



# Polar Bear Plunge at Camp Arifjan

Soldiers from the 1/34th BCT deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait held a Polar Bear Plunge on Feb. 4th. Master Sgt. Bryan Newcomer and 1st Lt. Ryan Doliber, both from the 1/34th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, connected with the Minnesota Special Olympics and partnered with the Morale, Welfare and Recreation office on Camp Arifjan to coordinate the event. Around 125 servicemembers, mostly Red Bulls, participated in the event on the breezy and very chill morning of Feb. 4th. The event had many similar features a 'Polar Bear Pluger' would experience in Minnesota. Like a Polar Bear 'Dash -n-Splash,' the service members were required to run a 5k prior to their plunge into a icy pool.



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8 Soldiers from 1/34th BCT participate in a remote Polar Bear Plunge at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

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# THE RED BULL EXPRESS

1st Brigade Combat Team  
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Public Affairs Office

Commanding Officer Command Sergeant Major  
Col. Eric D Kerska Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Herr

## Editorial Staff

1st BCT Public Affairs Officer:  
Maj. Paul Rickert

NCOIC:  
Staff Sgt. Lynette Hoke

Staff:  
Cpl. 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  
112th Military Police

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# Expert Infantry Badge

By Spc. Andrew Harrington



The EIB candidates, who made it through EIB qualification, form up waiting to receive their award with anticipation. (Photo by 1-235 Infantry Unit Public Affairs Representative)

The Expert Infantryman's Badge (EIB) is the one of the most coveted badges in the Army community and one of the hardest badge to earn. Soldiers of the Mankato, Minn. based 2-135 Infantry set their sights on earning this badge in January while deployed at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

First, the Soldiers started preparing for the course. Every Soldier knew it would be a difficult and daunting task so studying and preparing them became our first task. This included everything from doing physical fitness training to classroom presentations over weapons systems and range cards. Through all such tasks, soldiers helped each other with all the learning and training. "We all had one goal in our head and we wanted everyone to succeed with us," said Spc. Andrew Harrington of Apple Valley, Minnesota.

Second, the Soldiers of the 2-135 Infantry along with the Durant, Oklahoma based 1-180<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and the Brainerd, Minnesota based 1-194 Combined Arms Battalion participated in some Round Robin training on January 16, 2012. For five days, they went to various stations where they learned these tasks from current EIB holders. Finally, after studying, reviewing and prepping, testing for the EIB started with a 5:00 am PT test. Those that passed this strenuous test then went out in to the desert to do some land navigation. Soldiers observed that while they have done this training many times before back home, it was more difficult out in the desert.

Everyone that made it through that first day now went on to the 3 days of lanes. The three days of lanes comprised of an Urban Lane, a Tactical Check Point lane and a Patrol Lane. Each lane consisted of certain infantryman tasks that would be associated with each situation and a mission to accomplish. All these tasks had to be done under a time limit, and Soldiers noted that these conditions brought more intensity to doing these tasks.



Finally completed, a group of EIB candidates make it to the finish line.



# 1-94 CAV Going for the Gold

Story by Mathew Schlueter



The 1-94 Cavalry participated in the Camp Arifjan Power in the New Year Kuwaiti Power lifting Competition on 22 Jan. The competition was made up of three events which included the Squat Lift, Bench Press, and Dead Lift.

1st Lt. Thomas Miller participated in the Heavy weight division while Spc. Brandon Burt participated in the middle weight division. 1Lt Miller who is training to

become a Professional Strong Man competitor was excited for the event. "I love competition, it was good to get on the platform and compete against other competitors," said 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Miller

The event was Spc. Burt's first experience in a lifting competition. "The event took a whole new level concentration for me," said Spc. Burt.

1st Lt. Miller and Spc. Burt trained with each other for twelve weeks leading into the event. 1st Lt Miller a Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach at the University of Minnesota took Spc. Burt under his wing and helped him improve on his lifting ability. Spc. Burt was very grateful to work out with somebody of 1st Lt Miller's caliber. "The knowledge of lifting that he has is outstanding and to have him take me under his wing and help me improve was awesome," said Spc. Burt.

The first event was the squat lift. Spc. Burt failed his first lift, right way 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Miller was there to give him support which helped Spc. Burt went on to win that event. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Miller destroyed the competition with ease by putting up an impressive 700 pounds during the Squat lift. Spc. Burt was Inspired by 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Miller's Squat performance "He was so focused I couldn't say anything, but when he got up and got underneath the rack it was like there was no one else there and watching that was my favorite moment in the competition," said Spc. Burt

The bench press was the next event. Both competitors openly admitted that the bench press was not their strongest event. "One of my main goals is to improve my bench press significantly," said Spc. Burt who took bronze in that event while 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Miller finished with silver.

