



the

RED BULL EXPRESS

VOL 1, NO. 5

Nov 1st, 2011

Fighting the Good Fight

Story and Photos by Private 1st Class Linsey Williams

It may seem like just an extracurricular activity, but Brazilian jiu-jitsu is much more closely related to the U.S. military than one might think. Aside from the physical and mental benefits available to anyone who practices the sport, our Modern Army Combatives Program would not be what it is today without the base that Brazilian jiu-jitsu provided.

In the mid-nineties, the leadership of the 2nd Ranger Battalion decided to reinvigorate their combatives program. Headed by then non-commissioned officer in charge of the combatives program for the battalion, Matt Larsen, the Rangers sought a new base for what was to become the MACP.

The Gracie dynasty had been honing the art of jiu-jitsu for nearly a century before the U.S. Army took notice of its style and effectiveness.

It began with brothers Carlos and Helio Gracie in Brazil. Helio's oldest son, Rorion Gracie, was the first to bring the Gracie style of jiu-jitsu to the United States. He is also a founder of the Ultimate Fighting Championship. His younger brother, Royce Gracie, was the winner of UFC 1, 2, and 4.

After evaluating a number of different systems, the Rangers sent several men to the Gracie Academy to study their methods. With the tools offered by Brazilian jiu-jitsu, Larsen added his own military knowledge and combat experience to create a program tailored to the needs of the Army.

"[The Rangers] had a chance to train with the Gracies and find out their technique and notice that it works in pretty much every situation," said Cpl. Junious Grady, 342nd Transportation Detachment.

Grady is one of three blue-belt level jiu-jitsu instructors involved with running the class at Camp Arifjan. He

is also a level two MACP instructor and an officer with the New Orleans Police Department's Fifth District Task Force when he's not fulfilling his duty with the Army Reserve.

"It's a good stress reliever. With all the different stress, especially in deployments, jiu-jitsu is a way to ... unwind and unleash that stress in a controlled environment," Grady adds.

In 2001, the United States Army Combatives School was established at Fort Benning. There, soldiers learn the techniques of Brazilian jiu-jitsu as they have been modified for the modern-day soldier.

Spc. Sean Stebbins, forward observer, C Battery, 125th Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, has been an avid participant in the jiu-jitsu class since he arrived at Camp Arifjan two months earlier. He is a former North Saint Paul High School wrestler and competed in the 2010 All-Army Combatives tournament for the state of Minnesota.

"Jiu-jitsu's good for a lot of things. It helps you obviously stay in shape ... You can easily get a whole body workout in a half hour," said Stebbins. "On top of that it teaches discipline. You get what you put into it."

Though soldiers like Spc. Stebbins are the generally the most eager to participate in sport like jiu-jitsu, there are service members of all types and skill sets involved.

"The class is very controlled. We take our time and explain to the students that here, there's nothing to prove, there's no ego involved. We're here just to learn from one another," Grady explains.



Many Soldiers who participate in jiu-jitsu for it's physical benefits.

Just as the Rangers were able to learn from the Gracies, the U.S. Air Force has begun learning from the Army. In 2008, the USAF implemented a program based on MACP. Grady mentions that he is a big advocate for martial arts programs within the military setting, from extra-curricular tournaments, to actual programs like MACP, now adopted by the Air Force, as well as the Marine Corps. Martial Arts Program.

"I'm glad that Camp Arifjan has this class," said Grady. "It's a chance for people from combatives to continue to train and also transition into the world of Brazilian jiu-jitsu."

Thanks to instructors like Cpl. Grady, there is always someone to help them make that transition.

"They're real knowledgeable and it's good to have them here. They keep the class going. We had twenty-five guys today so it's a pretty strong program right now," Stebbins said. "Every time we get someone new coming in we try to get them to put the word out to their units. That's kind of what keeps the program going."

With no end in sight, the sport of Brazilian jiu-jitsu continues to become a practice amongst soldiers and other service members alike.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

2-135 IN UPAR, PFC Kyle Potaracke 3
Red Bulls: Reloaded

1-94 CAV UPAR, SPC Mathew Schlueter 4
Coach J. Robinson visit 1-94 CAV

1-194 CAB UPAR, 1LT Adam Brandt 5
Patched into Tradition

1-125 FA, 1st Lt. Sean Carstensen 6
SKOL Vikings!

