

Healthwatch: A special medical feature.
Page 3



Visit MWR acting class!
Page 7



Q-West Academy trains Iraqi NCOs.
Page 5



LIFELINER WEST

"If you want it done, call the 101!"

Volume 2, No. 9 Deployment Edition

Q-WEST BASE COMPLEX, IRAQ

February 15, 2006

Top of their class: IA NCOs graduate PLDC



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Iraqi army soldiers climb to the top of a knotted rope during the obstacle course portion of the leadership class Jan. 31.

By Sgt. Rachel A. Brune
Editor

The newest class of the next generation of Iraqi noncommissioned officers graduated Feb. 10 from the Q-West NCO Academy Iraqi army Primary Leadership and Development Course here.

"Iraq has a great future, and it's men like you who will make it a reality," said Command Sgt. Maj. Stephen D. Blake, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

Gen. Ameen, commander, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Iraqi army, attended the ceremony. He presented gifts to the two Iraqi army cadre and the four honor graduates.

After the speeches and presentations, Sgt. 1st Class Ala, first platoon guide and distinguished honor graduate, led his fellow soldiers in the Iraqi Army NCO Creed.

"I will be courageous and prepared to meet any challenge," read the words of the Creed.

"Many things ... we could not accomplish without our Iraqi brothers," said Sgt. Maj. Walter Murrell, NCO Academy commandant.

After the ceremony, the attendees lingered for soda and snacks.

For more information on the NCO Academy course, visit the feature on Page 5.

The Albanian Connection: 142nd Soldier bridges cultural span

By Sgt. Marshall Thompson
207th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

LSA DIAMONDBACK, Iraq – When a Soldier from Fort Polk, La., arrived in Iraq for a one-year tour, the last thing he expected to find was a second family from a distant country.

Capt. Daniel Chase, the adjutant for the 142nd Corps Support Battalion, was surprised to find himself on the same base as a contingent of Albanians. Chase lived in Albania for two years as a missionary and speaks the language fluently. He even keeps an Albanian flag on his desk.

"I had no expectations of seeing anyone I knew," Chase said. "It was kind of neat to see somebody with whom I could relate. Even though they were from a different country, we'd have the same experiences."

The Albanian military has worked with the

American military since 2000 as peacekeepers in Bosnia.

In 2001, Albanian forces went into Afghanistan and have been in Iraq since 2003. The company has less than 100 soldiers, but U.S. Soldiers appreciate their presence.

"I didn't think there'd be anyone over here but Americans," said Pfc. Kurt Tappe, a paralegal specialist with the 142nd CSB. "It makes me feel like we're not the only ones fighting the war. There are people over here fighting with us."

Tappe said he had no idea Chase spoke Albanian until an Albanian soldier visited the office one day.

"Capt. Chase was talking fluently with him when I came in to ask a question and I was like, 'wow,'" Tappe said.

Chase said he gets some curious glances from

Continued on Page 2



Photo by Sgt. Marshall Thompson

Capt. Daniel Chase, 142nd CSB, introduces an American Soldier to Albanian soldiers.



LIFELINER WEST STAFF

Brigade Commander

Col. James D. Scudieri

Brigade Command Sergeant Major

Command Sgt. Maj.

Stephen D. Blake

Public Affairs Officer

Sgt. 1st Class Lori Simmons

Lifeline West Editor

Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Art & Graphics

Sgt. Patricia Tso

Contributing Writers

James F. Jennings

1st Lt. Michelle Menges

Spc. Amber Moody

Capt. A. Michelle Moore, M.D.

Sgt. Ashly N. Rice

2nd Lt. Craig Russell

2nd Lt. Suzanne Schultz

Capt. William D. Stogner

Sgt. Marshall Thompson

Sgt. 1st Class Bruce Williams

The Lifeline West, Deployment Issue: Vol. 2, No. 9, is

published bimonthly by the 101st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office to disseminate command information throughout all subordinate elements of the brigade and units residing on Q-West Base Complex, and to raise and promote the morale of the troops. • Contents of this publication are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by, the United States government or the Department of the Army. • The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the 101st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office. • Articles and photos of interest to the brigade and its elements are invited and may be submitted to Sgt. Rachel A. Brune, Editor. • To contact the PAO, please call VOIP: 243-5104, or e-mail: rachel.brune@us.army.mil.

The Lifeline West can be viewed online at:

http://www.dvidshub.net

Albanians

Continued from Page 1

U.S. Soldiers when he eats lunch or dinner with the Albanians.

"I've noticed that some American Soldiers will walk by and take a double take," Chase said.

Although many of the Albanian soldiers speak English, they were pleasantly surprised to find someone who speaks their language.

"The first time Capt. Chase was here in my compound, I was impressed by his Albanian language skills because he speaks very well," said Maj. Besnik Sokoli, commander of the Albanian contingent in Iraq.

Chase said that for him, the Albanians were like a second family and "brothers in arms."

"The term 'brothers in arms' means more than fighting alongside another country, but understanding the backgrounds, differences, and struggles our countries have made to be where they are today," Chase said.

Albania and the United States have come a long way in the last two decades to be working together. When Sokoli took command of his first unit in 1988, Albania

was under a communist regime and had no allies, even among the other communist countries. In 1991, Albania started an effort toward democratization. Fifteen years later, Sokoli said it hasn't been easy, but it's been worth it. He's also glad to have allies once again.

"The cooperation we have with the American officers and noncommissioned officers has been on a good level," Sokoli said. "Our operations here are not just for Albanians, they are for Americans, too."

The Albanian company provides base security and a quick reaction force. They also patrol a large section of Mosul as well as operating checkpoints and running security for visiting officials.

Chase said he appreciates what the Albanians do to protect the base and surrounding areas and he's also happy just to speak Albanian with someone.

"To see them here contributing to the war on terror and fighting for the freedom of this country, it's incredible," Chase said. "And having them here has made it a little easier on me."

561st CSB conducts CLP commander certification

By Capt. William D. Stogner

561st Corps Support Battalion

FOB SPEICHER, Iraq - The 561st Corps Support Battalion recently conducted a Combat Logistics Patrol, or CLP, commander certification course here.

The course was designed to test and reinforce the technical and tactical knowledge associated with commanding a CLP. Many facets of leadership and combat expertise were put to the test during the four phases of certification.

