

The North Star

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Soldiers remember fallen with bracelets

By Spc. Jessica Zullig
135th Mobile PA Det.

A silver, metal band on the wrist of Sgt. Ralph D. Gaskin II, a vocalist for the 3rd Infantry Division Band, and a Fort Wayne, Ind., native, glints in the light as he sits in his office at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq. He wears the band engraved with his fallen battle buddy's name, Sgt. Mason Lee Lewis, who passed during Sgt. Gaskin's last deployment to Iraq in 2007. Sergeant Lewis was part of, "Top Flite," Company B, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd ID.

"I wear it in memorial to him," said Sgt. Gaskin. "He was such a great guy, extremely dedicated. He was a hell of a Soldier – hell of a friend. He would do anything for you."

The POW/MIA bracelets, like Memorial Day, are reminders of the sacrifice fallen servicemembers have made for their country. In a way, the bracelets spread May 31, across the calendar year.

"If you're wearing a memorial bracelet, then you've been touched by the situation," Sgt.

Gaskin said. "Nine times out of 10 it's somebody that you knew. Every time I see someone else wearing one, I think about mine – I think about Mason."

While many people take jewelry off when they shower or turn in for the night, Sgt. Gaskin never removes his bracelet.

"It never comes off," he said. "I do that out of respect for (Mason) because he was such a great guy and such a great Soldier."

Sergeant Julian Landrove, a floor noncommissioned officer for the COB Speicher

Troop Medical Clinic, Company C, 701st Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and a San Antonio native, has a similar feeling about what his bracelet means to him.

"I wear it to remember the guys who gave their lives for this operation," he said. "It's a reminder that people are dying out here."

Sergeant Landrove's bracelet is engraved with the name of Spc. Russell Hercules, Jr., a driver during his last deployment to Iraq in 2007. Specialist Hercules gave his life while supporting Operating Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Oct. 1, 2009.

"I wear it so that he can kind of live on," said Sgt. Landrove. "He's not forgotten."

Sergeants Gaskin and Landrove both bought their bracelets from online retailers, which offer their own type of moral support.

MemorialBracelets.com organized in order to help people remember and honor the victims of terrorist attacks, military casualties and Soldiers who have been and still are prisoners of war or missing in action. According to the Web site,

MemorialBracelets.com has donated more than \$78,000 to help children and families who have lost loved ones due to terrorist attacks or military conflict.

Another retailer that offers bracelets for remembrance of fallen servicemembers is HeroBracelets.org, founded by Chris Greta. The Web site was organized in 2004 to raise funds for the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund and has provided more than \$200,000 to various military support organizations. According to Greta, the organization has sent more than 100,000 orders all over the world and hears daily from servicemembers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The idea for POW/MIA bracelets first came to light during the Vietnam War. They were meant to draw public attention to American prisoners of war and U.S. servicemembers who were missing in action in Vietnam, and to involve college students in positive programs that supported servicemembers.

More people choose to honor fallen servicemembers by wearing the bracelets. It's a way for them to remember who paid the ultimate sacrifice ... recognizing Memorial Day throughout the year.



Photo by Spc. Jessica Zullig,
135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

Sergeant Julian Landrove, a floor NCO for the TMC, Co. C, 701st BSB, 4th IBC, 1st ID, wears a POW/MIA bracelet for Spc. Russell Hercules, Jr., a driver during Sgt. Landrove's last deployment to Iraq in 2007.

Troops play Ultimate Football to celebrate Armed Forces Day

By Sgt. Jessica Rohr
135th Mobile PA Det.

Armed Forces Week was celebrated with an Ultimate Football Tournament held by the Provost Marshal's Office, Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, at the stadium on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit, Iraq, May 11 - 15.

This year's Department of Defense theme for Armed Forces Week was "United in Strength." Sports tournaments encompass that slogan by promoting pride and team work, thus Ultimate Football.

"Ultimate Football for Armed Forces – It gives you unit cohesion, bringing everybody together. A little friendly competition helps take a break from the everyday stresses from the job that you have. It's good cohesion and lifts morale for the Soldiers," said Cpl. Jeremy S. Obermiller, a native of Blue Hill, Neb., and team leader of the dismount element for the Security Detachment, DSTB, 3rd ID. Seven teams competed in

a week-long tournament for one of two spots in the championship game held on Armed Forces Day, May 15.