1/34 BTSB, 7
*Pool, Sgt 1st Class Brittany Thingvold
 Talent Show, Sgt. Lindsay Mackie*

134 BSB, 1LT Eric Cameron 8
Powering Kuwait



Service members stretch during a recent jiu-jitsu class on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

1st BCT can be followed on:



www.facebook.com/MinnesotaRedBulls



www.twitter.com/MnRedBulls



www.youtube.com/MinnesotaRedBulls

THE RED BULL EXPRESS

1st Brigade Combat Team
 34th Red Bull Infantry Division
 Public Affairs Office

Commanding Officer
 COL Eric D Kerska

Command Sergeant Major
 Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Herr

The Red Bull Express is an authorized publication for members of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division. Content of The Red Bull is not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 1st BCT, 34th ID. All editorial content of The Red Bull Express is prepared, edited provided and approved by the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office.

Editorial Staff

1st BCT Public Affairs Officer:
 Maj. Paul Rickert

NCOIC:
 Staff Sgt. Lynette Hoke

Staff:
 Spc. Trisha Betz
 Spc. Bob Brown
 Pfc. Linsey Williams
 1/34th BCT UPARs

Contributing Units

1st Battalion, 125th Field Artillery
 134th Brigade Support Battalion
 1/34th Brigade Special Troops Battalion
 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor
 1st Squadron, 94th Cavalry
 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry
 1st Battalion, 180th Cavalry
 1st Battalion, 160th Field Artillery

RED BULLS: RELOADED

Story and Photos by Private 1st Class. Kyle Potaracke

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division (1/34th BCT) arrived in Kuwait this summer with soldiers who tended to either have already deployed or who were ‘green’.

The deployment experience of the Winona, Minn. based Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment is a microcosm of the rest of the 1/34th BCT experience.

Prior to its May mobilization, during the pre-deployment training, and within the past month of their deployment, Charlie Company added soldiers so it can support the Iraqi drawdown.

Soldiers with different Military Occupational Specialties (MOS)—jobs—and other soldiers fresh from basic combat training were added to the company to try and fill the voids in each platoon that occur over time as soldiers leave the service or retire.

That process of adding new soldiers to a functioning team always raises questions. Will the new soldiers be an asset to the platoon? Since some platoons have been together for a number of years, how will they react to new soldiers?



The recent arrival of new Red Bull Soldiers has been a welcome addition to many units all ready on the ground.



Soldiers of 2-135 INF prepare for a dusty day at the range.

When asked how he felt about being in an infantry unit for the course of the deployment Lewis stated, “I don’t really mind being a help. The things that matter to me are the people to my left and people to my right. This platoon has accepted me into their team and I get along with them.”

Cottage Grove, Minn. native Pfc. Nathan Van Bogart of 3rd squad, 1st platoon graduated basic training this past May and arrived in Kuwait in mid-September.

“I think that the guys in this platoon and my squad have really accepted me into their community. They pick on me a little bit, but it’s all in good fun. This platoon seems to be very squared away and has taught me multiple things in just the month that I have been here,” explained Private 1st Class. Van Bogart.

With all of the changes that each company has made in the battalion there are a lot of new faces among the vets.

Each platoon has their own way of bringing their new soldiers up to par with training, physical training and just being accepted into the platoon. When soldiers come to Charlie Company, they know they are coming into a great family and will leave with friends that will last forever.

Over time some of ‘the new guys’ will become the ‘vets’ that allow Charlie Company and the 1/34th BCT to stay ‘Army Strong’. *After all, winning teams don’t rebuild, they reload.*

“Charlie Company has changed a lot,” said Cpl. Andrew Jacobs from Cottage Grove. Cpl. Jacobs has been with Charlie Company for five years and says that the new guys have been accepted very well from the “vets” of the platoon.