The first phase begins with prospective CLP commanders traveling on three separate CLPs, once as a gunner, driver or TC, assistant CLP commander, and the CLP commander. This provides experience in four different roles associated with a CLP.

The second phase is a written and a hands-on test. The written test topics include rules of engagement for the escalation of force, risk assessment, CLP leadership, troop leading procedures and reporting requirements. The test is 20 questions, and candidates are not allowed to use notes.

The third phase is an actual board, where the candidates actually appear before a panel of commanders and first sergeants.

The board is similar to a promotion board; however the questions pertain to leadership, tactics, techniques,



Photo courtesy of 561st Corps Support Battalion

and procedures, as well as hypothetical situations.

The fourth phase is an actual CLP evaluation. All potential CLP commanders must be certified through their respective company commanders while actively leading a CLP. This provides an immediate evaluation of how the candidate may perform as an actual CLP commander when out on the road.

Finally, after all of the phases are successfully completed, and with the endorsement of their company commanders, the candidates become certified CLP commanders!

D-Back maintenance Soldier works closely with Iraqis

By Sgt. Marshall Thompson
207th Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

LSA DIAMONDBACK, Iraq - Most Soldiers in Iraq have little interaction with local Iraqis because of security concerns, but one Soldier from the 872nd Maintenance Company, 142nd Corps Support Battalion, has been able to work with locals on a daily basis.

Staff Sgt. Bart Rindlisbacher, the NCO in charge of the shipping and receiving yard at Logistical Support Area Diamondback, oversees a team of more than a dozen Iraqis who unload and reorganize shipments that come into the yard. He said, talking with them gives him a unique perspective.

"I get more news from them than I do from military sources," Rindlisbacher said about his team. "They're glad

we're here, but they're worried about elections and Saddam's trial."

Rindlisbacher, a Utah Highway Patrol Trooper in the civilian world, has been in Iraq for about six months with the 872nd out of Ogden, Utah. The local Iraqis on his team said that they were happy to work with him.

"We're not friends - we're brothers," said Yousif, a Kurdish resident of Mosul. "He's my big brother."

Yousif was in prison at Abu Ghraib for seven years while Saddam was in power. When asked why, he said: "Because I'm Kurdish."

Most of the men who work with Rindlisbacher are Kurdish, a group that has traditionally been pro-American.

"They're hardly ever negative about anything," Rindlisbacher said about his team. "They're happy now

because they have freedoms they never had before. They're glad it is the way it is now, even as dangerous as it is."

In a war that requires the Army to win the hearts and minds of Iraqis, the 872nd is careful to nurture what goodwill there is.

"The Soldiers here in the 872nd understand the dynamics of the situation we are in," said Chief Warrant Officer (2) Horace Hill, Rindlisbacher's supervisor in Iraq. "They deal with the local nationals with specific care."

Hill added that Rindlisbacher has done an excellent job as a representative of the U.S. Army to Iraqi civilians.

"He cares for his team and works well with them," Hill said.

Rindlisbacher said he loves his job, but will have to give it sometime in March when civilian contractors from Kellogg,



Photo by Sgt. Marshall Thompson

Staff Sgt. Bart Rindlisbacher, 872nd Maintenance Company, works with Khayri, a resident of Mosul who works at the shipping

Brown and Root take over the yard. He said he's not happy to leave such a rewarding job.

Still, Rindlisbacher has plenty to keep him busy as he trains to run a marathon when he's done with the deployment and works with the 872 to recover broken down military vehicles on the

roads of Iraq. He said that getting the vehicles is comparable to his civilian job as a trooper.

Although he said he misses his wife and children back in Utah, he's proud of what he's doing. He even re-enlisted for an indefinite period of time on Jan. 3.

HEALTHWATCH: Diet, Hygiene and Mental Health

NUTRITION: Diet expert helps Q-West Soldiers attain weight goals, make healthy choices

A registered dietitian conducted the second part in a semi-monthly series of individual counseling sessions and classes Feb. 8 and 9 here.

Maj. Polly R. Graham, 3rd Corps Support Command, offered advice and information to help Soldiers on post lose or successfully maintain weight.

Most of the Soldiers attending the individual counseling sessions were there for an initial evaluation as the first step of the Army Weight Control Program, said Capt. A. Michelle Moore, brigade surgeon, 101st Sustainment Brigade.

"A registered dietitian [must] give the initial counseling," said Moore, a Seffner, Fla., native. This requirement is in accordance with Army Regulation 600-9, which governs the Weight Control Program.

In addition to weight management issues, the sessions were open to Soldiers who wish to manage high cholesterol, hypertension or other special dietary needs.

"What I want [the Soldiers] to walk away with is one, two or three goals," said Graham, from Davenport, Ohio.

Graham began each session with a 24-hour diet recall, asking the Soldier to list everything consumed within the past day. She then asked the Soldier to describe his or her level of physical activity.

With this information, using the

new United States Department of Agriculture, or USDA, food guide pyramid and caloric intake recommendations, Graham helped the Soldiers develop their goals.

The food guide pyramid, released by the USDA in 2005, is an update from the old guide Soldiers may have learned in school, which showed food groups stacked one atop the other. The new pyramid displays each food group side by side, with a figure walking up the slope of the figure.

"This is a new way of looking at [the food groups]," said Graham. "They're all equally important."

Physical activity is also important and is represented by the walking figure. The pyramid and other dietary information is available at the USDA Web site, <http://www.mypyramid.gov>.

"Being in Iraq, I don't have a lot of tools to work with," said Graham. During her two days at Q-West, she met with 50 to 60 Soldiers.

Using props and information from the USDA site, she tried to help Soldiers look at their eating and physical activity habits and troubleshoot what might need improvement. In addition to information about the pyramid, the site contains a personal "tracker" to analyze these habits.

Some Soldiers informed Graham that they only ate one meal a day. Instead of helping Soldiers lose weight, as they expected, this eating habit is actually harmful.

"They're putting themselves in a semi-starvation place," said Graham.

The habit slows down the metabolism and starves the brain of the con-



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brunne

Maj. Polly R. Graham, 3rd COSCOM dietitian, points out the importance of activity in a balanced lifestyle.

tinuous glucose feed it needs.

As a solution, Graham encouraged these Soldiers to eat smaller meals more often, while still following the caloric intake guidelines appropriate to their ages, weights and physical activity patterns.

