



# ALITIMES



January 6, 2006

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**ALI TIMES**

Vol. 4, Issue 1  
Jan. 6, 2006

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The content is edited, prepared and provided by the public affairs office of the 407th Air Expeditionary Group. All photographs are U.S. Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

The *Ali Times* accepts stories, photographs and commentaries, which maybe submitted to the public affairs staff—located in the group headquarters building—or can be sent directly to the newspaper at Ali.Times@tlab.centaf.af.mil  
Deadline for publication is 7 p.m. Thursday before the week of publication.  
For more information, call 445-2318, or e-mail the staff.

## Front Page photo

777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron Advisory Support Team instructor Tech. Sgt. Charles Francks



works with one of his Iraqi air force students in the cockpit of an Iraqi C-130E.

Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

# Ali Base AEF 7/8 ends rotation with AOR leading accomplishments!

407th Air Expeditionary Group Commander Col. Don Palandech hosted his final commander calls Jan. 6. The morning session directly followed the end of rotation awards ceremony.

The colonel started with congratulations to all of the individual and group rotation award winners:

*Airman of the Rotation:* Airman 1st Class **Amorita Jenkins**, 407th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron.

*Noncommissioned Officer of the Rotation:* Staff Sgt. **Monica Pubillones**, 407th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron.

*Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Rotation:* Master Sgt. **John Gaskill**, 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron.

*Company Grade Officer of the Rotation:* Capt. **David Beasley**, 407th Expeditionary Logistics

Readiness Squadron.

*First Sergeant of the Rotation:* Master Sgt. **Terry Swartz**, 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron.

*Sharp Sabre Team of the Rotation:* **777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron Advisory Support Team**

The colonel then congratulated Iraqi air force Squadron 23 (Transport) for the successes they had during AEF 7/8 and over the past year. He noted how the squadron will soon be moving to their new home at New al Muthana, Baghdad International Airport, and compared the similarities between the mission and future location of Squadron 23 (Transport) with the U.S. Air Force mission at Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

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Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Col. Don Palandech (front, left), 407th Air Expeditionary Group commander, with his superintendent for the rotation, Chief Master Sgt. Cindy Davis (front, right) and members of the 407th AEG Honor Guard (front center) Tech. Sgt. L.J. Kincade, ESVS, honor guard coordinator; (back, from left) Senior Airman Vincent Hampton, ECES; Staff Sgt. Paula Spruill, ELRS; Senior Airman Casey Bonnin, ECES; Airman 1st Class Jorge Fernandez, ELRS.

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He followed with congratulations and thanks to friends, family, loved ones and strangers who sent wishes, prayers and morale support packages to Airmen of the 407th AEG throughout the holiday season.

**Highlights of the speech that followed:**

“Many people have compared the AEF 7/8 rotation to a race— not a sprint, but a distance run or marathon. I think it matches more closely to the Tour de France

- The Tour de France is not one race, but more than 20 stages, each different than the other; each requiring the talents and leadership abilities of a diverse group

- The Tour de France is a team sport; racers compete as a group

Lance Armstrong has been the focal point of the American cycling team over the past few years. For the 407th AEG, the 777th EAS and our work with Iraqi air force Squadron 23 (Transport) was our focal point, they are the missions that drive this base.

The goal of all Airmen assigned to Ali Base AEF 7/8 was to run a first-class airfield and operations to keep these critical OIF missions out front.

As the rotation progressed, just like Lance did not lead every stage, teams within the larger 407th team took the lead at different times. In the end, we rode together to excellence.

Here at Ali Base the mission starts with security forces— the Desert Hunters. They excelled at ensuring that we had the freedom to do what we needed, not taking cover behind concrete barriers. When the enemy was launching rockets at us, security forces rode the point. We supported them as they completed that stage.

Security forces need dependable vehicles to do their job, so at those times when the HMMWVs failed we pushed ELRS Jackals to the front to ride their professionalism. The Jackals exceeded our needs and expectations, providing fuel, supplies, running the terminal, and maintaining the vehicle fleet in an outstanding manner. The ELRS led the way with innovations like their preventive mobile maintenance team, a group of vehicle maintainers who went to the security forces compound

and fine tuned the HMMWVs before patrols to catch the things that the operators would not, preventing break downs while on patrol. The ELRS also processed passengers and cargo that came into and flowed from Ali Base.

For ELRS to do their job they needed up to the minute communications connectivity with higher headquarters.

The communications squadron was the backbone for everything we did during the rotation. The Tour de Ali team needed every minute of Land Mobile Radio, computer and telephone time that the “One team One Fight” communications squadron provided. The Comm squadron went all out, leading our team to connectivity and production. We put them out front and made sure that we supported what they were doing.

Airman accountability was also an issue: we needed to know where everyone was. And although the communications squadron provided telephones, it was the services squadron that held the solution to this problem.

Services rode point to tackle the difficult task of accounting for our Airmen. They were also on point for our total force fitness. The services squadron was there to make sure we exercised our minds at the library, spirit at the Hot Spot, and bodies at Muscle

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“Here at Ali Base the mission starts with security forces— the Desert Hunters. They excelled at ensuring that we had the freedom to do what we needed...”



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Members of Team Ali at the 407th AEG end of rotation commander's call.

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Beach. Services also ran the outstanding special events during the rotation: the Halloween and New Year's parties, comedy shows, and the Air Force Reserve Generation Band.

As services worked a series of outdoor activities, planning included help from the operations support squadron.

The Dust Devils of the EOSS came to the point providing weather forecasts for all our needs. In September and October the heat index was the key to our physical well being. November began our thunderstorm season and the lethal threat of lightning. Charged with running a first class airfield, the Dust Devils were on the job with air traffic control, intelligence, and airfield management.

Of course the condition of the runway is not static; it's under a constant state of flux when you run 24-hour operations. The condition of the runway condition could easily go from okay to awful without the diligent monitoring by the EOSS. Once problems were identified, the Dust Devils turned to ECES to make the repairs.