Spc. Dustin Lewis of Plymouth, Minnesota joined 1st Platoon during the month and a half of mobilization training back at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

Spc. Lewis is a mechanic who has been assigned to 3rd Squad of 1st Platoon. When

asked how he felt about being in an infantry

Coach J. Robinson Visits the 1-94 CAV

Story and Photos by Spc. Mathew Schlueter

Many people show their appreciation for the men and women who serve in the United States Army by showing their support. Then there are a few the go the extra mile to really show their appreciation. Minnesota Golden Gophers Wrestling Coach J. Robinson, a former Army Ranger and the father of modern Military Combatives came and visited Soldiers from the 1-94th Cavalry on Sept,29,2011 at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

As a Vietnam War Vet Coach Robinson spoke to Soldiers about his own experiences on how to deal with adversity and stress. Coach Robison told soldiers “You are in an unbelievable learning environment. Embrace the situation you are in because no other time in time in your life you will gain as much knowledge or the ability to strive under pressure as you will here.”



Lt Col. Eddie Frizell presents Coach J. Robinson with an award.

After speaking, Coach Robson signed a few autographs. SSG Samuel Mathiowetz one of the soldiers who met with Coach Robinson said “The fact that he took the time to come and talk with us was just awesome especially since his schedule back home is starting to get busy.” SSG Mathiowetz continued on to say “He is truly a humble man with great experiences and insights to share, I’m glad he did.”



Coach Robinson commented on the visit with the Cavalry Soldiers “It’s Reaffirming to know there is patriotic men and woman that step up and show how much they truly care for our great country.”



When it was time to leave, Coach Robinson showed his appreciation by making sure to shake every Soldier’s hand.

Preparing For a Rendezvous with History

Photos and Story by 1st Lt. Adam Brandt and Staff Sgt. Alan Graham, UPARs, 1-194 CAB

Currently in the Kuwait theatre of operation, the logistical draw down of forces for Operation New Dawn is in full motion. Spear-heading a majority of these logistical tasks recently falls heavily on the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry “Red Bull” Division.

The 364th Sustainment Command, “Task Force Rainier” brought a unique challenge that was handed over to Alpha and Bravo Companies of the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor (1-194 CAB). Their task was to assist the 364th in outlining, planning and coordinating the setup of the Redistribution Property Accountability Team (RPAT) yard to assist as a staging area for equipment as it is drawn out of Iraq.

Alpha Company, 1-194 CAB, 1st Platoon 3rd Squad assisted in the movement and the parking of tactical vehicles in the motor pool known as the Four Corners on September 27th, 2011. “The only way to know for sure if the yard will operate smoothly is to run actual trucks through this validation process” commented Spc. Matthew Lalli from Alexandria, Minn., an infantryman with Alpha Company, 1-194 CAB.

1st Platoon, 3rd Squad assisted by demonstrating the turning radius of the different tactical vehicles, all members of the High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle family of vehicles, commonly referred to as the Humvee, and the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle family, like the 25-ton Caiman. This provided a detailed visualization of vehicle movement to see if there are any issues to the steady flow of traffic. 1st Platoon, 3rd Squad also ensured the designated parking areas in the RPAT yard were sufficient enough for the vehicles. Since this was such a successful test run, Alpha and Bravo Companies were asked again to assist in this process on October 5, 2011. After setting up the model lanes throughout the RPAT yard, both companies had the task of validating the setup to work out any issues and spot deficiencies prior to actual units turning in their vehicles.

With the design laid out, Alpha Company served as a “first training audience.” Soldiers from Alpha and Bravo sat in on detailed briefing as actual convoy commanders and then were directed through each station of the yard as an actual convoy would during the turn in process.

As the process continued, Soldiers from both companies became familiarized with the outlined model and thoroughly understood what parts of the process improved efficiency. Detailed notes were taken on parking distances and on turning radiuses of the vehicles as the exercise neared completion. Overall the mission was a great success and provided yet another significant and important piece to the logistics picture.

“This training for Bravo Company is very valuable. It should really help the turn in process run smoothly and give the Soldiers a good idea of what goes into operations at the recovery level” commented Pvt. 1st Class James Dahlheimer, an infantryman from St. Paul, Minn. with Bravo Company 1-194 CAB.



Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles.



SKOL VIKINGS!

Story and Photos by
1st Lt. Sean Carstensen

Getting the chance to watch your hometown football team, the Minnesota Vikings, while deployed overseas tends to find itself on the back burner of priorities. Unless of course, they just happen to be broadcasted on the Armed Forces Network. For Soldiers who have found themselves on multiple deployments, one shrugs their shoulders and simply chalks it up to missing another season.

For members of Charlie Battery 1-125 FA stationed at Camp Arifjan, an unlikely wish came true. Thanks to Capt Kaufman of the 1/34th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Soldiers from Minnesota are welcome to join each week in the Zone 6 camp command cell conference room in order to view that week's game. CPT Kaufman purchased a season pass from NFL.com and for a mere five dollars; a Soldier can watch all 16 games while cheering on their team as loud as they want.

"This is the greatest thing since sliced bread! I mean, I had no expectations on this deployment to be able to watch the Vikings. Even though it's been an ugly season so far, just having this opportunity on this deployment makes it so much better," exclaimed C BTRY's SGT Jerad Billings after last week's 34-10 win over Arizona. Jerad is not the only fan, as around two dozen Soldiers from Minnesota show up weekly to watch their favorite football team win or lose.

With nearly a third of the NFL regular season complete, there is much football yet to play, which means making it to the playoffs, is anyone's game yet. The Minnesota Vikings have started the season off with a dismal record (1-4) in which they find themselves at the bottom of the NFC North division. Competing against two 5-0 division rivals, the Green Bay Packers and Detroit Lions will make the rest of the season a challenge if the Vikings have any playoff aspirations.



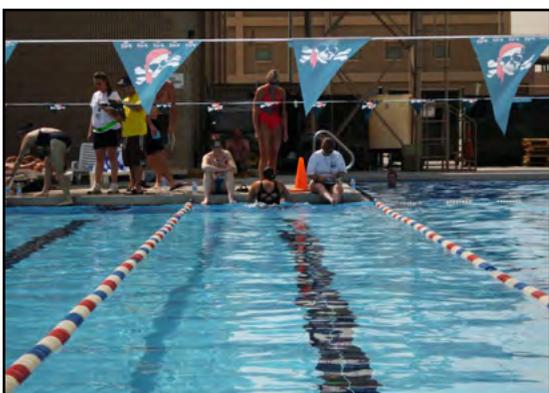
Staying “Cool” at the Pool

Story and Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brittany L. Thingvold

As we near the end of what we call *summer months* in Kuwait, Soldiers of the BSTB take advantage of some ways to stay cool; and what a better place than the swimming pool at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait!

With temperatures soaring from 110 – 130 degrees in the hottest time of the season in Kuwait, the pool manages to maintain temperatures of 75 – 90 degrees and even has a heater for when the temperatures drop to under 100 degrees. In the summer months, the pool is open early bird hours for physical training or even just to do laps. It remains open throughout the day into the evening for a late night swim or game of volleyball with friends. Whether it's lying in the sun for a little extra Vitamin D, reading a book, shooting hoops in the water net or simply swimming for the fun of it, many soldiers of the BSTB

look forward to their next day off to get out and relax. “The pool is different because it doesn't have the desert feel; no sand, no rocks and somewhere to just stay cool!” said Zach Holden, lifeguard, ITT, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Being a former Marine himself, Zach “know[s] how to relate to soldiers needs and we try to accommodate that.” The lifeguard staff even put in a little extra effort by personally buying rafts, balls and equipment for the troops enjoyment.



Some Soldiers of the Brigade Special Troops Battalion participated in the latest pool Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) event; the Sand Shark Swim Meet. In the land of 10,000 lakes (Minnesota), it is rare to find an outdoor swim event held in October, but 10,000 miles away, it is very likely. Sgt Krista Hanson, 1/34th Brigade Special Troops Battalion placed fourth in the 50 breaststroke relay, “I never swam so hard in my entire life!” said Hanson. She said she “would like to go back regularly to start swimming more laps because it was a lot of fun and great PT.”