The final event was the dead lift. 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Miller dead lifted 600 pounds and almost lifted 675, but the bar slipped out of his hand just before he could finish which meant he had to settle for second place in the event. Spc. Burt put up an impressive 565 which is almost 3 times his own weight giving him the gold. "I took the bull by the horns and dominated the event," said Spc Burt.

The two squadron competitors won both of their respected weight classes and brought home a total of 8 medals including five gold medals, two silver medals, and one bronze medal.

"I definitely want to do it again," said Spc. Burt, "I can't wait to do again and next time I hope to bring nothing but gold home."



# MRAP Off-Road Driving Course

By 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Kyle Koeberl

Since Iraq war ended in December, the Soldiers of Alpha Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Combined Arms Battalion 194<sup>th</sup> Armor (1-194 CAB) have been conducting training.

During their missions in Iraq, these Soldiers had driven paved roads to facilitate the drawdown of equipment from Iraq. Alpha

Company Soldiers are conducting off-road training to learn how to better maneuver their 20-ton CAIMAN Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles on variable terrain and in tight quarters.



The training began with Alpha Company Soldiers convoying their CAIMAN MRAPs to Udairi Range, an ordinary task



they have accomplished time and time again. When they entered the training area the Soldiers knew an interesting day of training was ahead of them. Rolling hills, tight turns, soft sand, ravines, and other obstacles they had not yet encountered while on their prior missions all awaited the Soldiers. The MRAP Off-Road Driving Course contained many natural obstacles and terrain features chosen to properly train the Soldiers. After a brief time spent preparing the range, the first vehicle moved out onto the course. The terrain was rough and assumed to be unforgiving on the 20-ton CAIMAN MRAP, but to the Soldiers' surprise, the large elephant-like vehicle traversed the terrain with little difficulty. Up and down the hills, through the thick sand, over the rhythmic sections of harsh terrain the drivers navigated their vehicles. The purpose of the course is to build confidence in the drivers and in their vehicles capabilities. This is exactly what happened. After the first run had been completed, the drivers had a good idea of the vehicles off-road capabilities. The drivers were then sent back out on the course, this time they traversed the course with little trouble and had a good basis of experience with off-road maneuver of the CAIMAN MRAP.



The Soldiers of Alpha Company will continue to train and hone their skills in order to prepare themselves for whatever the future may hold. Although, one thing is certain, whether it is paved roads or the harsh desert terrain, the Soldiers of Alpha Company 1-194 CAB will be able to shoot, move, and communicate wherever they are needed.



# 56.5 Change of Command

Story and Photo by 1st Lt. Sean Carstensen

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 125<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery's non-standard mission at Camp Patriot is a unique one. The Battalion provides security of the gates and perimeter of the Kuwait Naval Base as well as the life support and sustinment for all tenants of Camp Patriot. The tenants receiving support from the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 125<sup>th</sup> FA include the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, the Canadian Army, civilian contractors, and occasionally U.S. Marines. Many cross-service relationships have been forged through this support during the past several months.

One of the largest groups here at Camp Patriot is the Commander Task Group (CTG) 56.5, composed of both U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard personnel. The Task Group's mission is to provide seaward security for the Kuwait Naval Base. On January 18, 2012, CTG 56.5 had a transfer of authority ceremony as the outgoing commander—U.S. Navy Cmdr. Kevin Hanson—handed over the mission to the incoming commander—U.S. Navy Cmdr. Robert Klaszky.

Cmdr. Hanson spoke at the ceremony and thanked Lt. Col. Troy Soukup, commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 125<sup>th</sup> FA, for his Battalion's support. Cmdr. Hanson remarked that he had heard "horror stories" about working with the U.S. Army, but said his worries were put to rest as he worked with the Soldiers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 125<sup>th</sup> FA. Cmdr. Hanson also thanked Col. Eric Kerska, commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, for the freedom to perform the mission and the overall support that the Brigade provided.

On January 20, 2012, Lt. Col. Soukup presented Cmdr. Hanson with a certificate of appreciation to CTG 56.5 for outstanding support of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 125<sup>th</sup> FA. An excerpt from the certificate reads, "Your 'mission first' attitude greatly enhanced the daily operations of the battalion at Camp Patriot ensuring the welfare of all service members." Cmdr. Hanson was delighted to receive the certificate and thanked the Battalion. He said that he enjoyed his time working with the Battalion and was happy for the friendships that were made between the Sailors, Guardians, and Soldiers.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 125<sup>th</sup> FA will now begin a working relationship with the incoming Sailors and Guardians of CTG 56.5, under the command of Cmdr. Klaszky, hoping to continue this exceptional relationship.