The 407th civil engineers spent a great deal of time leading our Tour de Ali team. They were out front of so many projects and requirements. The ECES has a force protection flight that outshone all expectations as we saw the contracting squadron award construction

contract after contract, continually adding to the mission of the force protectors. The fire department was ever present as was the readiness flight, each charged with missions to save lives following accidents or attacks. The EOD flight was also at the ready to make our team safe after an attack or when a UXO

was discovered. No team member was more needed than those in construction, electrical, the Dirt Boyz, power pro and structures. The ECES did their part, making it cool when it was hot, dry when it was wet, light when it was dark and providing shower water for you to clean yourself with at the end of a long workday.

But the supplies that ECES need to do all of their work had to get here somehow. Much of it arrived by air, which takes us back to the 777th, (the Dragons), out front, bringing in equipment needed to get the job done.

Our team of squadrons, riding as a pack, was supported in magnificent fashion by the group staff support team of command post, contracting, chaplains, safety, finance, PERSCO, and anti-terrorism. Recording and reporting our progress and successes was the tremendous public affairs office of one.

Just as the Tour de France stages exposes weaknesses in teams, the AEF does the same for expeditionary operations. Our ride proved that we had a superior team:

As I expected, we shot out of the start, driving hard. I expected this enthusiasm to taper off as we got into the rotation but soon recognized the attitude and enthusiasm that characterized the work being done here.

I started to have an inclination that this was an extra special group and an extra special rotation. As October rolled around my suspicion was confirmed.

Every squadron came together to host a group of local Sheiks on base for a luncheon celebrating one of the most important days each year in their local culture. The 407th AEG hosted almost 20 Sheiks for an Eid al-Fitr luncheon prompted by the inspiration of Chaplain Vu and Mr. Sam Abdullah, a DoD linguist working with the security forces squadron.

Just as the Tour de France stages exposes weaknesses in teams, the AEF does the same for expeditionary operations. Our ride proved that we had a superior team



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Members of Team Ali at the end of rotation commander's call.

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The luncheon wasn't only a successful event; it marked a new day in the region and the gelling of the 407th. We won the yellow jersey of champions early in the race and didn't give it up for the remainder of the battle. It seemed that almost every idea turned into another success story for the team. We were unstoppable.

Along the way the ECES team had a top finish in softball and Comm won it all in flag football; security forces had a neighborhood watch program of Iraqi nationals calling us for help; contracting took an education package to the locals to teach them about the bidding process, which boosted the local economy as local people won contracts to do work or provide services for the base; ELRS tackled a chaotic jumble of spare parts, and vehicle maintenance put vehicles back on the road that had not run in more than a year!

The EOSS was right there to help transients in dire straits, whether it was the Navy P-3 that departed the runway or the group of F-16s that had held for four hours over Baghdad before diverting here and staying



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Chief Master Sgt. James B. Erwin, 407th ESFS Manager, at the morning session end of rotation commander's call.

"You will soon be leaving, but when you look back on this time, when somebody asks you what you did to support OIF, you can proudly say..."

for the night. The 777th and advisory support team ran a program heralded as the biggest success story in the Iraqi air force.

Services was there with a Christmas tree lighting to kick off the holiday season. They also put together a group of carolers that wowed the Secretary of the Air Force and USAFE commander. And of course, who will forget the two Christmas plays, one from services and one from the chapel?

Throughout it all you've all been truly outstanding: All-stars, each and every one of you.

This group has been the crown jewel of the theater, there's no doubt about it.

We had the top mission effectiveness rate as well as top CFC program; you did it all. We relied on a culture of team work and support for one another. We shared the spot in front of the pack. We shared in the work as smaller teams, leading the overall group to ultimate

victory. Together we now share the spotlight of glory.

Now, as the SECAF and USAFE commander noted about you, let me tell you again how remarkable you are. Your winning spirit inspired them both. You have shown how a team of active, guard, reserve, and civilians could reach heights that were unthinkable last September.

You will soon be leaving, but when you look back on this time, when somebody asks you what you did to support OIF, you can proudly say that you helped build the first Iraqi air force squadron, you helped to provide order in Iraq, and helped locals to come to know what true Americans really are. You passed along the spirit of hope to a nation reborn.

Keep in mind that the American people do support what you've done. You have earned their respect and should be very proud of where you've been and what you've done.

I am proud to have served with you and to have been your commander.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Members of Team Ali at the end of rotation commander's call.

# He brought a band (but could have flown solo)

By Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

Maybe it was Uncle Joe or Aunt Grace. Maybe it was just Dad's old Air Force buddy or Mom's best girlfriend from across state. Everybody seems to have somebody who whizzes into their lives much too infrequently, makes them laugh, has them talking about anything in a matter of seconds, leaves too soon and always leaves them with great memories to talk about.

Gen. William T. "Tom" Hobbins, commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, left Airmen here basking in the afterglow of his energy and asking themselves and others why he had to leave so soon.

There were no tactical rollups, budget debriefs, crisis overviews or security policy workgroups in the schedule. The general, who had been at his new job as USAFE commander a few weeks before embarking on a trip downrange, was here Dec. 27 in the spirit of the holidays and to meet and inspire his USAFE Airmen and anybody else he could get hold of. "Hey, come here," he repeatedly asked the photographers. "I want to meet this guy, this gal; they are all heroes."

USAFE, other Air Force commands, U.S. Army Soldiers, Italian servicemembers — the general didn't hesitate to make the first move when it came to introductions; his smile and outstretched hand working together, sending a message loud and clear: "Hey, come here: I'm proud of what you're doing and want to tell you that face to face."

Once he arrived at each location, there was no doubt who was in control: escorts could step aside and relax.

At dinner with a group of Airmen, the general made time for everyone — sitting with an Airman or two, chatting until they all shared a smile, and then moving down a few chairs and starting up again as if revisiting old friends.

Putting people at ease almost immediately, he quickly and deliberately searched for problems, peeves and possibilities for improvement in his command. "I'm not telling you that everything you don't like is a problem I'm going to solve," he said. "But I'll know about them."