Food was not the only focus of the counseling sessions.

"I try to get people to look fairly hard at what they're drinking," said Graham. She unfolded a label for a well-known sports drink, pointing out the various minerals and components making up the drink.

Sports drinks and juice containers may be good to drink in the summer, or during periods of very strenuous activity when Soldiers need to maintain levels of electrolytes, said Graham. During the colder months, these are unnecessary calories.

Graham encouraged the Soldiers to find a non-caloric beverage such as water, non-caloric drink mixes, or even diet soda, "if they have to."

The counseling sessions were open to all Soldiers on post, and the word is getting out, said Graham. Although the sessions are popular, they are an additional duty to her COSCOM responsibilities, and she must try to work a visit to Q-West into her schedule.

"If I can go out and support people, I'm more than happy to," said Graham. She believes Soldiers can get a lot out of the classes and the Internet tools. One of her success stories was a Soldier who lost 11 pounds between the first and second months' sessions.

Another success story was a Soldier who used to be five percent over the maximum allowable body fat level and is now only two percent over the level, said Moore.

Another bad habit the sessions try to counteract is the use of dietary weight-loss supplements, said Moore.

Most of the commercially-available supplements are not doctor-approved and have not undergone testing by the Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, so there is no way of knowing whether they can help or harm someone.

"Society has tried to find lots of different ways to help people lose weight," said Moore.

In the end, Soldiers can only achieve weight loss and maintenance through the proper application of diet and exercise.

"I wish there was an easy way to lose weight," said Moore. "I'd love that, too!"

Water Smart: A Word About the Wet Stuff



From the Brigade Surgeon's Office

Clean water is one of the most important resources in a combat zone. Providing adequate quantities of potable water to deployed forces is critical to maintaining the health and readiness of those forces.

We have an ample supply of bottled water, which comes from U.S. Army-inspected and -approved civilian bottling facilities throughout the region. Drinking unapproved or non-potable water can cause infections of the Gastrointestinal, or GI, tract, which can lead to vomiting and diarrhea.

Most cases will be resolved in a few days, but some can last months and require significant medical treatment.

We also have Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units, or ROWPU, which use filters and pumps to separate raw water, from rivers or ponds, into product water and waste reject water.

The product water is good enough to drink. We use it for the dining facility and clinic. We can also use this water for showering. The reject water contains concentrated dissolved

impurities and bacteria from the raw water.

According to TB MED 577, Sanitary Control and Surveillance of Field Water, this water is not allowed to be used for personal hygiene. It can be used for washing vehicles or dust abatement.

Our shower water can have low levels of bacteria and still be safe, but high levels of bacteria can cause health problems. This occurs by accidental swallowing of shower water, or entry of water through the ears, eyes, nose, broken skin, and through contact with the skin.

Because we must have clean water to shower, we have only a very limited supply. Showers are not necessary for good health, but clean water at the dining facility and Troop Medical Clinic is necessary.

Therefore, when there is a water shortage clean water will go to the DFAC and Clinic, and our showers will be turned off.

So remember that the shower water is a precious resource and to **limit your showers to five minutes.**

HOW TO COMBAT STRESS: RECOGNIZE, TREAT, PREVENT



Stress is "basically something we're all going to experience," according to Capt. Sean P. McDonald, Company B, 101st Sustainment Brigade. McDonald, the brigade psychologist, works in the behavior health clinic, open to all Soldiers on Q-West.

Although stress is fairly normal, when it is not controlled properly, it can be elevated to levels where it is critical a Soldier receive professional assistance.

"This is where leadership is so crucial," said McDonald. Although a Soldier must be responsible for seeking help for stress, leaders must be aware of the Soldiers under their care and their states of mind.

For more information on stress, and relief of stress, visit the Army's "Hooah 4 Health" Web site online at: <http://www.hooah4health.com>.

Recognize

Tension head & back ache
Pounding heart
Anxiety
Awakened by bad dreams
Grieving; Feeling guilty
Irritability, Swearing
Upset stomach
Anger at own team
Lose confidence in self/unit
Fatigue, weariness
"1,000-yard stare"

Treat

Try to restore calm, control
Focus on the mission
Maintain sense of humor
Focus on the facts; Don't believe rumors
Take a deep breath
Take a break
Focus on task; Follow SOP
Talk to fellow unit members
Talk to unit chaplain
If nothing works, seek help

Prevent

Drink plenty of liquids
Keep open channels of communication with chain of command
Use quick relaxation techniques
Ensure Soldiers have plenty of time to sleep
Allow Soldiers time to themselves, mission permitting

SLCR Team holds down FOB at McHenry

By 2nd Lt. Suzanne Schultz
506th Quartermaster

FOB MCHENRY, IRAQ - The Shower, Laundry, and Clothing Repair, or SLCR, team here has been hard at work supporting more than 1,000 Soldiers for the last three months.

The SCLR team Soldiers include: Sgt. Wayne Baker, NCOIC, Sgt. Khari Simpson, Sgt. David Boyce, Spc. Joshua Arzuaga, Spc. Neemia Afoa, Pfc. James Kruczek and Pfc. Antwan Campbell.

Their attitudes remain very positive despite lacking the regular amenities of FOB Speicher. On my recent visit to FOB McHenry, I heard nothing but the best compliments from the chain of command and other Soldiers at FOB McHenry.

The dirty clothes of an infantry Soldier can be rather filthy as one can imagine based upon their daily mission. Hence, the services provided by the SLCR team are greatly appreciated.

Upon arrival to FOB McHenry, Baker had to train three Soldiers working outside their military occupational specialty in order to complete the mission. His training was very successful because all the Soldiers now know how to operate the equipment properly and keep it mission capable at all times.

On certain days, the SLCR team processes and washes more than 250 bundles a day.

A typical day at the laundry point begins when a supply representative from each company delivers their unit's laundry bags to the processing tent.

The SLCR team Soldiers then inventory the laundry prior to putting it in the appropriate mesh bags for washing. Careful bookkeeping ensures none of the laundry is misplaced.