# Contracting Officer Representatives are at it Again!

By Sgt. 1st Class Brittany L. Thingvold; contributions courtesy of Sgt 1st Class Paul Hoffmann

Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team (Feb. 12, 2012) -- It has been this latest addition to our workload that has led us to making our biggest impact on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait since October, 2011. The Zone 6 Camp Command Cell's Contracting Officer Representative (COR) section has removed over ten KMS trailers (government leased shower latrine trailers), 40 ILU's (government owned porta-johns), and 140 APU's (government leased porta-johns). It has recently reached a high point when in a four day period, the COR section removed 103 leased APU's from service. This was a major muscle movement in the Army's initiative to save millions of dollars on showers and latrines in Kuwait. Our mission did not originally include this duty however, once the transition of soldiers out of Southwest Asia began, it only made sense to reduce the amount spent on unneeded items.

There are several steps involved in the removal of unneeded latrines with the first step identifying those units that are underutilized and/or expendable which takes a tremendous amount of time. This is done by a careful analysis of current population levels and anticipated future usage. The second step involves discussing with tenant units to see what their preference is as to which units are taken or left behind based on their needs. Finally, the logistics of the moves can begin. These include ensuring the latrines have had all plumbing and electricity disconnected and that the contractor is able to supervise their movement. The COR section must also submit composite risk management statements for approval; adjust their schedule to allow these moves to be done. Spc. Jonathan Card of Las Vegas, Nev. who extended with the Brigade Special Troops Battalion after already serving a year in theater said "I am responsible for escorting TCN's, placing and finding areas of the latrines and making sure they are completely empty and nothing can break in transit. It's a lot of work, but at the end of the day it's fulfilling knowing we are saving the government money." "Maybe they'll give us an increase on our pay" Card said jokingly.

The COR section has also recently taken on minor repairs of government owned showers and latrines such as replacing shower heads, shower curtains, lights and fire extinguishers. The biggest addition to their workload has been removing showers and latrines that are no longer needed from service while simultaneously conducting the primary mission of daily latrine and laundry trailer inspections and Camp Command Cell work orders.

Sgt 1st Class Paul Hoffman, COR Representative from Sleepy Eye, Minn. who is an Army Engineer with the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team said "One thing that needs to be noted is that we take a high level of satisfaction from these moves. First, we realize that we are saving the taxpayers large amounts of money. Second, this provides a chance to interact with TCNs who assist us and has given us the chance to experience a different culture than that of the normal American military. I can say that I have had the chance to get to know people from many countries such as Egypt, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and the United Kingdom. Finally, it is a good feeling to be able to see the result of your efforts and be able to say that I helped accomplish that."



A line up of the ILUs (government owned porta-johns) before preparing them for movement to a different location. This has recently reached a high point when in a four day period the (Contracting Officer Representative) COR section of the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, Brigade Combat Team removed 103 leased APUs from service. This was a major muscle movement in the Army's initiative to save millions of dollars on showers and latrines in Kuwait.



# Combating Unemployment

It's no secret the veteran unemployment rates is higher than the national average. The unemployment rate of the 134th Brigade Support Battalion is near 30 percent. The issue is not the soldier themselves. Often a soldier is not called back for a job he or she applied for because their resume did not translate.

"From my viewpoint we have not done a good enough job of telling our story and what skills we have as they translate to civilian employment," said Headquarters and Headquarters Company Commander, Capt. Jason Huedepohl, from Chaska, Minn. "The hard skills are usually pretty apparent but we need to do a better job identifying and teaching our soldiers what those soft skills are and how they apply in the civilian sector."

Now that the drawdown is over, commanders like Huedepohl are able to address the next steps for the members of his company.

"Each soldier has a different story when it comes to why they are unemployed but it comes back to what we can do as a family and teach them how to prepare themselves for a challenging employment market."

Preparing for employment involves translating military experiences into civilian equivalent, preparing for the job interview and how to find jobs to apply for that match their skill set.

"We are starting with the basics of resume and cover letter writing to give them a base that allows them to put into words their hard and soft skills as well as their previous accomplishments," said Huedepohl. "We are also going to focus on career path identification and



Spc. Joshua T. Intihar, from Poplar, Wis., performs duties as a semi-automatic weapons range safety on Jan. 29, 2012, at the Udari Range complex near Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Being a range safety requires confidently operating under stress in potentially dangerous situations and being able to correct a firer regardless of rank. Deployments develop valuable skills which often are difficult to convert to a civilian equivalent. The employment working group put together by his unit focuses on translating these skill sets on a resume. Intihar is deployed with the 134th Brigade Support Battalion, Minnesota Army National Guard and will return home early summer 2012.

personality traits and then transition into interview skills and online job seeking and networking."