"I've never met a 'four-star' before," said Staff Sgt. Caroline Parker from the 407th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron and deployed from Ramstein Air Base, Germany. "I can't believe how friendly and nice he is. I can't wait to get back to Ramstein to work for him."

Sergeant Parker also enjoyed her acting debut



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Gen. William T. "Tom" Hobbins stands among more than two dozen U.S. Air Forces in Europe Airmen deployed to Ali Base who joined him in the filming of an American Forces Network television spot here Dec. 27.

during the general's visit. She and about two dozen fellow USAFE Airmen joined General Hobbins while taping an American Forces Network television spot that highlights the accomplishments of Ali Base Airmen.

Shot on location behind the 407th EOSS Area Control Center, which controls 50,000 square miles of airspace in southern Iraq, the spot ends with the cast enthusiastically joining the general as they affirm in unison: "Flying, Fighting, Winning!"

And win was what the general's band accomplished, too.

Introduced by General Hobbins as an extension of his desire to spread inspiration and gratitude, the USAFE band Touch and Go had the crowd bebopping and swinging by the end of their afternoon performance. Of course, the general joined the groove section center stage, dancing with more than two dozen Airmen, swinging around and giving somebody else a twist or two.

In just six short hours, General Hobbins introduced himself to the men and women who had a different commander when they deployed here. He left each one of the USAFE Airmen with the realization that he's looking forward to their return and is proud of what they've accomplished.

He probably inspired a lot of Airmen to move USAFE to the top of their dream sheets.

# Nurturing the future, grooming Airmen for success

By Chief Master Sgt. James B. Erwin

407th Expeditionary Security Forces manager

What does taking care of your troops mean to you? Does it mean giving in to every want, concern or need?

To me, it means to give the troop everything he or she needs to be successful. After all, they are the Airmen who will replace today's leaders, and we owe it to them to make sure they are prepared.

Troops need education, discipline, opportunities and role models.

Education is important to our young and upcoming Airmen. In some ways, they are already smarter than us. Don't believe me? Grab a young Airman and a VCR, IPOD and computer and find out who gets at least two out of three working first. But in all seriousness, they need to be educated. They need to be competent and confident in their duties and the life-style of the Air Force. As a rule of thumb, the philosophy I have been brought up with is to get qualified and/or certified on your duties first and then knock out your career development courses. These simple actions make new Airmen a valuable member of the team—a member who can be relied on to complete any task or assignment they are given.

Challenge Airmen with the opportunity of off-duty education after they are duty-qualified and have proven themselves competent. This will not only benefit the Air Force but will make the Airman more productive because they are doing something for themselves. With formal education, their thinking becomes

clearer and their ability to communicate is enhanced, often times reducing the work load of the supervisor, and I don't mean *do the supervisor's work*. Even if they make a career out of the Air Force, at some point they will need to close that chapter in their life and walk into the civilian world. What a great feeling it is to know you've helped them along the way.

As important as education is, troops also need discipline. Of course, when most people hear the word discipline they immediately think of the old sergeant chewing out a troop or Airman Smith standing in front of the commander's desk receiving some form of administrative action. Unfortunately, there are times when both these things are necessary, and these actions aren't taken lightly. But, often times these actions can be avoided if supervisors at the lower level are actively engaged with their troops and are encouraging conduct that warrants rewards instead of punishment.

The side of discipline that goes unnoticed is the reinforcement or reward side. It doesn't take a lot of time to give a deserving Airman a pat on the back, type a quick thank you note or letter of appreciation, or just to say thanks for a job well done in front of their peers and supervisors. Little things, such as these, are money in the bank for the leader who recognizes the individual's efforts and sets a marvelous example for the Air Force. This is not to say individuals should be constantly



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Chief Master Sgt. James B. Erwin

recognized for merely doing their job, but it may offer a supervisor the opportunity to encourage a troop to take that extra step.

As Airmen grow they need opportunities to enhance the skills they have learned. They need to be allowed to stumble, but not fall.

Some experiences are best learned from failure and serve as a test of character. This is a fine line that supervisors need to monitor. Supervisors do not necessarily have to be right over the shoulder, but close enough to keep an eye on things and step in if things start to go too far off course or situations start moving too fast for the troop.

Continued next page:

**LEADERSHIP**



# From the CPIC: Briefs off the wire from the Combined Press Information Center

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** –Iraqi Police coordinated with Coalition Forces to foil two terrorist attempts to use vehicle-carried improvised explosive devices against Iraqi citizens Jan 2.

Task Force Baghdad Soldiers detained six known terrorists during a cordon and search in southern Baghdad Jan. 2.

**TIKRIT, Iraq** – Soldiers from Task Force Band of Brothers seized four weapons caches and detained 11 suspected terrorists Jan. 4 in northern Iraq. Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team, conducting a patrol near Hawija, detained eight suspects and destroyed a large collection of weapons and explosives Jan. 4.

Tips from concerned citizens led to the discovery of two small weapons caches over the past several days in northern Iraq.

Soldiers from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team seized a mortar round and three detonating fuses after a local civilian led them to a cache in Mosul Monday afternoon.

Tips from local residents led to the discovery and disarming of four IEDs and the capture of five suspected terrorists Jan.1.

Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers captured 23 suspected terrorists who were the targets of three raids Dec. 30 and Dec. 31 in northern Iraq.

Troops from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division crushed a ‘drive-by’ attack, killing two terrorists and recovering a large amount of weapons on Dec. 28 near Ad Dawr. A civilian vehicle approached the Soldiers’ patrol and began to fire at the troops with AK-47s. The Soldiers returned fire, killing both attackers and disabling the vehicle.

**DIWANIYAH PROVINCE, Iraq** — MNDCCS and Iraqi Soldiers seized illegal weapon caches in Diwaniyah and Wasit provinces. During operations six suspicious men were detained and the following weapons and munitions were found: 75 assorted mines, 40 artillery and mortar rounds, seven RPG launchers with 69 rounds, 50 hand grenades, sniper rifles, machine guns and explosive material.