After the inventories are completed, the bundles are placed in the laundry advance system, or LADS for washing and drying. After the bundles are removed from the machine, the clothes are once again inventoried, folded, and



Photo by 2nd Lt. Suzanne Schultz

The SLCR Soldiers: Sgt. Khari Simpson, Spc. Neemia Afoa, Sgt. Wayne Baker, Pfc. James Kruczek, Pfc. Antwan Campbell, Spc. Joshua Arzuaga, and Sgt. David Boyce

put back into their original bags.

Finally, the units will come to pick-up their clothes later that day or on the following day.

After speaking with the Soldiers of the SLCR team, many of them feel that being at FOB McHenry has been a rewarding experience. They enjoy each others' company and the relationships they have developed with the units they are supporting.

They have grown to be a tight group of friends who work well together. During their down time, they can often be found hanging out together watching movies, playing video games, or preparing their weekly cookout.

Arzuaga feels that the best part of being deployed to FOB McHenry is having the opportunity to get to know his fellow Soldiers.

"We all get along great and tell a lot of stories," said Arzuaga.

Baker is very proud of the effort his Soldiers put forth on a daily basis. They work as long as needed in order to get the job done. The 506th Quartermaster Company is very proud of the work they are doing, and we look forward to their return to FOB Speicher prior to redeployment.

Lions roar, Bulldogs bite

B/1-321 FAR takes on the tough missions

By 2nd Lt. Craig Russell
B/1-321 Field Artillery

FOB SPEICHER, Iraq - When Battery B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 321st Field Artillery Regiment, better known as B/1-321, was assigned a convoy security mission for the 561st Corps Support Battalion, the Soldiers expected high demands for excellence, as all paratroopers do.

They never knew that within their first month, however, that they'd be assigned to relocate assets of the entire 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. While most were concerned about what might happen during the operation, due to its remote location, 1st Lt. Karcher, Battery OIC, said, they only give the toughest missions to those who can handle them.

B/1-321 was proud to accept the mission, but as if that wasn't tough enough, one more mission was assigned the very same day. The paratroopers were glad to accept it; after all, it was the mission they were trained for since the day they graduated from OBC

and AIT.

B/1-321 and its sister battery, C/1-321, were selected out of all other batteries on FOB Speicher to perform artillery missions for direct support for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division, commonly known as the Rakasans.

Spc. Tobin, assistant fire direction NCO for B/1-321, said: "It was a great feeling to hear that (the

month of) May was not going to be last time I'd get to fire artillery against the enemy for God, country, the American citizen, and proud traditions like Mom and apple pie."

Sgt. Foxen, gunner for the Howitzer section, replied when asked about his feelings on the mission: "I love it. It's my job, I'm glad I'm doing it!"

1st Lt. Parker, fire direction officer for the missions, responded with a simple wink, and a thumbs-up.

All the while, the Bulldogs' remaining personnel are still executing their standard convoy operations from FOB Speicher in support of the 561st CSB.

Remember! Celebrate! Act! King's birthday leads to Black History Month

By Sgt. 1st Class Bruce A. Williams
Brigade EO Advisor

Many consider Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to be one of the greatest figures of the 20th century, certainly one of the greatest orators not just in African-American, but all American history.

Like other heroic figures, Dr. King was uniquely prepared to meet the challenges of his time, and equally willing, even eager, to answer the call to leadership.

As the preeminent champion of civil rights and nonviolent social change, Dr. King dominated the social landscape during the 1950s and 1960s, as Americans came to terms with centuries of discrimination and disenfranchisement.

Some older Americans remember Dr. King and the tumultuous events that swirled about him well. Some were even touched directly by his eloquent words and courageous deeds.

Yet many younger Americans know of him only through a sound bite of famous oratory, and have no substantive knowledge of who he was and how he led America through a revolution for justice.

I was one of these younger Americans who only knew of a speech performed in front of thousands of

people in Washington, D.C. I was moved by an excerpt of Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech that I was taught in school as a young man.

Later, after being educated on the meaning of segregation and being introduced to the many tragedies African-Americans faced in the South, I was brought to tears when I actually watched and listened to his entire call for equity of all Americans.

As we continue to venture into the new year, it is good to reflect on what distinguished Dr. King from others, and why he is worthy of our remembrance.

Dr. King was driven by the simple desire to see all Americans enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

While some other African-American leaders espoused separation and violence, Dr. King envisioned a united America created through nonviolent social change.

His philosophy of nonviolence flowed logically from his upbringing in the African-American church and his preparation for the ministry.

Over the course of 14 grueling years, he molded the tactic of nonviolent, direct action from an admirable theory into a powerful force for concrete social change.

Through it all, he motivated others

through his mastery of the spoken word and his willingness to suffer on behalf of others.

His commitment to civil and human rights eventually cost him his life. Dr. King's legacy is now enshrined in a national holiday.

It is observed every third Monday in January, and will endure in the 21st century and beyond.

Please think about this on Dr. King's holiday: "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day on, Not a Day Off!"



Celebrate!

Come help celebrate Black History Month!
There will be a special ceremony Feb. 28 at
2:30 p.m. in the Morale, Welfare and
Recreation Theater.

All are invited.

For more information, please contact 101st
Sustainment Brigade Equal Opportunity
Advisor Sgt. 1st Class Bruce Williams.
Hope to see you there!

Spotlight on the Q-West NCO Academy: Part Two

Meeting obstacles builds teamwork at IA NCO Course

There's nothing like a little friendly competition to build teamwork.

Iraqi army students at the ongoing Q-West NCO Academy Primary Leadership and Development Course built teamwork and unit cohesion at the obstacle course here Jan. 31.

The obstacle course was one of many sections of instruction designed to teach Iraqi soldiers the skills needed to become successful noncommissioned officers in the new Iraqi army.

Earlier in the week, the students learned the basics of first aid, such as controlling bleeding and splinting frac-

tures. Now, they encouraged each other as together they climbed ropes, crawled on their stomachs under barbed wire and balanced precariously on beams of various heights.

In the morning, before the obstacle course began, the American and Iraqi cadre taught the soldiers hand and arm signals for tactical movement. After a break for lunch and prayer, the instructors gathered the students together and went through the course, demonstrating how to surmount each obstacle.

After each soldier moved through the obstacles, the cadre tasked the first and second platoon guides to select teams of four soldiers each to compete against each other in the course.

"Let's get this party started!" said Sgt. Marki Hall, infantryman, originally of Company B, 423rd Infantry, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

At the signal, the four members of the second platoon team ran forward. Toeing gingerly through old tires, they ran forward and leaped over a narrow ditch.