In the end it was team "Legion," DSTB, 3rd ID, out of Ft. Stewart, Ga., versus team "573rd Outlaws," 573rd Clearance Company, 1st Engineer Battalion, out of White Sands Missile Range, N. M., that competed for the title.

After a grueling 30-minute game of military athleticism, 573rd Outlaws captured the title of "3rd ID Ultimate Football Champs," as they finished the double-elimination tournament undefeated.

"We brought together the best of the competition that we had in Ultimate Football," said Sgt. John O. Taylor, a native of Roco, Ill., and team leader of an area clearance platoon for the 573rd Clearance Co., 1st Eng. Bn. "As Combat Engineers, 573rd Clearance Co., we rose to the occasion. Our opposition was great ... we played a tough game. In the end, team work and dedication played out along with communication"

Sergeant First Class Peter A. Thens, a native of



Photos by Sgt. Jessica Rohr, 135th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

The 573rd Clearance Co., 1st Eng. Bn., came out on top as the champions in the Armed Forces Ultimate Football tournament held by the PMO, HHOC, DSTB, 3rd ID, at the stadium on COB Speicher, May 15.

Pittsburgh, and the Division Investigative Task Force noncommissioned officer in charge for the PMO, HHOC, DSTB, refereed the Ultimate Football tournament, which embodied this year's Armed Forces Day theme.

"Ultimate Football allows Soldiers to show off their athleticism, helps build teamwork, provides a good workout, and gives them some bragging rights for the Soldier and their unit," said Sgt. 1st Class Thens. "All that tied together is just a good way to celebrate

Armed Forces Day."

Armed Forces Day is in its 60th year, the first celebration was held on May 20, 1950, after Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson announced its creation in 1949.

"Every branch in the Armed Forces - Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines - pull together here in Iraq to accomplish the common goal to protect America's rights and freedoms that we have," said Cpl. Obermiller. "The Armed Forces make that possible."



Corporal Emmit B. Gause, a signal support system specialist for the 573rd Clearance Co., 1st Eng. Bn., passes the ball to his teammate, Spc. Calan D. Olson, a combat engineer for the 573rd Clearance Co., 1st Eng. Bn., during the final game of the Armed Forces Ultimate Football Tournament held at COB Speicher, May 15.

Armed Forces Day "United in Strength" Saturday, May 15, 2010

Armed Forces Day was created to consolidate Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard Days. The first Armed Forces Day was celebrated by parades, open houses, receptions and air shows.

"The Heritage of our freedom must be guarded as carefully in peace as it was in war. Faith, not suspicion, must be the key to our relationships. Sacrifice, not selfishness, must be the eternal price of liberty. Vigilance, not appeasement, is the byword of living freedoms. Our Armed Forces in 1950 -- protecting the peace, building for security with freedom -- are teamed for defense."

-General Omar Bradley, former Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the first Armed Forces Day, 1950

IP work to make corrections stick

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs,
1BCT, 1st AD PAO

For years the Iraqi Police have relied on eye-witnesses and word-of-mouth to detain those who break the law. 'Titan' Soldiers of 512th Military Police Company, 92nd Military Police Battalion, 4th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade out of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.,

hope to change that by moving the IP focus, from only what citizens say, to gathering evidence and intelligence, so they can convict the criminal.

In order to begin introducing this program to the IP chiefs, 'Titan' leadership met with Col. Taha Saladin Abdullah Hussien, Qoria IP station chief, in Kirkuk,

Iraq, May 12.

Colonel Taha, who has been personally attacked by terrorists nearly 10 times since becoming police chief, said that he believes the IP have security in the area at a good level but want to work on convictions.

"There used to be attacks daily, but now months have gone by and nothing, security is good we have a few issues though," said Col. Taha.

He went on to explain IP usually rely on citizens of Kirkuk to come forward to make an arrest on the criminal.

"The people of Kirkuk want a peaceful nation rid of the terrorists so they help us," he said to the 'Titan' leadership.

Sergeant First Class Robert Cannon, a native of Jacksonville, Ill., and police training team noncommissioned officer in charge with Headquarters Platoon, 512th MP Co., agreed with Col. Taha.

"Sharing information is great, but if evidence is gathered in the proper way the conviction rate will rise," said Sgt. 1st Class Cannon.

The goal of this program is for police to arrive on the scene of the crime and put a focus on preserving the crime scene and gathering evidence in the proper way, according to Sgt. 1st Class Cannon.

This program will also help the voices of the chiefs be heard, according to Sgt. 1st Class Cannon.