**CAMP BLUE DIAMOND, AR RAMADI, Iraq** – U.S. Marines discovered more than ten metric tons of munitions hidden at 72 cache sites 39 km south of Fallujah during the week-long Operation Green Trident. First Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 8 began the operation last week near the village of Al Latifiyah to search suspected locations for hidden weapon caches. More than 1,000 artillery and mortar rounds were unearthed along with scores of rocket propelled grenades and hand grenades. Most of the caches were shallowly buried along the banks of the Euphrates River and surrounding area.

## LEADERSHIP from previous page

Experience is the best teacher; troops learn what to do and what not to do. For the most part, if it’s not a safety violation, something prohibited by a regulation or instruction and it’s not going to get expensive (monetary or human life) give them an opportunity to succeed. Even if they fail, they should have learned something that makes them a little smarter and little bit more prepared for the next time. No leader or supervisor has gotten where they are by being perfect, it isn’t humanly possible.

Education, discipline and opportunities are all important, but to make sure an Airman understands the path, they need a map. They need role models. Often the role model is the immediate supervisor or trainer, but this is only the tip of the

iceberg. Granted, supervisors may spend more time with the individual team member, but anyone who has more rank or time in the service automatically becomes a role model, and that’s not always the best thing.

Positive role models are vital not only for the Air Force to complete it’s mission but to set the tone of what is expected from troops as they grow into the Air Force family. Let’s start with every ones favorite, the uniform police. Can you take someone seriously when they chew an Airman out for wearing a gold chain or mirrored sunglasses, but is themselves wearing a uniform that looks like it has been slept in, has coffee stains on the blouse and has his hands in his pockets?

Supervisors and leaders need to set a positive example because the higher we move up the chain

of command the more we are looked at.

USAFE Command Chief Master Sgt. Gary Coleman told a group of new chief master sergeant selects, “Welcome to the top one percent, you are now living in a fish bowl. People will be watching you just to see what you do, they don’t mean too but they do. Because of the stripes you wear you are the ‘know all’ of everything in the Air Force, and what you say and do will be considered gospel to some.”

In a nut shell, there are good role models and bad ones; both can be positive learning experiences for the new Airman. From the bad role models they learn what not do, and from the good ones they learn to do what is right.

So, what does taking care of your troops mean to you?

# Give and take, teach and learn: building an Iraqi air force

Story and photos by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

**REALITY** is often at odds with preconceptions or expectations when Airmen deploy. This difference can be extreme when the mission is to provide military training to a recent adversary.

But several Airmen near the end of six month deployments as advisory support team instructors here say they would rather stay deployed than go home after their experiences here. During their deployment they've had a chance to directly help shape the future of the world, learn about and gain respect for a different culture, meet men they now call brothers, and solidify their instinctive belief that the United States Air Force is the greatest in the world.

"It wasn't like I was on the fence before I came, I volunteered to do this," said Tech. Sgt. John Furber, deployed from the 463rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark. "But now I know I've been part of something really big. I have a stake in it now; I know [the Iraqi air force men] and have a lot of respect for what they're doing."

The Iraqi air force airmen live and work with their American counterparts here. The tent city at Ali Base has no walls or concertina wire separating Coalition partners (or Iraqi's from them). Everybody lives together, shares the fitness center, laundry, library, recreational centers and dining facility. The men of the Iraqi air force share family photos, important events in their lives and perspectives on the past and hopes for the future with U.S. Airmen.

Centered on the stand up of a self-reliant Iraqi airlift squadron, the mission here is one of rebuilding fences and is focused on the future. The only attention given to the past seems to be an appreciation for the toppling of Saddam Hussein.

"I'm taking away a sense that we've become part of the same family," said Tech. Sgt. Mike Garrison, deployed from the 314th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Little Rock. "These men are no different from us. Americans fight and die for their country and these guys did the same thing. They love their families and their country, and are glad we got rid of Saddam [Hussein]. We are brothers."

This new relationship between the Iraqi's and the Americans has come a long way during the past year.

One of the Iraqi air force maintainers was stationed here at Ali Base during Gulf War 1. He saw his commander get killed during the first night of Shock and Awe. Today the maintainer is learning to repair the C-130Es gifted to the Iraqi air force by the United



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Redeployment is bittersweet for advisory support team instructors assigned to the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here. Leaving this week are (from left): Tech. Sgts. John Furber, Mike Garrison, David Cole; Master Sgt. Matthew Chastain and Senior Master Sgt. George Godsey.

States in January 2005.

The advisory support team instructors are assigned to the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here; the Iraqi air force airmen belong to Squadron 23 (Transport), which stood up Jan. 14, 2005. The relationship between the squadrons was labeled last month as "the greatest training success story in the Iraqi air force," by Maj. Gen. Allen Peck, deputy combined forces air component commander, who accompanied Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne on a visit to the base.

"We've come a long way," said Senior Master Sgt. George Godsey, also deployed from the 463rd, Little Rock, part of a group leaving for home this week.

"When [group two] got here the training of the new

## 777 AST

from previous page

Iraqi air force was well under way. We were able to kick things into the next gear, take [the Iraqi maintainers] to another level," said Sergeant Godsey. "Now success is up to them. We've given them the tools to make it, but it's up to them to make it or break it."

Squadron 23 (Transport) is scheduled to move to their permanent home at New Al Muthana Air Base, Baghdad International Airport, within the next few weeks. And although the squadron will not be self-reliant when they get to their new home, each day brings them closer.

Language barriers seem to be the only remaining stumbling block, said Sergeant Garrison. "The [maintenance reference materials] are all in English, but other than that problem these guys are running at full speed. They've made huge strides; they know the airframe and know the systems."

English instruction, which is temporarily on hold while the squadron relocates, will continue when Squadron 23 (Transport) arrives at New Al Muthana said Maj. Jed McCray, 777th EAS AST maintenance flight commander, deployed from Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

The major, who will also redeploy

in the next few weeks, is also taking away just as much, if not more, than he brought with him to the training mission. Most importantly, Major McCray said he's developed a greater respect for what the United States is trying to do in Iraq and it's part in the GWOT; an enhanced appreciation and respect for those who have to make the top level decisions; a true appreciation for the Iraqi people; and a solid belief in Air Force institutions and standards.