Confronting them next, the rope climb towered above the team against a cloudy sky. As they completed the obstacles, the rest of their platoon mates encouraged them loudly in Arabic and Kurdish.

After overcoming several more obstacles, the four Iraqi soldiers swung on a rope over a ditch to a platform, hopped off and climbed over one last vertical wall. As the last soldier



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

IA NCOs run across balance beams at the NCO Academy obstacle course.

slid down the ramp, Sgt. 1st Class Wesley E. Derrick, senior instructor, from Van Alstyne, Texas, clicked off the stopwatch.

With a time of more than six minutes, second platoon had set a record.

"This is the slowest time we've ever had," said Sgt. 1st Class Jomo Anderson, senior instructor, from Winston-Salem, N.C.

The record-setting day was not quite over. After the soldiers caught their breath, and the cadre settled them down, it was first platoon's turn to show what they could accomplish.

Once again, the Iraqi soldiers hurtled over the vertical walls, scrambled along a rope pull and crawled through and over alternating concrete tunnels and wooden hurdles.

First platoon achieved success by completing the entire course in four minutes, 37 seconds.

"That's the best time ever!" said Derrick.

Without warning, the soldiers of first platoon hoisted Derrick onto their shoulders. With a sheepish grin, he accepted the honor.

"They have lots of fun," said Anderson. He added, the purpose of the obstacle course is to build motivation and unit cohesion.

This class seems to be more mature than other PLDC groups that have gone through the course and has a good level of motivation without too many disciplinary problems.

The next week of training included blocks of instruction on various tasks such as map reading, checkpoints and military operations in urbanized terrain, or MOUT.

"They're right on track right now," said Anderson. "There's always improvement."



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

IA Soldiers tackle the rope pull at the obstacle course Jan. 31.

Iraqi NCOs learn first aid basics at NCO Academy

The scene was familiar to any Soldier who ever sat through a basic first aid class.

One student, while evaluating a casualty, began treating a "fractured" leg, as the instructor stood by, repeating: "His guts are on the ground."

The student finally understood what the teacher was trying to tell him – after an interpreter translated the instructions into Arabic.

The Iraqi NCO and his peers were taking a test on basic first aid Jan. 30 as part of the recently-graduated Iraqi army Primary Leadership and Development Course at the Q-West NCO Academy.

"I'm teaching them how to do medical things, but I'm learning, too," said Sgt. Marki Hall, NCO Academy instructor, originally from Company B, 423rd Infantry, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

Although he is an infantryman, Hall, from Ocilla, Ga., is the primary instructor for the first aid section of the NCO course. He learned the medical tasks from a former instructor at the Academy, Staff Sgt. Mario Pratcher, from Memphis, Tenn., who was a combat medic.

This cycle was the second time Hall taught the class on his own since Pratcher's departure. Some of the students have rudimentary knowledge from attending the basic combat training class at the Academy, but some come with no knowledge of first aid, said Hall.

The first day of the first aid section of training consisted of blocks of instruction in how to evaluate a casualty, perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation,



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

An Iraqi army NCO dresses an abdominal "wound" during the test of basic first aid.

or CPR, avoid sexually transmitted diseases and maintain personal hygiene. Hall taught from points of instruction Pratcher developed for the course.

The Iraqi soldiers are learning to use first aid they may need to use during missions such as manning a traffic control point. As NCOs, they will return to their units to teach the skills to other soldiers, said Sgt. 1st Class Jomo Anderson, NCO Academy senior instructor, from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 423rd Infantry, 172nd SBCT.

"I think NCOs should always know how to give first aid and how to teach it," said Anderson, a Winston-Salem, N.C., native. He explained, the Academy instructors try to utilize as much hands-on participation as possible.

"The more hands-on [training] we do, the more they retain," said Anderson. "That's with anyone,

really."

The second day consisted of a class on how to stop bleeding. Hall demonstrated how to treat various types of wounds on Sgt. 1st Class Mohammed, fellow instructor and Iraqi army soldier.

Hall secured a tourniquet on Mohammed and showed the class how to mark a "T" on his forehead to notify further care providers of his actions.

One student raised his hand with a question. An interpreter translated: "Can we use a stick to tighten [the tourniquet]?"

"Yes," answered Hall. "Anything you can use to twist to get that blood to stop."

Hall is not only the medical instructor, he also runs sick call for the Academy students. Although he refers any complex problems to the Troop Medical Clinic, he is able to treat common aches and pains from physical training or combatives, he said.

After a short break, Hall took the class outside for instruction on transporting incapacitated soldiers. One by one, he demonstrated how to carry a wounded comrade on a litter, and with one or more people.

"You always carry [your patient] head first," said Hall, as he showed the students how to carry a litter. "The only time you carry feet first is when you're going downhill."

Once Hall demonstrated, the students paired up to practice. Hall and Mohammed circulated the small area, trying to make sure each student was performing the skill correctly.

"We teach them, and they are listening," said Mohammed, through an interpreter.

MedTalk: A Weighty Matter

By Capt. A. Michelle Moore, M.D.
Brigade Surgeon

Many soldiers are gaining weight during this deployment. You may ask why?

The answer is simple: WE ARE OVER EATING. You may say "It's not my fault, it is the DFAC's fault."

The dining facility can only over-serve. Having too much food on your tray will NOT cause you to gain weight.

Eating too much causes you to gain weight. Once you realize this and accept responsibility for your weight, you can take control and lose the weight.

The first step in maintaining a healthy weight is to understand how much you need to eat. This varies depending on your job, your sex, and your exercise regiment.

A person who drives a truck all day needs far fewer calories than a person who digs trenches. Also, women need 30 percent fewer calories than men.

For example, a 22-year-old male who does not do any physical training needs 2,400 calories per day; a 22-year-old female who does not do any physical training needs 2,000 calories; a 46-year-old female who does not do any physical training only needs 1,800 calories per day.

To find your caloric needs visit: <http://www.mypyramid.gov>. This Web site offers a calorie chart, as well as personalized analysis of your daily

activity and food intake.

The next step is determining how many calories you are taking in. You will be surprised.