"So many dignitaries are focused on this program, if concerns are voiced, they will be heard," he said.

Colonel Taha agreed beginning this program will benefit his station.

"We have learned from each phase and have faced many troubles, but we have built up and Qoria Police Station is ready to do whatever it takes to progress, so there will be no more civilian victims in Kirkuk," said Col Taha.



Photo by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs, 1BCT, 1st AD PAO

Sergeant First Class Robert Cannon a police training team NCOIC with Headquarters Plt., 512th MP Co., 92nd MP Bn., 4th MEB out of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., talks with Col. Taha Saladin Abdullah Hussien, Qoria IP station chief, in Kirkuk, Iraq, May 12.

You are invited

Phil Vandel

Where: JSS Keiser, JSS Marez,
May 18
JSS Heider, JSS Sykes, May 19
FOB Gabe, COB Speicher, May 21
FOB McHenry, FOB Warrior, May 22

TF Marne Asian/Pacific Heritage Month Celebration

Where: D-Main, COB Speicher
When: May 21, 11:30 a.m.

DSTB Asian/Pacific Heritage Luncheon

Where: Main Dining Facility
When: May 25, 11 a.m.
Ticket raffle for 2011 Pro Bowl and
other prizes

Wrangler National Patriot Tour

Where: FOB Marez, May 30,
FOB McHenry, FOB Warrior,
May 31
FOB Cobra, FOB Warhorse, June 1
COB Speicher, June 2

Benny and the Jets *An Elton John tribute band*

Where: FOB Sykes
When: May 26, time TBD

TF Marne Volleyball Competition

Where: Freedom Rest,
COB Speicher
When: May 27-28

25th CAB Asian/Pacific Heritage Ceremony

Where: South MWR
When: May 28, 5:30 p.m.

Run for the Warriors Marathon

Where: COB Speicher Stadium
When: May 30, registration
is from 5 - 5:35 a.m.
5K walk begins at 6 a.m.,
10K run begins at 6:30 a.m.
To register early, e-mail
woundedwarrior10K4hope@yahoo.
com
Early registration is recommended.

Task Force Marne Heroes of the North



Staff Sergeant Maloth Doung, of Holland, Mich., is with 425th Long Range Surveillance Current Operations Cell, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. He is a member of the 425th Long Range Surveillance Current Operations Cell and is originally from Cambodia. Before coming to the United States, Staff Sgt. Doung survived the Cambodian killing fields, where he fought against the Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese Army since the age of 12. Once Staff Sgt. Doung was told he was deploying to Iraq, he immediately learned Arabic, and upon coming to northern Iraq started learning Kurdish. Staff Sergeant Doung is Defense Language Institute certified in six languages. Without a known birthday, Staff Sgt. Doung has listed his official birthday as July 4 "Because I owe so much to the United States." The reality is the United States owes so much to Staff Sgt. Doung. His translation abilities and lifelong warrior ethos have saved numerous coalition lives. Staff Sergeant Doung looks forward to seeing his wife Samloth, and four boys back home before he re-deploys back to Afghanistan next year for his third Operation Enduring Freedom tour. For his dedication to America's finest, he is selected as today's Task Force Marne Hero of the North.



Sergeant Juan Obregon, of Kyle, Texas, is with 2-25 Assault Helicopter Battalion, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. He serves as the senior medic for Team Archangel, the United States Division - North Personnel Recovery Team. As the senior medic, he is responsible for the team's medical well being and is completely integrated into training. He has assisted with the planning and the execution of mass-casualty exercises along with organizing and conducting combat lifesaver recertification training. On March 6, Sgt. Obregon put his skills to use when he responded to a medical emergency in his unit's tactical operations center. He took charge of the emergency situation, stabilized the patient, and accompanied the patient to the combat support hospital where he assisted with the Soldier's follow on care. Sergeant Obregon's performance exemplifies the Army values and makes him an excellent choice for today's Task Force Marne's Hero of the North.

Asian/Pacific Americans in the military ... www.asianpacificheritage.gov



Grant Jiro Hirabayashi - The famed commandos of Merrill's Marauders, a unit of Soldiers who slogged their way through the Burmese jungles to overcome the Japanese occupiers, consisted of a number of Japanese Americans, or Nisei. They served in both intelligence and combat capacities,

translating captured documents and fighting where needed. Grant Hirabayashi was among these men. Hirabayashi would later serve in India and China; in the late days of the war, he interrogated Japanese POWs, one of whom accused him of betraying his people.