"Many of these [Iraqi] men are doing this for their country," Major McCray said. "They give up a lot being away from their families, because for most Iraqis, family is everything.

"And they still can't wear [their Iraqi air force] insignia on their chest or tell their neighbors that they're leaving for duty with the air force."

Iraqi air force members and their families are targets for enemy retribution and therefore protect their identities closely.

The ability of the Air Force to train the Iraqis is due to the standards and programs within the U.S. system, said Major McCray.

"Our training programs, empowerment of the noncommissioned officer ranks and strong discipline standards have been highlighted by this experience.

We've showed the world that our model is the right one," Major McCray said.

These standards and the Air Force way of doing business will continue to be taught until the Iraqi air force is self-sufficient. It isn't an event found on a timeline, rather, the point when the United States has done everything necessary to help

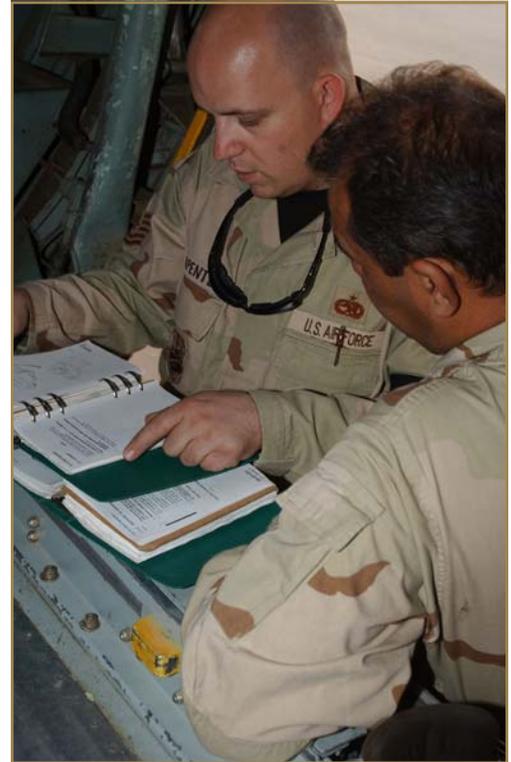


Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Tech. Sgt. John Carpenter, deployed from the 374th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Yokota Air Base, Japan, works with an Iraqi maintainer on an inspection checklist.

Iraq defend its sovereign skies and fly their own missions toward that end.

Tech. Sgt. Charles Francks, deployed from the 86th Maintenance Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, GE, is one of the recently arrived replacement AST instructors who hopes to take the Iraqi air force closer to the finish line.

"I really believe we need to train the Iraqi air force properly— to make sure they are a capable force. I think what we're doing here today will ensure that the Iraqi Air Force can secure their freedom in the future," said Sergeant Francks. "And I really wanted to be a part of that."

"The ultimate achievement will be the day I see one of these Iraqi air crews out with us flying cargo into someplace together. I really think that will happen, and as AST instructors we're proud to have been a part of that," said Sergeant Garrison.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean

Tech. Sgt. Mark Norris, deployed from the 314th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., oversees an Iraqi air force maintainer inspecting systems of an Iraqi C-130E.

# The origin of the Magi

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joseph Vu

407th Air Expeditionary Group chaplain

Once had a chance to visit Northern Iraq. While there, many Kurdish Christians talked to me about the Bible and Christian history, often times asking rhetorically: “Do you know that one of the Magi who visited Christ at His birth was a Kurd?”

I find it an interesting question to consider.

The only direct mentioning of the Magi visiting the infant Jesus in the Bible was in chapter 2 of Matthew’s gospel. It’s written: “When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage...’” The key words are “Magi from the East,” but Matthew did not state the number of visitors, their names, status or origins. This is where the speculation and my search begin.

First, the remotest connection that might have associated the Magi with Iraq was around 586 BCE at the time of Daniel. It was Daniel who held the office of “Rab-mag,” or chief among the Magi of Nebuchadnezzar’s court during the Jewish exile to Babylon. Daniel’s tomb is located in present day Kirkuk, Iraq.

The word Magi, (plural of magus), in the New Testament is derived from the Greek word magoi. The King James Version translated it as “Wise Men” and the Catholic Bible called them “Astrologers.” They were scholars and scientists based on the world of knowledge at the time. They were not magicians or sorcerers, as this word is also used to describe such people who practice “dark” science (Acts 8:9; 13:6,8).

Second, the origins of the Magi were only mentioned in general

terms - from the East. This means anywhere in the eastern world from Jerusalem. Could Iraq be considered in this light?

To unveil their mysterious origins the Bible offered three hints: (a) Show it from your temple on behalf of Jerusalem, that kings may bring you tribute (Psalm 68:30); (b) May the kings of Tarshish and the islands bring tribute, the kings of Arabia and Seba offer gifts...(Psalm 72:10-15); and (c) Rise up in splendor! Your light has come; the glory of the Lord shines upon you... Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian and Ephah; All from Sheba shall come bearing gold and frankincense, and proclaiming the praises of the LORD (Isaiah 60:1-6).

These references however did not prove the exact origins of the Magi.

Several countries had claimed the Magi to be theirs, among them: Ethiopia, Persia, Arabia, and Iraq.

The Ethiopian Christians named the Magi *Hor*, *Basanater*, and *Karsudan* but did not have many details to support their claim.

The Arabic origin of the Magi probably came from the general knowledge that gold, frankincense and myrrh were common trading items in Arabia.

The Magi’s Persian origin is supported by two facts: (1) the account of Marco Polo in his book “*The Travels: The Description of the World*” written in 1289. Chapter 11 of this book gives tantalizing details of the Magi in their visit to Bethlehem; (2) the mosaic inside the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem depicted the scene of the Magi in Persian attires visiting the Christ Child. This image saved the church from destruction when the Persians ransacked the Holy Land Churches in 614 and the Persian tradition



Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joseph Vu

gave names of the Magi as *Larvandad*, *Hormisdas* and *Gushnasaph*.