Here is an example based on my observations in the DFAC:

Breakfast: Ham cheese omelet: 190 calories; two biscuits with gravy: 500 calories; two sausage patties: 200 calories; two juice boxes: 200 calories. The total: **1,090 calories.**

Lunch: Two chicken fillets: 611 calories; one cup baked macaroni and cheese: 360 calories; two Cokes: 360 calories; two Otis Spunkmeyer cookies: 520 calories. The total: **1,851 calories.**

Dinner: Roast beef, four-ounce serving: 276 calories; one cup mashed potatoes with gravy: 250 calories; one cup green beans southern style: 82 calories; three scoops of Baskin Robbins ice cream: 750 calories. The total: **1,359 Cal.**

That makes your total daily intake 4,300 calories.

To help control your weight, start a diary of your calories taken in. Find things you can eliminate from your diet and ways to decrease the total number of calories per day to get to your goal.

If you want to lose weight, remember 500 calories per day equals a pound per week. So if you need 2,000 cal per day to maintain your weight, decrease to 1,500 calories per day to lose one pound per week.

Got news? Contact your UPAR!
Unit public affairs representatives are your lifeline to the Lifeliner WEST. Each unit has one - get to know him or her, and let us know how we can make you famous!

Signal celebrates the Superbowl

By Spc. Amber Moody
Company A, 101st BTB

We came together only to be torn apart by the most televised and expensive sports event: The Super Bowl. Company A started a day or two in advance setting up the theater in building 6-08 just for this game.

There was an offer made to all the Soldiers and NCOs, that if they stayed up to watch the game until it ended, their work call would be 1 p.m. Most soldiers took advantage of this offer!

The game started at around 3 a.m., and the theater was partly filled with people. There were chips and drinks available and you could almost see the line being drawn between each team's fans.

It was all in good fun -- the competition allowed us to bond and talk to people we don't see during our hours of work. The rest of the Soldiers started filtering in about partway through the first quarter.

One soldier was dubbed "like a grandma with a blanket as a shawl and nodding off throughout the game."

During the first quarter, it looked like the Seattle Seahawks would have a great game. They came out strong and were making progress.

The theater at this time was mostly full of people pulling for the Seahawks. Going strong, the room was full of objections when a call was deemed wrong. It was "Go Seahawks!" and shadow dogs on the screen during commercials.

Then the tide started to shift as the Pittsburg Steelers scored and had most of the calls go in their favor. Sgt. 1st Class Gabriel Tennyson, the pla-

toon sergeant for first platoon, was pulling for the Steelers and throwing comments back at Sgt. Jacob Handley in second platoon.

The rivalry between the two added a spice to the normal everyday work experience.

1st Sgt. Pierre Ledet came in and threw on the light. The room went crazy, with cries of: "Turn it off!" Smiling, he walked through the door saying that "since the Seahawks were losing," he "thought that their fans wouldn't want to see the game."

How wrong he was! It made us more determined to see the game through to the end.

The halftime show was cause for even more comments about how old The Rolling Stones are.

Wow, to see someone like Mick Jagger run around and sing with that much energy at his age almost put some of us to shame.

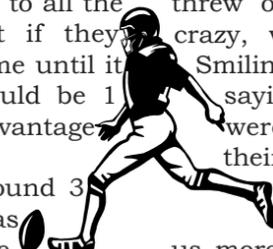
The halftime show was not the best, in some peoples' opinions, but at least we didn't have a repeat of a Janet Jackson peep show. What a relief.

The game was full of exciting moments for both teams, and some would argue that the Seahawks were cheated, but the game was good.

The pass interceptions were awesome, some of the most interesting foot work that I have seen. I have to give it to the players on both teams, they put on a great game.

No matter who won, the game was a great way to bring morale into Company A, and for all of us to appreciate the hard work that the engineers put into our theater.

It was worth staying up for that game!



Ancient History: Q-West logistics officer studies the past

By Sgt. Rachel A. Brune
Editor

As a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Arizona, geoarchaeologist Jesse Ballenger spends his days roaming the arroyos looking for mammoths, or rather, their earthly remains.

As a logistics officer with 153rd Field Artillery Brigade (Forward), an Arizona National Guard unit, Capt. Ballenger works in the mayor cell at Q-West Base Complex, helping to resolve the issues of daily living.

I first heard from Ballenger when he contacted me to find out if I would be interested in taking some aerial photographs of the ruins at Hatra, a site dating from at least the second century B.C. With an eagerness stemming not in the least from watching the "Indiana Jones" movies too many times, I got in touch to find out more about the project.

It turns out, the Tucson native actually finds Hatra boring because - get this - the site is not old enough. I wasn't quite sure what he meant because four thousand years seemed pretty ancient to me.

A border town situated as a buffer state between two powerful empires, the Roman and the Parthian, the site was the bustling locale of caravan traffic moving back and forth, a huge open market and a large temple site. Ballenger compared Hatra to border towns in his home state.

"Economics isn't just silk, it's ideas," said Ballenger, speaking of the mixed styles found in the remains of the ruins. "I think it comes out in the architecture."

A large map of Iraq hung on a wall of Ballenger's office. He pointed to a small spot in the Zagros Mountains at the northeastern tip of the country near the Iranian border.

"Have you ever read 'Clan of the Cave Bear?'" asked Ballenger. Archaeologist Ralph Solecki excavated the cave in the 1950s.

"He was looking for a cool site, and he found one - it was Shanidar Cave," said Ballenger. In his digging, Solecki discovered the remains of a 50,000-year-old man who apparently died at the ripe old age of 40 years.

"In the Neanderthal life span, this was an old man," said Ballenger. From the remains, the researchers were able to determine the man had a bad right arm, was blind in his left eye and showed signs of healed head trauma.

"This guy was in bad shape," said Ballenger. "He was early evidence that these guys were taking care of family members. What was his contribution to the group?"

Although we may never know the answer to that question, we do know the man's contribution to my high school reading list. A Library Journal article quotes Jean Auel, "Clan of the Cave Bear" author: "The Shanidar Cave became the model for the Clan of the Cave Bear society."

Yet, compared to the nearby Wadi al Tharthar, Shanidar Cave is très modern. The wadi was "probably the mid-Pleistocene channel of the Tigris River, maybe 50 to 60 thousand years ago," said Ballenger.

