

FAMILY

Family Newsletter for the 49th Military Police Brigade, California Army National Guard

49th MPs Celebrate National Guard's Birthday With Run in Baghdad

On Dec. 13 at Camp Victory, Iraq, Soldiers of the headquarters company, 49th Military Police Brigade from Fairfield, Calif., run with their guidon high as they near the completion of the 3.73 mile run commemorating the 373th birthday of the National Guard. (US Army photo by 1st Lt. William Marquez, 49th MP Brigade, Public Affairs Officer)



By 1st Lt. William Marquez

49th MP Brigade Public Affairs Officer

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq — On Dec. 13, at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq, the headquarters and headquarters company, 49th Military Police Brigade, of Fairfield, Calif., ran 3.73 miles in the National Guard's Birthday Run to commemorate 373 years of citizen-soldier service.

Preceding the run, before a large crowd of hundreds of guardsmen, Maj. Gen. Peter Aylward, deputy

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commanding general for Iraqi security forces, spoke about the history of service performed by National Guardsmen since their origin in the colonial militias. Aylward focused on the decisive

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Sgt. Jefferson Austria, 49th S-4 supply sergeant, nears the completion of the National Guard Birthday Run

Around the Camp

Dec. 3



Soldiers of the 49th MP Brigade held a moral, welfare and recreation event Dec. 3 at the Buxton Bistro.

Over 30 participants played Texas Hold'em, a popular card game, for fun and prizes.

(from the bottom then clockwise) Sgt. 1st Class Melissa McDonald, Staff Sgt. Mark Kim, Capt. Francisco Flores, Sgt 1st Class David Northup and Spc. Daniel Greene have fun playing poker for Texas Hold'em tournament. (The fancy flyer was created by Sgt. Alexandra Trivison)



Dec. 15



Six out seven Soldiers having a birthday during the month of December took part in a consolidated birthday celebration held on the brigade's compound. From left to right, Sgt.

Daniel Jagers, Sgt. Nicholas Emmerling, Spc. Jakeya French, Maj. Earl Russel and Staff Sgt. Frank Tsai prepare to blow out birthday candles. (Another fancy flyer created by Sgt. Alexandra Trivison)



Dec. 24



Soldiers from the 49th MP Brigade brave the chill of Christmas Eve to watch a classic Christmas movie.

The DVD movie was sent to the 49th by Lt. Col. Peter Cross' wife Melinda.

To make life a little bit better, the 49th Headquarters Company Commander Capt. Edward Bombita has promoted the weekly viewing of movies at the "Bombita Box Office".



From the 49th MP Brigade Headquarters Commander

"The HHC continues to do their part to make the time here more like home."

Capt. Edward Bombita

The holidays are in full swing and our Soldiers are getting ready for them. Thanks to the great support of some wonderful non-profit organizations, all of us have received care packages with small gifts and cards wishing us well during the holidays. We have also been receiving great packages from our own FRG, which our Soldiers have really appreciated. The most meaningful however have been the ones from all of you, since it shows how much you love your

Soldier. It really brightens our day to receive these and somehow feel connected with our loved ones during our absence.

The HHC continues to do their part to make the time here more like home. We kicked off the season with the decoration and lighting of our Company Christmas Tree. After the tree was lit, we got a chance to share some time together singing carols, eating goodies provided by the FRG and posing for pictures in front of our tree. We are keeping the Spirit of the Season with Christmas Movies and a door decorating contest. On Christmas Day, the unit will gather and have dinner together once again to celebrate with each other as a family would. We

will close out the season with a New Year's Eve BB-Q, along with karaoke and our version of the ball dropping promptly at 9 PM (we have to work the next day).

As you can see your Soldiers are making the best of the situation and helping each other to pass the time away from all of you. It is no easy task for either you or them so during these times, keep all of us informed of what the families are doing and we will reciprocate. By sharing our experiences with each other we can somewhat bridge the great



Capt. Edward Bombita

divide that now separates us and will certainly make for a more enjoyable time for all.

On behalf of all our Soldiers, I wish you all a joyous holiday season and a wonderful New Year!

From the 49th MP Brigade Headquarters First Sergeant

Dear Families,

I want to thank all the family members who have been working so very hard with supporting the Family Readiness Group and our Soldiers here in Iraq. It is extremely difficult during the holiday season and we certainly would rather be home with you.