BSTB has “Got Talent”

Story and Photos by Sgt. Lindsay L. Mackie

On Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, soldiers from the 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 34th Infantry Division, based in Bloomington, Minn. can be seen performing for a crowd of soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and civilians.



On Sunday evenings starting at 7pm, service members from throughout Camp Arifjan gather at Starbucks in Zone 6 for Poetry Night. Performers can sing, read a poem, play an instrument, or rap. Some performances are original pieces written by the artist and some are songs and poems that others have written. Anyone who attends Poetry Night can be almost guaranteed to hear original raps performed by the group 1-8-deuce, made up of three soldiers from the 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 34th Infantry Division.

Spc. Johnathan Card, Zone 6 Contracting Officer Representative Technician, Spc. Joseph Brantley, Zone 6 Billeting Specialist, and Pfc. Davy Kimbrough, Zone 6 Maintenance Technician are all natives of Detroit, Mich. The three soldiers joined the 1/34 BSTB in August, 2011 after extending from their previous deployment with the 1/97 Fires Brigade, who returned home to the United States after being replaced by the Minnesota based 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division. The 1/34 Brigade Special Troops Battalion is currently deployed in Kuwait as the Mayor Cell of Zone 6 in Camp Arifjan.

In addition to open mike night, Mondays and Tuesdays are karaoke nights at Camp Arifjan. Spectators can expect to hear an eclectic selection of music sung by service members and civilians on the camp. Karaoke takes place at 7pm in the Zone 1 Community Center on Monday nights and at the Zone 6 stage on Tuesdays.

Power in the Desert

Story and Photos by 1st Lt. Eric Cameron



Power is something one may take for granted living in the United States, where flipping a switch and turning the lights on is the norm. The Soldiers of the 134th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), deployed to Camp Virginia, Kuwait, do not always have this luxury. Fortunately, the hard-working SGT Vangen has been assigned to help manage the electrical generators there.

SGT John Vangen is from Blaine, Minn. He deployed with the 134th BSB out of Little Falls earlier this summer. Vangen is the Contracting Representative for the generators at Camp Virginia. One of Vangen's jobs is a monthly audit of the Contractor's performance. This is to

ensure the contractor is meeting or exceeding the contract requirements and maintaining the generators at Camp Virginia. It is important for Vangen to monitor the contractor's work with the aim of ensuring continuous, uninterrupted power for Soldiers living at Camp Virginia. Unfortunately, as diligent in his job as he is, generators still go down.

When a generator stops working, the call quickly finds its way to Vangen. He contacts the contractor and ensures the contractor fixes the generator within the time specified in the contract. While some areas have backup generators, many others are not able to operate until the generator is back online. "The generators run 24hrs a day, 7 days a week, providing all electricity needed on the camp," said Vangen. "They are the heart providing the life blood to Camp Virginia."

There are some unique challenges Vangen and the contractor face in keeping the generators operational. The extreme temperature of the desert environment is hard on the equipment, and the loads on the generators vary considerably from summer to winter due to changing air conditioning requirements. The size of the generator must be tailored to the load to prevent overheating in the summer and wet stacking (not enough load on the generator, causing excess fuel usage) in the winter. Overheating leads to generator failure, and wet stacking causes the generator to emit sooty black smoke from the fuel exhaust. Planning and care are necessary to get the correct generator for the job. "It's a balancing act that includes balancing the load, the heat, and the contractors who maintain and repair the generators," said Vangen.

Generators range in size from 30k to 550k. To give an example of the capabilities, there are approximately 120 Soldiers living off of one 420K generator, powering things such as T.V.s, air conditioners (running 24/7), refrigerators, and other electrical items. If just one generator fails to operate effectively, it can make things very unpleasant for a large group of soldiers, especially in the summer heat.

As the draw down in Iraq continues, it is important for Vangen and the contractor to maintain a good working relationship. SGT Vangen's job is an important piece of the group effort as the 134th BSB works hard to ensure smooth operations for Soldiers arriving in Camp Virginia on their way home.