Taking the time now for soldiers to develop their products and creating a strategy while their minds are clear and not clouded by the newness of going home is critical to success.

Huedepohl continues, "If we can establish a solid foundation of basic skills and show them the available resources we can help make them more successful when the current support system is not directly involved. They will be able to take the products and knowledge they have learned and adjust or modify it in a way that fits a specific position or job they are interested in."

Huedepohl is deployed with the 134th Brigade Support Battalion, 1/34 Heavy Brigade Support Battalion to Camp Virginia, Kuwait. He is expected to return early summer 2012.



Spc. Jeremy Gravidahl, from Bemidji, Minn., constructs a deck at Camp Army Life Support Area, Kuwait for the Camp Chapel. Soldiers, like Gravidahl, develop non-military specific skills during a deployment which are often overlooked by soldier themselves and employers as they seek employment. The employment working group put together by his unit focuses on highlighting soft skills. Gravidahl is deployed with the 134th Brigade Support Battalion, Minnesota Army National Guard and will return home early summer 2012.



# *O'Hanlon is Up to the Task*

By PFC Agnes Hall, UPAR, A/1-180<sup>th</sup> CAV

Specialist Brian O'Hanlon is from Ardmore, Oklahoma where his wife Jessica and his seven month old daughter Olivia await his return home. Once he returns home O'Hanlon plans on working towards a Bachelor's degree in Physical Therapy. In his spare time he enjoys hanging out with his friends and family, and watching his little girl grow up.

O'Hanlon has been in the military for five years, all of which he has spent as a member of 1-180<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. He is on his first deployment and when asked what he thinks about the deployment Spc O'Hanlon says, "It was a great way to make money, bond with friends, and further my education."

During this deployment Spc O'Hanlon teamed up with Corporal Derrick Riley, Specialist Frank Harjo,



and Specialist Joshua Knighten to earn his gold spurs at the 1-180<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Spur Ride. He also is able to boast being one of the five Soldiers of the 1-180<sup>th</sup> Cavalry to finish all the tasks put forth in the EIB and earn his Expert Infantryman Badge.

O'Hanlon's unit, the 1-180<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, is headquartered in Durant, Oklahoma, and has units stationed in Ada, McAlester, and Poteau. The unit has been mobilized as part of the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team since April 2011; it has trained at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, Fort Polk, Louisiana, and has been deployed to Kuwait since July. In Kuwait, the unit has completed several missions, including the support of the withdrawal of the final troops and equipment from Iraq this past December. Specialist O'Hanlon took part in numerous convoy security missions into Iraq before January.





# Unique Work for 268th MP Soldiers



Military Police (MP) Soldiers are accustomed to varied and unique job and mission assignments. Several Soldiers from the 268<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company based in Ripley, Tennessee were selected as part of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) mission that very few Soldiers have the opportunity to experience.

Soldiers from the 268<sup>th</sup> MP Company were assigned to the EOD mission for 5 months. During that time, the Soldiers were afforded the chance to gain valuable and exiting experience working with trained EOD technicians tasked with destruction of ammunition and explosives that have become damaged or otherwise not suitable to retain in the inventory.

The MP Soldiers assigned to the detail were responsible for the safe preparation of 'shot holes', - the manner in which selected explosives are positioned for safe destruction, either by burning or by detonating with explosives. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the job was that "they (EOD Cadre) trusted us enough – as non-EOD techs – to prepare our own shot holes," said Spc. Charles Smith of Cordova, Tn., a member of the 268<sup>th</sup> MP Company, "It says a lot about us as Soldiers."

The MPs were able to learn highly technical aspects of handling explosive in a short amount of time. The Soldiers learned the proper methods of preparing explosives and detonating devices safely and efficiently. Spc. Smith, having no prior experience with explosives said, "I learned enough to want to join an EOD unit" upon reenlistment. Sgt. Daniel Rowden, from Chattanooga, Tn., a Soldier assigned to the 268<sup>th</sup> MP Company echoed the sentiment. It was the "opportunity of a lifetime, especially for an MP. The relationships were inspiring, and we looked forward to going to work every day," said Sgt. Rowden.

In addition to destroying dangerous munitions, the Soldiers were also responsible for checking training areas for unexploded Ordnance (UXO) in order to ensure a safe training environment for Soldiers assigned to the area. Despite the heavy physical demands of the job, the Soldiers thoroughly enjoyed the work. "It's a lot of work, but when you hear the boom, it's worth it," said Rowden.