We have been overwhelmed and humbled with the amount of boxes and well wishes received during the past month. Many boxes have been received from the FRG and many more boxes from organizations

who want to support our troops. It amazes me how many patriotic Americans there are and how hard they work to support our troops. Rest assured that each and every Soldier here is receiving packages and feels taken care of. On behalf of BG Currier, CPT Bombita, Leaders and Soldiers I want to again send my heartfelt appreciation for your support of the unit.

Our planning and preparation for the Holiday Celebration is well underway. There are several activities planned: Christmas Movie, Christmas Dinner and a New Year's



1st Sgt. Ben Jandreau

Celebration. We are going to try and stay busy so we don't get too lonesome for home!

Again, I want to wish everyone a Happy Holiday

Season and let's make sure we are there to support each other during this difficult time.

1SG Jandreau

Holiday gathering; 49th unites, shares festivities



Brig. Gen. Donald Currier welcomes and greets Soldiers from the 49th MP Brigade, 223rd Finance Company and the 217th Mp Company during the Holiday Dinner celebration held at the 49th's chapel, Dec. 25, Camp Liberty, Iraq.

"It's a great time of the year. It's a time to remember our blessings,"
Brig. Gen. Donald Currier,
49th MP Brigade Commander

By Spc. Eddie Siguenza
49th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs Office

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - For one day, for a few valuable hours, your Soldiers here shared the holiday season's blessings together and beside new friends.

This is the closest we've gotten to "family" considering the miles separating our loved ones. And it was appropriate considering the holiday season is all about family.

Your Soldiers united Dec. 25, sharing a holiday meal and happiness with new friends. We were joined by members of the 223rd Finance Company, a California-based unit that arrived in theatre early December, and members of Alabama's 217th Military Police Company, a subordinate unit.

"Just kind of forget about the work for a few minutes and enjoy the meal," Brig. Gen. Donald Currier told the gathering. "We'd all rather be with our families. But since we can't, being with each other is hard to beat."

The traditions of turkey, gravy and cranberries, along with assorted

pies, were served. First Sgt. Bennett Jandreau employed a hard-working staff that coordinated food and desserts with a well-decorated chapel, site of the festivities. Kudos went to Alex, a civilian contractor and friend to the 49th, who spent hours preparing a roasted pig. Combine this food with corn, beans and mashed potatoes, and we ate well.

Our Public Affairs Office prepared a special holiday video that was shown during the meal. We shared the sentiments as we watched and listened to our members recite "The Soldiers Christmas Poem," then laughed as out-takes closed



Col. Grace Edinboro, 49th Deputy Commander, distributes a serving of corn to a member of the 49th MP Brigade as Command Sgt. Maj Robert Liles, the 49th MP Brigade Command Sergeant Major, prepares to serve a helping of turkey during the Holiday dinner held at the unit's compound.

out the video. Families can watch a revised version on the 49th's Facebook site online.

A raffle closed out the evening. Prizes such as gift cards, candles and the main giveaway - a set of Bose speakers - were distributed.

And there wouldn't be a holiday without the season's most recognizable fellow, Santa Claus. He showed up at the meal, thanks to Lt. Col. Timothy Rieger. Santa passed out gifts, posed for photos

and shared his joy with everyone. Said Gen. Currier, "It's a great time of the year. It's a time to remember our blessings, remembering what Christmas means to each of us. I'm

