heaters will not be left unattended. Heaters will have 36-inch clearance from combustibles. At no time shall items be placed on top of or in front of heater or air conditioning units.*

A friendly reminder from the Garrison Command Safety Office!

## Phone Numbers

### Support

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Mayor Cell Work Orders  | 834-3116 |
| Billeting               | 834-1334 |
| Base Support Operations | 834-3084 |
| Dept. of Public Works   | 834-3180 |
| Chaplain's Office       | 834-3001 |
| Safety Office           | 834-3148 |
| Taji Times              | 834-4551 |

### Medical

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| Sick Call     | 834-1358 |
| Combat Stress | 834-1050 |

### Emergency Services

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| Emergency       | 911      |
| Fire Department | 834-1000 |
| Military Police | 834-3000 |
| BDOC            | 834-3417 |

Camp Taji Fire Department gives Fire Warden classes every Wednesday at 0900 at Fire Station 1 (across from PAX Terminal). The class is designed to teach assigned fire wardens their responsibilities, as well as proper use of a fire extinguisher, and how to identify fire hazards and fire safety. Malfunctioning fire extinguishers can be brought to Fire Station 2 (Bldg 507) during normal working hours for repair. If you have general questions about fire safety, extinguishers, smoke alarms or fire warden training, call: DSN: 834-3372 OR KBR: 713-970-5131

## Chapel Service Times

### Holland Hope (Bldg 97)

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Contemporary Gospel    | 0930 Sun         |
| General Protestant     | 1000 Sun         |
| Traditional Protestant | 1100 Sun         |
| Church of Christ       | 1300 Sun         |
| Catholic Mass          | 1600 Sun         |
| Bible Study            | 1900 Tue/Wed/Thu |
| POC Sgt. Clark         | 834-1124 / 1161  |

### Warrior Chapel (Bldg 510)

|                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Christian Worship       | 0800 Sun            |
| Sunday School           | 0900 Sun            |
| Contemporary Service    | 1000 Sun            |
| Catholic Mass           | 1200 Sun            |
| LDS Service             | 1400 Sun            |
| LDS Bible Study         | 1500 Sun            |
| Contemporary Protestant | 1800 Sun            |
| Catholic Mass           | 1900 Tue            |
| Bible Study             | 2000 Wed            |
| International Service   | 2000 Sat            |
| POC Sgt. Dinsmore       | 834-3329 / 242-6501 |

### Spirit & Truth Worship Chapel (Bldg 639)

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Gospel Service                   | 1000 Sun |
| Contemporary Protestant          | 1800 Sun |
| Spirit & Truth Ladies Bible Stu. | 1830 Mon |
| Bible Study                      | 1830 Wed |
| Ugandan Service                  | 1600 Thu |
| Men's Bible Study                | 1800 Fri |
| Wicca Open Circle                | 1900 Fri |
| POC PV2 Schommer                 | 834-1049 |

This schedule lists primary services only. See individual Chapel for other studies, rehearsals, and special programs.  
POC geoffrey.wagner@iraq.centcom.mil

## Hours of Operations

|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| PX                      | 0700-2300 (daily) |
| Green Beans Coffee      | 24 hours/7 days   |
| Subway                  | 0900-2200 (daily) |
| Burger King             | 0700-0000 (daily) |
| Pizza Hut               | 1000-0000 (daily) |
| Cinnabon                | 0600-0000 (daily) |
| Taco Bell               | 0900-0000 (daily) |
| Popeye's                | 1000-2200 (daily) |
| New Car Sales           | 0900-2100 (daily) |
| Beauty Shop             | 0900-2100 (daily) |
| Barber Shops (3)        | 0900-1900 (daily) |
| Alteration Shop         | 0900-2100 (daily) |
| Photo Processing        | 0900-2100 (daily) |
| AT&T Calling Center     | 24 hours/7 days   |
| Laundry Facilities (11) | 0700-1900 (daily) |
| Post Office             | 0800-1800 (daily) |
| Finance Office          | 0900-1600 (M-Sa.) |
| Swimming Pool           | closed for season |

### Level II Medical Sick Call

|             |                 |   |           |
|-------------|-----------------|---|-----------|
| Mon-Fri     | 0800-1100       | & | 1930-2200 |
| Sat-Sun     | 0800-1100       | & | 1930-2130 |
| Emergencies | 24 hours/7 days |   |           |

**Patients MUST have a sick call slip signed by their First Sgt. or commander to be seen, unless an emergency.**

## DFACs

### DFAC 1 - CSM Cooke

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Breakfast | 0600-0900 |
| Lunch     | 1100-1400 |
| Dinner    | 1630-2000 |
| Midnight  | 2300-0030 |

### DFAC 2 - Cantigny

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Breakfast | 0630-0930 |
| Lunch     | 1130-1430 |
| Dinner    | 1700-2030 |
| Midnight  | 2330-0100 |

### DFAC 3 - SGT Timothy H. Walker

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Breakfast | 0600-0900 |
| Lunch     | 1100-1400 |
| Dinner    | 1700-2030 |
| Midnight  | 2300-0030 |