The Kurdish claim of the Magi’s origin is supported by four pieces of evidence:

First, John Hildesheim in the *Historia Trium Regum (History of the Three Kings)* published in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. The book mentioned one of the three Magi was the king of Chaldea with their relics are kept in the Cathedral of Cologne (Köln), Germany since 1164. We are in Ur, the heart of Chaldea and in Iraq.

Second, according to a Chaldean legend, the Magi came from Edessa. During the time of the birth of Christ, Edessa was a remnant of former Assyrian empire, an independent buffer state between the Roman and Persian empires and was in Iraq.

Third, the Magi’s names were popularly known as Melchior, Gaspar and Balthazar. The name Balthazar is a composition of *Belsah-uzur*, an Assyrian-Babylonian word means “God protects the king” and it has the closest association with Iraq.

Lastly, the earlier quote from Isaiah mentioned “*Caravans of camels shall fill you, dromedaries from Midian...*” Median was the land of the Medes, also in Iraq.

Since Christian Kurds are Chaldeans and the land they inhabit was in Median, their claim that one of the Magi came from Iraq has some credible supports.

# December 407th Air Expeditionary Group Promotion and Awards Ceremony

*To airman first class:*

**Anthony J. Perry**, 777th EAS

**Mathew Saunders**, ELRS

**Sean C. Svette**, ESFS

*To senior airman:*

**Lasonja Bryant**, ELRS

**Angela H. Garza**, ESFS

**William J. Gilmer**, 777th EAS

**Acacia M. Oudinot**, EOSS

**Randolph Parker Jr.**, ECES

**Ramon Rodriguez**, ECES

**Reagan C. Ruiz**, ECES

**Sergio Francisco Santos**, ECS

**Christopher A. Schwegler**, ESFS

**Nicholas Vincent**, ESFS

*To staff sergeant:*

**Garry S. Chickery**, ESFS

**Alyson S. Church**, EOSS

**Daniel C. Cohen**, ELRS

**James R. Diden**, ELRS

**Luke R. Gardiner**, ESFS

**David B. Grogan**, ECES

**Golangia A. Jenkins II**, ECES

**Jonathan A. Williams**, EOSS

*To technical sergeant:*

**Jason L. Brown**, ELRS

**David J. Isaacs**, ECS

**Alexander M. D. Jones**, ECES

**Jonathan C. Sarabia**, ESFS

**Richard A. Thorpe**, EADS

**Christopher D. Wilson**, ECES

*To master sergeant:*

**Kevin M. Alexander**, ECS

*Airman of the month:*

Senior Airman **Acacia M. Oudinot**, EOSS

*Noncommissioned officer of the month:*

Staff Sgt. **Caroline N. Parker**, EOSS

*Noncommissioned officer of the month:*

Master Sgt. **Keith L. Rogers**, ECS

*Company grade officer of the month:*

Capt. **Raymond H. Spohr**, ECS

*Sharp Sabre Team:*

**Communications Infrastructure Installation Team**, ECS

Master Sgt. **Thomas J. Decell**; Tech.

Sgt. **Carl E. Beaty**; Staff Sgts.

**Randy L. Amsler Jr.**, Nolan K.

**Brown**, Michael A. Goethe Jr.,

**Bradley M. Hendrix**, David J.

**Isaacs**, Paul W. Mattke, Thomas S.

**McKeon**, Fernando L. Perez,

**Jesse N. Ransom**, Gary L. Sayre,

**Richard O. Trimble**; Senior Airmen

**Andrew J. Coburn**, Roshad L.

**Mays**, Jerod A. Paccassi, Michael

**S. Woods**; Mr. Larry Chavis



Senior Airman **Acacia M. Oudinot**



Staff Sgt. **Caroline N. Parker**



Master Sgt. **Keith L. Rogers**



Capt. **Raymond H. Spohr**



**Communications Infrastructure Installation Team**



Airman 1st Class **Anthony J. Perry**



Airman 1st Class **Mathew Saunders**



Airman 1st Class **Sean C. Svette**



Senior Airman **Angela H. Garza**



Senior Airman **William J. Gilmer**



Senior Airman **Lasonja Bryant**



Senior Airman **Randolph Parker Jr.**



Senior Airman **Ramon Rodriguez**



Senior Airman **Acacia M. Oudinot**



Senior Airman **Sergio F. Santos**



Senior Airman  
**Christopher A. Schwegler**



Senior Airman **Reagan C. Ruiz**



Senior Airman **Nicholas Vincent**



Staff Sgt. **Garry S. Chickery**



Staff Sgt. **Daniel C. Cohen**



Staff Sgt. **James R. Diden**



Staff Sgt. **Golangia A. Jenkins II**



Staff Sgt. **Luke R. Gardiner**



Staff Sgt. **Jonathan A. Williams**



Tech. Sgt. **David J. Isaacs**



Tech. Sgt. **Jason L. Brown**



Tech. Sgt. **Alexander M. D. Jones**



Tech. Sgt. **Richard A. Thorpe**



Tech. Sgt. **Jonathan C. Sarabia**



Tech. Sgt. **Christopher D. Wilson**



Master Sgt. **Kevin M. Alexander**

## Identify This



### Do you know what this is?

If you can identify the object, e-mail the paper at [Ali.Times@tlab.centaf.af.mil](mailto:Ali.Times@tlab.centaf.af.mil) with "Identify This" in the subject block by 3 p.m. Thursday Jan. 12.

All correct entries will be placed in a box and three winners will be randomly selected at Combat Bingo (at the Big Top) at 7:30 p.m., Friday Jan. 13.

Participants do not have to attend bingo to win.

Winners will receive a complimentary T-shirt or coin from the 407th Expeditionary Services Squadron. The winners selected from those correctly identifying the center assembly on a HMMWV rear wheel pictured in the Dec. 23 *Ali Times* are: Staff Sgts. **Stephen Cross** (ESFS), **Tethon Hunting** (ECES) and Senior Airman **Jacob Mendow** (ESFS).