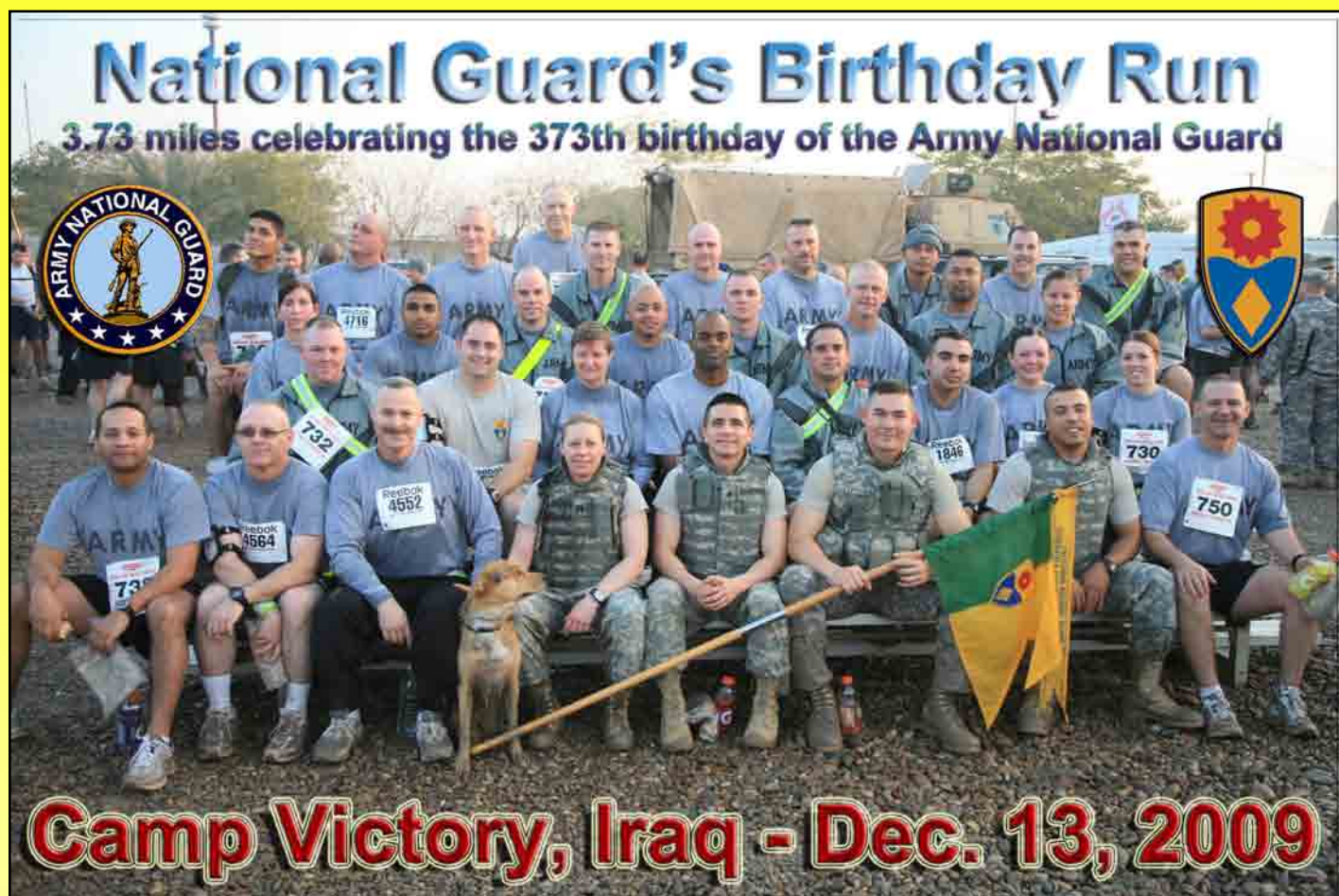
proud and honored to be serving our country here, and I know that you are, too. It's a privilege and an honor to be serving with you all."



ABOVE: Santa (Lt. Col Timothy Rieger) serves a portion of green beans to an enthusiastic recipient during the Holiday Dinner.



ABOVE: Sgt. Alexandra Travison, wearing the red and green elf hat, displays a prize that is up for raffle to the large crowd of Soldiers that are enjoying Holiday Dinner at the 49th MP Brigade compound, Dec. 25, Camp Liberty, Iraq.



Soldiers from the 49th Military pose after completing the National Birthday Run. (first row from left to right) Capt. Edward Bombita, Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Liles, Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, Sophie, Capt. Jacquelyn Atkinson, Spc. Cruz Valderrama, Capt Donald Lipscomb, Sgt. Mohamed Dawoud, 1st Sgt Ben Jandreau. (Second row) 1st Lt. Jason Carlisle, Staff Sgt. Matt McVey, Col. Grace Edinboro, Spc. Farrel Mapp, 1st Lt. Willaim Marquez, Spc. Ernesto Soria, Sgt. Laurel Benghauser, Sgt. Alexandra Trivison, (third row) Chief Warrant Officer Carol Lima, Staff Sgt. Mohammed Nazir, Sgt. Brad Daeda, Pfc. Fermin Maturin, Spc. Jeremy Cooper, Capt. James Parsons, Capt. Francisco Flores, Sgt. Lauren Whitted, (fourth row), Spc Rommel Vazquez, Sgt. David Chellson, 2nd Lt. William Martin, Lt. Col. Peter Cross, Capt. Charles Stone, Maj. Wayne Hutson, Lt. Col. Derrick Boler, Capt. Thoeuth Duong, Capt. Steven Jester and 1st Lt. Bajun Mavalwalla. Sgt. Jefferson Austria also completed the run but didn't pose for this photo.