Carolyn Hisako Tanaka - Nicknamed Road Runner for her unflagging energy and enthusiasm, Carolyn Hisako Tanaka served in Vietnam in spite of a scarring childhood memory. At the age of 6, she saw her family evicted from their California home in the wake of Pearl Harbor and relocated to

an internment camp in Poston, Arizona. When the family returned to California after the war, they found their home burned to the ground. In 1966, as an emergency room nurse, she decided to enlist in the Army, telling skeptical friends, "I have a skill that is needed in Vietnam, and I'm going there to do my duty for my country." Ironically, she returned from that war to a "welcome" that brought back bitter memories.



Jimmie Kanaya - As a youth, Jimmie Kanaya became fascinated with the military, and at 20 he jumped at the chance to enlist in 1941—months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. After helping his parents relocate from their Oregon home to an Idaho internment camp, Kanaya took his skills as a

medic to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He aggressively looked out for his men, even negotiating a halt to fighting to bring in casualties from the battlefield. Captured by German troops, he escaped three times and at war's end was the only non-Caucasian in his POW camp. Kanaya continued to serve his country during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

REGIONAL HEADLINES

75-year-old immigrant claims 3 college degrees

Lawrence Journal World

Lawrence, Kan. —Traute Kohler remembers how the most recent of her adventures began.

She was talking to the chairman of the German department at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, discussing a program she developed to teach adults how to grasp basic German language concepts.

“I remember exactly how he put it,” Kohler said. “He said, ‘I take it for granted that you have an American degree.’”

Sparked by that conversation years ago, the now 75-year-old German immigrant can boast not one, but three American degrees, all from Kansas University.

The last of them, her doctorate, officially comes from KU’s department of Germanic languages and literatures, but actually reflects an interdisciplinary study of psychology, linguistics and German.

She defended her dissertation last November, and will participate in an upcoming hooding ceremony on campus.

The dissertation presents her ideas on the role that color can play in teaching German grammar.

“While most people are sitting back and collecting Social Security benefits, she’s writing a dissertation,” Keel said. Sitting in her Roeland Park home of more than 44 years, Kohler is

surrounded by trinkets, artifacts and furniture that reflect her varied interests.

There’s a Navajo rug on the wall, a small replica of an elephant from Thailand, and a piano with Bach, Mozart and German folk music on it. Before ever going to school in the United States - Kohler has a degree in business from a German university - in 1984, she founded Languages on Wings, an academy that put her language teaching practices to use, often for international businessmen.

Kohler said life doesn’t stop when you reach a certain age.

“You just get there,” she said. “You keep yourself alive, and you’ll be the same way.”

McDonald’s employees take on would-be robber

Bremerton Patriot

East Bremerton, Wash. - A masked man attempting to rob an East Bremerton McDonald’s restaurant early May 8 had trouble getting employees to take him seriously.

He was eventually wrestled to the ground by the workers, who held him until police arrived.

Bremerton Police were called to the McDonald’s at 3580 Wheaton Way in Bremerton just after midnight when employees reported they had detained a man who had tried to rob the counter, according to police reports. Employees initially thought the suspect, 29, of Bremerton, was a fellow

employee playing a joke.

He was wearing a mask and had a metal pipe under his clothes which he told employees he would use to shoot them.

After demanding money from the register 10 times, the suspect went behind the counter. An employee approached the man and was punched in the face. The employee then said, “Oh no, it’s on,” according to the man’s written statement.

The suspect was wrestled to the ground and detained while the store’s owner called 911. He was booked into the Kitsap County jail for investigation of first-degree robbery.

Solution to Friday’s crossword puzzle.

V	U	L	P	I	N	E		O	A	T	S			
I		O		B				P		I		B		
X		C	H	E	E	T	A	H		G	N	U		
E		U		X		E		I		E		R		
N	E	S	T		G	A	N	D	E	R		R		
		T		P		L		I				O		
B	A	S	S	E	T		C	A	L	V	E	S		
A				L		H		N		E				
B		T	A	I	P	A	N		G	N	A	T		
O		A		C		R		S		I		O		
O	W	L		A	N	T	L	E	R	S		A		
N		O		N				A		O		D		
		A	N	T	S			F	E	L	I	N	E	S

Anti-Kidnapping tip:

Maintain situational awareness. Scan your operating environment for threats. Make note of routes of approach and escape to your current location.

THE North Star

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