**Maj. Nicole Dye (left) and Staff Sgt. Pilar McCullough at their joint Birthday Bash Jan. 2.**

*Photo by Tech. Sgt. Paul Dean*

## 407th AEG

## Warrior of the Week



*Photo by Senior Airman Jennifer Haas*

### Tech. Sgt. Contina Richardson

#### Unit:

407th Expeditionary Communications Squadron

#### Duty title:

Commander's administration

#### Home station:

4th Communications Squadron, Seymour Johnson AFB, N.C.

#### Why other warriors say she's a warrior:

"Unit Combined Federal Campaign representative who helped Ali Base raise more than \$50K, which was number 1 in CENTAF. Helped review and approve 50 base file plans and trained 13 records custodians. Also, consistently helped the post office process more than 34K pounds of mail for more than 8K Air Force and Army troops."

—Master Sgt. Paula Miller,  
section chief/information management

#### Most memorable Air Force experience:

"Walking through the airport on the way to this deployment and being stopped by perfect strangers who just wanted to thank us for our service to this country."

#### Family:

"Husband, Daniel; daughter, Erika; son, Devon."

#### Hobbies:

"Singing and spending time with family and friends."

*AEF 7/8— Doing things right the first time, every time!*

# Serenity in the sand

## faith-based services schedule

**W**orship is at the 407th Air Expeditionary Group **Oasis of Peace** chapel, unless otherwise noted. The *Oasis* is open 24 hours a day for prayer and reflection. For details on worship opportunities, or directions to worship locations, please call 445-2006.

### FRIDAY

1 p.m., Muslim prayer/ service: (temporarily unav.)  
 6 p.m., Weekday Mass: Oasis  
 6:30 p.m., Jewish Service: Army Religious Activities Center (ARAC)  
 7 p.m., Bible Study: ARAC  
 7:30 p.m., Gospel choir rehearsal: Army Post Chapel (APC)  
 8 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous: ARAC annex

### SATURDAY

5:30 p.m., Catholic Confession: Oasis Office  
 6 p.m., Catholic Vigil Mass: Oasis  
 7 p.m., Kick the Camel (quit smoking) club: ARAC

### SUNDAY

7:30 a.m., Catholic Confession: Oasis Office; Traditional Protestant Service: APC  
 8 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass: Oasis; Church of Christ Service: ARAC  
 8:30 a.m., Contemporary Protestant Service: Sapper Chapel; Sunday School: APC  
 9:30 a.m., Traditional Protestant Service: Oasis  
 10 a.m., Contemporary Protestant Service: APC; , Latter Day Saints Service: ARAC  
 10:30 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass: Camp Cedar  
 1 p.m., Gospel Service: APC  
 7 p.m., Contemporary Worship Service: Oasis

### SUNDAY (CONTINUED)

7:30 p.m., Contemporary Christian Service: Sapper Chapel  
 8 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous: ARAC

### MONDAY

6 p.m., Weekday Mass: Oasis  
 7 p.m., Protestant Bible Study: Sapper Chapel  
 7:30 p.m., Discipleship Bible study/fellowship: Oasis

### TUESDAY

Noon, Alcoholics Anonymas: ARAC Annex  
 6 p.m., Weekday Mass: Oasis  
 8 p.m., Catholic Study: Oasis Annex; Combat Bible Study: ARAC

### WEDNESDAY

6 p.m., Weekday Mass: Oasis  
 7 p.m., Spanish Bible Study: ARAC; Midweek Service Discussion: APC  
 7:30 p.m., Protestant Evening Service: APC; Mens Bible Study: APC  
 8 p.m., Godly Marriage and Relationships: Oasis Annex

### THURSDAY

6 p.m., Weekday Mass: Oasis  
 6:30 p.m., Ladies Bible Study: ARAC  
 7 p.m., Latter Day Saints Study: ARAC  
 7:30 p.m., Workmans' Fellowship: RAC; A Man and His World Bible Study: Oasis

# CRICKET MOVIE THEATER

## at the Hot Spot

Today's times and movie descriptions for the week

**Goal!** (2005), 1 a.m., 1 p.m., *Kun Becker, Alessandro Nivola*, drama/sport  
**The Gospel** (2005), 3 a.m., 3 p.m., *Boris Kodjoe, Idris Elba*, drama/music  
**Deuce Bigalo, Euro Gigolo** (2005), 5 a.m., 5 p.m., *Rob Schneider, Eddie Griffin*, comedy  
**Chicken Little** (2005), 7 a.m., 7 p.m., *Zach Braff, Gary Marshall*, animation/action  
**Hitch** (2005), 9 a.m., 9 p.m., *Will Smith, Eve Mendes*, comedy/romance  
**King Arthur** (2004), 11 a.m., 11 p.m., *Clive Owen, Ivan Gruffud*, action/adventure  
**History of Violence** (2005), *Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello*, crime/drama: Big Top, Friday 9 p.m.  
**Aeon Flux** (2005), *Charlize Theron, Marton Csokas*, action/adventure: Big Top, Sunday 2 p.m.  
**Serenity** (2005), *Nathan Fillion, Gina Torres*, action/adventure: Big Top, Sunday 4 p.m.

### Saturday

History of Violence ..... 1 a.m.  
 Goal! ..... 3 a.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 5 a.m.  
 Euro Gigolo ..... 7 a.m.  
 Chicken Little ..... 9 a.m.  
 Hitch ..... 11 a.m.  
 King Arthur ..... 1 p.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 3 p.m.  
 Goal! ..... 5 p.m.  
 Aeon Flux ..... 7 p.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 9 p.m.  
 Serenity ..... 11 p.m.

### Sunday

Goal! ..... 1 a.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 3 a.m.  
 Euro Gigolo ..... 5 a.m.  
 Chicken Little ..... 7 a.m.  
 Hitch ..... 9 a.m.  
 King Arthur ..... 11 a.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 1 p.m.  
 Goal! ..... 3 p.m.  
 Aeon Flux ..... 5 p.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 7 p.m.  
 Serenity ..... 9 p.m.  
 History of Violence ... 11 p.m.