Cont. **BAGHDAD RUN**, from Page 1

role militiamen, forerunners of guardsmen, played in key Revolutionary War battles.

Throughout his speech, a soldier stood to his right carrying a red guidon draped with multiple award and battle streamers representing hundreds of years of service to the nation. The soldier served in the 101st Engineer Battalion of the Massachusetts National Guard. At one point during his speech, Aylward turned towards the soldier and gently lifted a streamer bearing the

words Lexington and Concord, the famous first battles of the Revolutionary War where "shots were heard around the world."

Once Aylward finished speaking about the historical importance of the National Guard, he directed the many hundreds of participants to the starting line. From the beginning to the end of the race, the route was a floor of mud coating narrow roads. Throughout the race, mud kicked-up onto runner's shorts and legs. At the end of the race, the legs and backsides of participants were covered with mud, but motivation

was still high.

"I rarely participate in running events, but this run is special. I wanted to show support for an organization that has supported the nation for so many years," said Sgt. Bradley Daeda, a communications sergeant with the 49th Military Police Brigade. "It felt great being out here with my fellow guardsmen celebrating our birthday." ■





ABOVE: Spc. Farrel Mapp, Sgt. Brad Dagda, Sgt. David Chellson and Sgt. Matt McVey cross the finish line of the 3.73-mile National Guard Birthday Run held at Camp Victory Iraq to commemorate the Citizen Soldiers' 336th birthday.



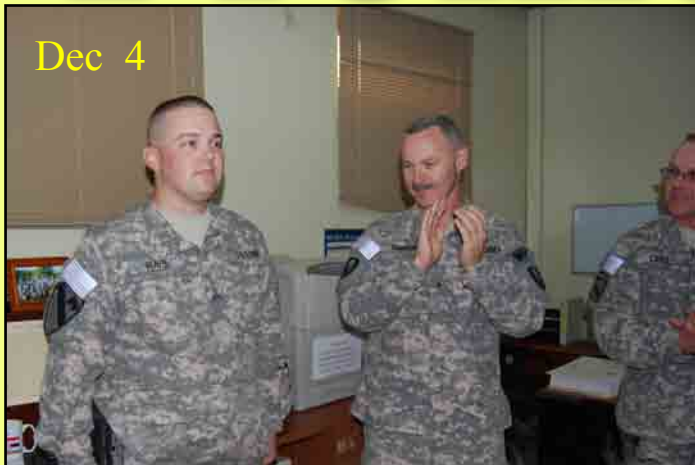
ABOVE: Command Sgt. Maj Robert Liles, 49th MP Brigade Command Sergeant Major, nears the finish line of the wet 3.73 mile National Guard Birthday Run at Camp Victory, Iraq, Dec. 18, 2009.

RIGHT: Sgt. Mohamed Dawoud, 1st Lt. Jason Carlisle, Capt. Jacquelyn Atkinson and Lt. Col. Derrick Boler complete the 3.73 mile National Guard Birthday Run in high spirits.



Promotions

Dec 4



ABOVE: Spc. Michael Hays, a human resource systems management specialist, is promoted to rank of sergeant by Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, 49th MP Brigade commander, Dec. 4, at work area.

Nov. 24



ABOVE: Upon returning from RnR leave, PFC. Robert Buxton, a member of the personal security detachment, is promoted to the rank of specialist by Capt. Edward Bombita, headquarter company commander, on Nov. 23, as the 1st Sgt. Ben Jandreau, headquarter company first sergeant, reads the promotion order. Buxton was surrounded by fellow members of the PSD during the event at the brigade's headquarters compound located on Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Dec 4



ABOVE: Private. Fermin Maturin, the brigade mail clerk, is promoted to the rank of private first class by Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, the brigade commander during a ceremony held in the personnel section, Dec. 4, Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Dec. 15



ABOVE: PFC. Rommel Vazquez, a member of the personal security detachment, is promoted to the rank of specialist by Capt. Edward Bombita, the headquarter company commander, as fellow members of the PSD stand at the position of attention, Dec. 15, Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Dec. 22



LEFT: 1st Lt. Donald Lipscomb is promoted to the rank of captain by Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, 49th MP Brigade Commander during a promotion ceremony held at the Al-Faw Palace, Camp Victory, Iraq, Dec. 22, 2009

Congratulations



Porsha and Pfc Elvin Jenkins were blessed with a beautiful baby girl. Uriah was born Oct. 2 in Walnut Creek, Calif., the day after the 49th MPs arrived here in Iraq. Jenkins is a member of the 49th MP Brigade Personal Security Detachment. Also in the photo is the Jenkins' family 4-year-old son Japre'.