Although Ballenger cannot be certain, because

nobody has done much work in the wadi, the drainage "seems to have very ancient terraces." Potentially, archaeologists might find Neanderthal sites close to the surface and perhaps, even Lower Paleolithic sites from 1.4 million years ago, said Ballenger.

"I like wadis," said Ballenger via e-mail. They are similar to the arroyos he hikes in Arizona, and also "open-air, alluvial deposits are generally cleaner in terms of stratigraphy."

I looked up stratigraphy on Dictionary.com. It means: "The study of rock strata, especially the distribution, deposition and age of sedimentary rocks."

This is where Ballenger's training as a geoarchaeologist comes in. His specialty is examining the geological setting of archaeological finds and dating those finds.

"Radiocarbon dating is my niche," said Ballenger. He explained, Iraq does not currently have a Lower Paleolithic site to call its own.

"A Mesopotamian 'dot' on the map of Lower Paleolithic sites in southwest Asia would be a big deal, for sure," said Ballenger.

Getting involved with the archaeology made Ballenger realize how important it is that things go well here in Iraq. There is great potential for archaeological discovery, and to prevent looting from the sites in order to make a quick buck.

"That's not something that I want to see happen," said Ballenger. Instead, he'd rather get the chance to go exploring in the Wadi al Tharthar, excavating, dating and publishing the evidence of history.

FUN

Sunday
 QBC Unplugged Coffeehouse 2000

Monday
 Tournaments Galore!

Tuesday
 Acting Class 2000

Wednesday
 Salsa Lessons 1900
 Guitar Lessons 2000

Thursday
 Tournaments Galore!

Friday
 Alternating Country & Hip Hop Night
 2100

Saturday
 Flea Market 0800-1600
 Alternating Karaoke & Latin Night 2100

Deadline! February 25
ART & POETRY CONTESTS!

FITNESS

Sunday
 Take a break!

Monday
 Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
 4-Week Weight Training Program 1000
 Spinning Class 1600
 Dynamic Abs 1700
 Cardio Kickboxing 1800
 High Impact Step Aerobics 2000

Tuesday
 Extreme Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
 Yoga & Mat Pilates 1900
 Abs & Glutes 1800 & 2000
 Spinning Class 2000

Wednesday
 Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
 4-Week Weight Training Program 1000
 Spinning Class 1600
 Dynamic Abs 1700
 Cardio Kickboxing 1800
 High Impact Step Aerobics 2000

Thursday
 Extreme Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
 Yoga & Mat Pilates 1900
 Abs & Glutes 1800 & 2000
 Spinning Class 2000

Friday
 Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
 4-Week Weight Training Program 1000
 Spinning Class 1600
 Dynamic Abs 1700
 Cardio Kickboxing 1800
 High Impact Step Aerobics 2000

Saturday
 Abs & Glutes 1800
 Yoga & Mat Pilates 1900
 High Impact Step Aerobics 2000
 Spinning Class 2000



MWR Aerobics Room Under Renovation

The MWR aerobics room is currently receiving a new facelift, courtesy of the recent heavy rainfall which flooded the gym Feb. 3. The drywall for the room became wet and needed to be replaced.

Lifeline Laffs *by Jennings*



Onstage: My True Adventures in the MWR Acting Class

By Sgt. Ashly N. Rice
Staff Reporter

Within minutes of entering the room, my heart began to race.

This was not an uncommon feeling. I often feel this way during new situations and being there at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation acting class was not any different.

My friends describe me as outgoing and charismatic, but if they only knew, it is partly a front. I often cover up my fears in sheer hope it goes undetected by the human eye.

However, the people in this room, at this class, were nowhere near human - they were thespians.

The acting class is held Thursdays at 8 p.m., wherever the participants can find room to practice.

I was proud that I prepared for that night. I planned appropriate answers just in case anyone asked why I decided to go to the acting class.

I needed a change in activities and atmosphere, and I also have a curiosity

about the world of theater. I was not going to freak and blurt out something during a jolt of excitement that I might regret.

A small Ron Howard lookalike gestured for us to move our chairs closer to be part of the circle. We then began going around the circle giving our acting background.

To my relief, the others did not have a lot of acting experience either, so when it was my turn, I wasn't as nervous.

The mini-Ron turned out to be the instructor, Spc. Shawn Fraine, from Lewistown, Pa., a truck driver with 828th Quartermaster Company, 71st Corps Support Battalion.

I listened to him speak of the many plays he had acted in and helped produce and direct. I grew more confused, because when I mentioned his resemblance to Ron Howard, he had no clue of whom I spoke.

Determined that Fraine should understand his

own resemblance, I started naming movies Ron Howard directed, and television shows in which he starred. Yet, Fraine was still clueless.

Out of frustration, I muttered something about age, and he calmly responded: "I'm only 19. How old did you think I was?"

Although the youngest person in the room, he carried himself maturely, and proceeded to instruct the class.

After introductions, we mimicked Fraine's actions with voice and body exercises to prepare us for the class. I didn't know acting was so much work. I barely stretched this much before running in physical training!

Our first lesson was to observe someone, anyone, outside of the room for five minutes. After picking out the unsuspecting victim, we returned to the room ready to act out the actions of the person who caught our eye.

Everyone's choices were

imaginative and full of energy. One aspiring actor imitated a very cocky, but bad, ping pong player.

He showed much enthusiasm, and it seemed there was not one trait he missed about his chosen subject.

To my dismay, my turn came all too soon, and that overwhelming feeling of being in a new realm continued. I placed my chair in the middle of the room, sat down and began. I was doing it!

I was actually acting out my observation of choice -- a person playing BINGO.

But the person I observed did not have much to do. I sat and simulated my hands placing little BINGO chips on the very serious BINGO player's cards.

It wasn't that exciting or interesting, but it was mine. That day marked one of my first adventures in acting.

I highly suggest anyone looking for a change in activities, atmosphere or a curiosity of the world of theater, to attend the class.

Top 10 Iraq Road Trip Games

10. Find your house on the MTS.
9. Word synonyms for "dirt." Loser gets the turret.
8. The alphabet game, backwards in Arabic.
7. The colored car game. Each person picks a color of car to count. I've got dibs on orange and white.
6. Rock, paper, scissors. No fair playing with real rocks, Gerbers, etc.
5. Dodge the donkey.
4. Dodge the small child.
3. Thumb wrestling. Add in sneak attacks with the M240B for extra fun!
2. Out-of-state license plates. Just kidding.
1. How many times can you ask "Are we there yet?" before the convoy commander makes you walk to Tikrit.