### Monday

The Gospel ..... 1 a.m.  
 Euro Gigolo ..... 3 a.m.  
 Chicken Little ..... 5 a.m.  
 Hitch ..... 7 a.m.  
 King Arthur ..... 9 a.m.  
 History of Violence ... 11 a.m.  
 Goal! ..... 1 p.m.  
 Aeon Flux ..... 3 p.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 5 p.m.  
 Serenity ..... 7 p.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 9 p.m.  
 Goal! ..... 11 p.m.

### Tuesday

Euro Gigolo ..... 1 a.m.  
 Chicken Little ..... 3 a.m.  
 Hitch ..... 5 a.m.  
 King Arthur ..... 7 a.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 9 a.m.  
 Goal! ..... 11 a.m.  
 Aeon Flux ..... 1 p.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 3 p.m.  
 Serenity ..... 5 p.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 7 p.m.  
 Goal! ..... 9 p.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 11 p.m.

### Wednesday

Chicken Little ..... 1 a.m.  
 Hitch ..... 3 a.m.  
 King Arthur ..... 5 a.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 7 a.m.  
 Goal! ..... 9 a.m.  
 Aeon Flux ..... 11 a.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 1 p.m.  
 Serenity ..... 3 p.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 5 p.m.  
 Goal! ..... 7 p.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 9 p.m.  
 Euro Gigolo ..... 11 p.m.

### Thursday

Hitch ..... 1 a.m.  
 King Arthur ..... 3 a.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 5 a.m.  
 Goal! ..... 7 a.m.  
 Aeon Flux ..... 9 a.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 11 a.m.  
 Serenity ..... 1 p.m.  
 History of Violence ..... 3 p.m.  
 Goal! ..... 5 p.m.  
 The Gospel ..... 7 p.m.  
 Euro Gigolo ..... 9 p.m.  
 Chicken Little ..... 11 p.m.

Movie times are subject to change.



# Bedrock and beyond...

## activities to keep you fit, happy and hungry for more

### Today

4:45 p.m., **5K Run:** Fire Dept. ECP  
 5 p.m., **Tang Soo Do:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 6:30 p.m., **Spin:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 7 p.m., **Dominoes:** ACC  
 7:30 p.m., **Step Aerobics:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 7:30 p.m., **Bingo:** Big Top  
 8 p.m., **Hip Hop Night:** Sprung Cneter  
 8 p.m., **Step Aerobics:** HOP  
 9 p.m., **"History of Violence,"** (2005); *Viggo Mortensen, Maria Bello*, crime/drama, Big Top

### Saturday

2:30 p.m., **Yoga:** Muscle Beach (DVD)  
 5:30 p.m., **Absolute Abs:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 7 p.m., **John Madden TNYs:** ACC  
 8:30 p.m., **Absolute Abs:** Muscle Beach (I)

### Sunday

noon, **Tae Kwon Do:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 1 p.m., **3 Point Shootout:** Bedrock Courts  
 2:30 p.m., **Pilates:** Muscle Beach (DVD)  
 5 p.m., **Tae Kwon Do:** HOP  
 7 p.m., **Karaoke:** Big Top

### Monday

5 p.m., **Tang Soo Do:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 6:30 p.m., **Spin:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 7 p.m., **Ping Pong:** ACC  
 7:30 p.m., **Step Aerobics:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 8 p.m., **Ping Pong:** Big Top  
 8 p.m., **Step Aerobics:** HOP

### Tuesday

2:30 p.m., **Yoga:** Muscle Beach (DVD)  
 5 p.m., **Quarterback Challenge:** Bedrock Courts  
 5:30 p.m., **Absolute Abs:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 7 p.m., **Chess:** ACC  
 7:30 p.m., **Tae Kwon Do:** HOP  
 8 p.m., **8-Ball:** Big Top  
 8:30 p.m., **Salsa:** HOP  
 8:30 p.m., **Absolute Abs:** Muscle Beach (I)

### Wednesday

10 a.m., **Top 3:** Chapel Annex  
 5:30 p.m., **Focus 5-6:** Chapel Annex  
 6:30 p.m., **First Four:** Chapel Annex

6:30 p.m., **Spin:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 7 p.m., **Jeopardy:** Big Top  
 7 p.m., **Spades TNY:** ACC  
 7:30 p.m., **Step Aerobics:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 8 p.m., **Step Aerobics:** HOP

### Thursday

9:30 a.m., **Tae Kwon Do:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 5:30 p.m., **Absolute Abs:** Muscle Beach (I)  
 6 p.m., **Cardio mix:** HOP  
 7 p.m., **8-Ball:** ACC  
 7:30 p.m., **Tae Kwon Do:** HOP  
 8:30 p.m., **Salsa:** HOP  
 8 p.m., **Texas Hold 'em:** Big Top  
 8:30 p.m., **Absolute Abs:** Muscle Beach (I)

(I)—Instructor  
 TNY—Tournament  
 HOP—House of Pain, Army Fitness Center  
 ACC—Army Community Center

## Squadron Olympics, Saturday Jan. 7

9 a.m., ..... Horseshoe Tournament,  
 5-Man Basketball Tournament  
 9:30 a.m. .... 3-Legged Race  
 10 a.m., ..... Tug-of-War  
 11 a.m., ..... Trivia Competition  
 noon, ..... Volleyball Tournament,  
 Dodge Ball Tournament  
 2 p.m., ..... 3 Point Shoot Out  
 2:30 p.m., .. 3K Run and Darts Tournament  
 3 p.m. .... Quarterback Challenge  
 3:30 p.m., Muscle Man and Muscle Woman  
 Competition  
 4 p.m., ..... Jump Rope Competition  
 5 p.m. .... Awards Ceremony at the new pavilion

**Carly Goodwin, (country music),  
 Sunday Jan. 8,  
 8 p.m.,  
 Big Top!**