Donnic and Spc. Melvin Brunson were blessed with a beautiful baby boy. Elijah, was born Nov. 20, weighing 6 lbs, 8 oz. and 20 inches in length. Brunson is a member of the 49th MP Brigade Personal Security Detachment.



49th MPs share Thanksgiving

By Sgt. Kenneth Bince

49th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs Office

CAMP LIBERY, Iraq -- More than 100 members of the California National Guard, 49th Military Brigade, Headquarters - Headquarters Company shared a Thanksgiving dinner Nov. 24, at their compound here.

The Fairfield based unit opted to hold its own dinner together, instead of individually or in small groups at the 1st Armored Division Cavalry Pegasus Dining Facility.

Immediately following Halloween, three Soldiers, Sgt. 1st Class Melissa McDonald, Sgt. Laurel Benghauser and Sgt. Alexandra Travison, went into full swing with the organizing of the next major holiday event. "When we were on our last deployment during 2005-2006, the headquarters company put together its own activities during the holidays, so this just seemed to make sense to do it again," said McDonald.

The night before Thanksgiving, setup and decorating of the chapel began. "Specialist Mapp, myself,



Brig. Gen Donald Currier, 49th MP Brigade Commander, and Command Sgt. Maj Robert Liles, 49th MP Brigade Command Sergeant Major, prepare to serve hungry Soldiers during their Thanksgiving dinner.

Sgt. Travison, Sgt. Benghauser and Sgt. 1st Class McDonald started decorating Wednesday night to get a jump on the event, putting up the decorations and moving extra tables and chairs into the chapel," said Spc. Darnell Sanders, a member of the headquarters communication section. The following morning the setup and preparation continued from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The group of Soldiers continued adhering hundreds of orange and brown paper cutouts in the shapes of turkeys, leaves and pumpkins.

Dozens of Thanksgiving themed decorations were taped to walls and ceiling of the chapel, most notably the

projects behind the head table. Njea Mitchell, a fourth grade teacher at Oakview Elementary School in Orangevale, Calif., sent the works of art that her class made to her brother in the 49th, Sgt. 1st Class Arne Eastlund. Each of the 11 inch by 17 inch construction-paper projects were decorated with a handprinted turkey, finger paint, crayons and a handwritten greeting. "Dear Soldier, I hope that you have a great Thanksgiving. I hope you have cake for dinner," signed Camille.

The bountiful dinner consisted of five turkeys, two trays of lamb and marinated vegetables, green beans, potatoes, squash, stuffing, samoon (Iraqi bread), biscuits and baklava for desert.

Food for the dinner was prepared between 9:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. "Potatoes were washed, boiled and mashed by hand, a



Sgt. 1st Class Melissa McDonald and Chaplain Lt. Col. Daniel Viveros wait for a winner of the raffle that was held at the brigade's chapel, Nov. 24, 2009



Soldiers from the 49th MP Brigade bow their heads and give thanks during the blessing of the food by Chaplain Lt. Col. Daniel Viveros. More than 100 Soldiers and civilians enjoyed the company and food of the special Thanksgiving dinner that was held at the 49th MP Brigade's Chapel.

large crate of green beans cleaned and cooked,” said McDonald. “All the food prep, including the baking of turkey were completed at “the Big Apple”, she added. The Big Apple is a civilian contractor that helps facilitate resources that are hard to find. “Without the use of their kitchen area, we wouldn’t have been able to pull this off,” said 1st Sgt. Ben Jandreau, headquarters company first sergeant.

The 49th MP command staff, donning light blue surgical gloves, manned the serving line of green plastic insulated food containers, serving the Thanksgiving meal to the hungry horde of Soldiers and civilians.