Thoughts on St. Valentine's Day

Editorial

More than March, with its lion and lamb tendencies, February is a crazy mass of contradictions.

As I e-mailed home to wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day, the biggest blizzard in so many years was pounding areas of New Jersey and New York that have not seen snow in a while.

On the other hand, as I walked home the brigade command sergeant major's meeting, my CHU-mate and I spoke of how we could smell spring in the air.

Once again, this holiday for love and family finds me away from the reasons for the day. However, once again, love and family can cross great boundaries of distance with simply a prayer and a memory.

Whether it be the gift from my fiance that arrived unexpectedly, or the candy heart the first sergeant handed out with the mail, small reminders of friendship arise like green shoots springing up through the barren sand.

Let us take a moment to view our surroundings. What hope and renewal can be found in the moments they are least expected!

OFF THE WIRE: News from the American Forces Press Service

Iraqi Army Leads Operation; Weapons Cache Found

Army News Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12, 2006 – Iraqi soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, cleared the rural village of Subiyhat of insurgents yesterday, marking their second independent operation, officials said today.

Marines from 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 8, assisted in the operation by providing security on the outer perimeter.

The operation resulted in the detention of four suspected insurgents and enhanced relations between the citizens of Subiyhat and the Iraqi army, officials said.

It was also another step toward the Iraqi unit's operational independence, said Marine battalion commander Lt. Col. David J. Furness.

Elsewhere, soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 16th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, were tipped off by an Iraqi about

a weapons cache Feb. 9.

The local national directed the combat patrol to the ammunition, which was buried in a field near a house north of Najaf, capital city in Najaf province.

The cache included 71 100 mm high explosive rounds, four weapons, eight 122 mm rounds and five 115 mm high explosive anti-tank rounds.

An explosive ordnance disposal team was dispatched to the site and cleared the cache.

In other news, soldiers provided humanitarian assistance Feb. 8 to 100 flood victims in Mulay al Moskaul.

Due to heavy flooding in the Tigris River basin, Mulay al Moskaul village had been isolated for five days.

Two Multinational Division Central South helicopters were used to assist Iraq in three different settlements in the area. Humanitarian aid included potable water, food, shoes, clothes, mattresses, hygien-

ic items and toys.

Officials also reported that a 53-year-old male security detainee at Abu Ghraib died Feb. 11 at 1:20 p.m. from complications after being assaulted by an unknown number of detainees.

The detainee was transported to Task Force Med 344th, at Abu Ghraib, by the guards after the detainee reported the assault. The detainee quit breathing at 11:50 a.m. and medical personnel administered CPR and inserted a breathing tube. An attending physician pronounced him dead after he failed to respond to aggressive medical treatment.

The military Criminal Investigation Division is investigating the incident, which is standard procedure after any detainee death.

The detainee's remains will be transferred to the family upon completion of an autopsy, standing procedure for all detainees who die while in custody.

Mean Streets II



Photo by Staff Sgt. Aaron Allman, U.S. Air Force

Two soldiers from the U.S. Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment keep an eye on the surroundings as they conduct a combat patrol in the streets of Tall Afar, Iraq, on Feb. 6, 2006.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Aaron Allman, U.S. Air Force

Soldiers line up against a wall as they prepare to enter a building during a combat patrol in Tall Afar, Iraq, on Feb. 7, 2006. These soldiers are attached to the U.S. Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.



AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE

Stories and photographs reproduced on this page were compiled from information released through AFIS. For more information, or for news released by the Department of Defense, visit: <http://www.defenselink.mil/news>.

Troop-Support Groups Share Ideas, Concerns in Atlanta

By Samantha L. Quigley

American Forces Press Service

ATLANTA, Feb. 11, 2006 – Twelve representatives of seven grassroots troop support organizations met here yesterday for the first of eight planned regional "America Supports You" summits.

America Supports You is a Defense Department outreach program designed to recognize citizens' support for U.S. servicemembers and their families.

The summits are designed to provide a venue for a two-way discussion about what is working well for support groups and what could work better. Tips to help the groups grow and improve their effectiveness are part of the focus as well, said Allison Barber, deputy assistant secretary of defense for public affairs, who oversees America Support You.

"You've been supporting our men and women in the military long before there was ever an America Supports You program," Barber said. "The purpose of America Supports You, remember, is for us to highlight what you do ... for us to help bring national visibility to your organizations."

To help achieve that goal, she discussed possible programs and partnerships that will bring focus to the work the groups do. For example, NASCAR's participation as an America Supports You corporate team member provides the opportunity to make the DoD program very visible on a national level.

Open discussion during the meeting highlighted challenges groups are facing and ways America

Supports You can help them.

Postage costs turned up as a daunting issue for many groups that specialize in sending care packages to overseas deployed troops. Mary Harper, president and founder of Operation Shoebox, reported that her group spent nearly \$14,000 on postage to ship more than 2,000 packages last month.

While noting the U.S. Postal Service is the cheapest method of shipping packages to servicemembers overseas, Harper said "anything (cheaper) than postal rates would help."

Other issues discussed included groups' visibility in local communities and ways to help fulfill requests that a particular group is ill-equipped to handle.

Vicki Sarracino, president of the Georgia chapter of Operation Homefront, said the opportunity to network with some other support groups would help with this issue.

Operation Homefront is a national network effort providing support for the nation's military families, ranging from donations of computers, furniture, baby items, to moving assistance, to offering monetary grants to needy families of deployed servicemembers.

Barber said the Defense Department is working to address groups' concerns, and that events like the summit make clearer the issues support groups face.

"Everything that we do, I hope you'll accept as our



Photo by Samantha L. Quigley

Representatives of troop-support groups listen to Jorge Martinez discuss strategies that will help them get their messages out through the media. Attendees met for a summit meeting in Atlanta Feb. 11, the first of eight America Supports You regional summits scheduled around the country.

best efforts," Barber said, thanking the groups for what they do for servicemembers and their families. "We can't do it without you."

The representatives also received tips on working with media and managing their volunteers. Speakers on both topics made it clear that both areas are crucial to the organizations' success.

"The media is a very important grassroots tool," said Jorge Martinez from Susan Davis International public relations firm.