Capt. Edward Bombita, the 49th headquarters commander, opened the festivities with a welcome greeting. “The goal of this event wasn’t just to celebrate

Thanksgiving, but it was to get everyone together as one family, since we are unable to share this holiday with our families at home,” said Bombita. “So, we decided to step in and give the headquarters company the opportunity to share this occasion as one group, which is very important for me and the first sergeant, especially this time of year,” he added.

Next speaking was Brig. Gen. Donald Currier, the 49th

MP Brigade commander who thanked the Soldiers for coming to the event. “This is the time of year that we need to stop and take inventory of the blessings in our lives, regardless of what faith you are,” said Currier. “We are very fortunate here, (in Iraq), there are always people out there that have it better and worse than we do, and all you have to do is drive down the street to see that we have is good here,” he added.



See **THANKSGIVING**, Page 12

Col. Grace Edinboro, 49th Deputy Commander, uses tongs to serve a portion of lamb and marinated vegetables to Staff Sgt. Frank Tsai, 49th chaplain assistant, during the high-spirited Thanksgiving dinner.



Sgt. Anthony Pantazis, a member of the 49th personal security detachment helps prepare stuffing for the Thanksgiving dinner.

Preceding the general's initial greeting, he reached for his notebook and pulled out a folded sheet of paper. The note was from a 13-year-old girl named Brittney Fox, daughter of a staffer for the governor of California. The staffer handed Currier the note during Gov. Schwarzenegger's visit to Iraq in November. The commander read the heart-felt note that thanked the troops for their heart, dedication and service. Upon completion of the short but powerful note, the brigade commander gave thanks for the blessings and opportunities that all Soldiers have and for the youth of America. Currier then raised his beverage and gave a toast to the headquarters company

and to all of the subordinate units in the brigade.

Lt. Col. Daniel Viveros, the 49th chaplain, gave thanks for the food, the opportunity to share the occasion with one another, for the Soldiers' families, and he recited a blessing over the event. Once Chaplain Viveros completed his blessing, he asked the group of Soldiers gathered what they were thankful for in their lives.

"I'm thankful for the technology we have today," said Sgt. Deanna Gray, a 49th human resource management sergeant. "Because of this, I'm able to talk to my husband and son every night and every morning."

Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Ratley, a 49th Police Transition Team sergeant,

said "I am thankful for my life, the Soldiers that I get a chance to serve with and the time that I have."

Chief Warrant Officer Johnathan Cosmos, a 49th legal administrator, said, "I am thankful for my family back home, because they provide a lot of support for me."

Staff Sgt. Arlyce Baty, the 49th human resources sergeant, said, "I'm thankful that we got to bring Sophie, the 49th force protection dog, and that she brings everyone together."

The headquarters commander was also thankful for the family support back home but he added, "We get the opportunity to effect change in the lives of those brothers that we have



Spc. Eric Lucas, a 49th light wheeled vehicle mechanic, stops for a moment to pose for a photo as he finishes traveling down the serving line of food during the Thanksgiving dinner held at the 49th MP Brigade's Chapel.



Spc. Wesley Adams, a member of the 49th personal security detachment, and Sgt. Laurel Benghauser, 49th executive administrative assistant, sample the multitude of deserts during the Thanksgiving dinner held at the unit's chapel.

here. If it weren't for the Army, we wouldn't have the chance to make a difference and help the people of Iraq.

"I'm thankful for my wife and son that have endured multiple deployments, for the linguists I have and for the 17 members of PSD, (personal security detachment), that give me task and purpose," said 1st Lt. Jason Carlisle, PSD officer in charge.

Maj. Daniel Williamson, 49th liaison officer, said, "I'm thankful that I do have family here, even though she won't sit next to me." The joyous crowd burst into

laughter, because Williamson's wife, Command Sgt. Maj. Cheryl Williamson, is also deployed with the 49th.

More than a dozen Soldiers and civilians stood up and proclaimed thanks, and the last Soldier to give thanks was Chaplain Viveros who professed, "I have the greatest job in the military, I get help Soldiers and that is so rewarding to me."

As the evening event wound down, a raffle took place and the jubilant party of Soldiers sang "happy birthday" to the individuals who have a birthday

during the month of November.

Soldiers of the 49th MP Brigade did more than just share a meal together on that Thanksgiving Day at Camp Liberty, Iraq. They participated and attempted to fill in the huge void that every Soldier carries around that is caused by the separation from family and friends. The occasion was special, it was service members helping service members through the deployment. ■

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