

**STRIKER
TORCH
NEWS TEAM**

Command Team

COL Robert E. Scurlock Jr.

CSM Jose A. Santos

Striker Torch

25 DECEMBER 2005 **2nd EDITION**



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1st Lt. Wesley Brooks of A Company, 40th Engineer Battalion demonstrates both Christmas spirit and the "Will of the Warrior."

Photo by
Cpt. Daniel Napolitano



A Word from the Striker Command Team



COL Robert E. Scurlock Jr.

CSM Jose A. Santos



As we celebrate this holiday season and welcome in a new year, my prayer is for God's fullest blessings upon you and your loved ones. I encourage you to take advantage of the various means available to communicate with those at home to share holiday greetings and the spirit of the season.

We would all like to be with our families at this time; but we also remember that we share this experience with all our fellow comrades, past and present, who have made such sacrifices for the sake of freedom. Like these fellow Soldiers, we too accept this part of our duty for the most important of reasons. It is significant that at this time of year we celebrate the endur-

ing realities of love, family, freedom, and hope for the world. These are exactly the values that our present mission is dedicated to preserving. In this season of exchanging gifts, our service here is among the most valuable gifts we could offer to those we love – a gift that will last not just for the holidays, but throughout the future years of our country.

And so this holiday season should be one that we remember with pride. Iron sharpens iron as one Iron Soldier sharpens another. May God bless you during this special time as we share the privilege of serving in the cause of lasting justice and peace on earth.



Soldiers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, basking in the holiday spirit, showing the gifts they received from their Bn. Chaplain, Capt. Ricky Brunson.

Photo by 1st Lt. Bledy Taka

Holiday Religious Services

25 December 05
Normal Religious Services*

25 Dec 05 - 1 Jan 06 : 1815
Hanukah Candle Lighting

31 December 05 : 1800
New Year's Eve Mass

31 December 05 : 2200
Watch Night Service

(All religious services are scheduled for the main post chapel)

*See new Religious Services Schedule on Pg. 8



40th Engineers Train to Defeat IED Threats

Story and Photos by SFC David R. Dockett

A serious threat facing Coalition Forces today is the detonation of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). These devices are designed to inflict terrible damage while deteriorating the morale of the people working hardest to help build a better future for Iraq – the members of the Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

Within the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, the sappers of the 40th Engineers are called to be the front line of defense against IEDs. Their mission is to search for the explosive devices while clearing routes Coalition Forces and Iraqi citizens use to conduct the business of rebuilding Iraq.

realistic training we can receive on the subject of route clearance," said the 40th Engineer Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel William H. Graham. "The Soldiers learn to employ new equipment, interact with civilians on the battlefield, and encounter IEDs in a complex battle space."

As Soldiers and leaders analyze videos of how IEDs are emplaced and triggered, the engineers' textbook-knowledge is combined with learning about the real world experiences of subject matter experts who have conducted missions in Iraq. Capt. Galeazzi said, "Soldiers are shown how IEDs are set-up and hidden in

Iraq so they know what to look for when they're out clearing the routes." Developing effective IED countermeasures relies on Soldiers who are constantly informed and understand new discoveries in enemy tactics. This particular training exercise is one of many designed to increase the awareness of Engineers while searching for explosive devices.

"This is more realistic training here [rather] than in Germany. The instruction was informative and detailed, [the instructors] have first hand knowledge of what is going on up north," said Private First Class Gene H. Holten, 3rd Platoon, B Co., 40th Eng. "The environment here looks a lot more like what we are going to see in Iraq, this helps you envision what it is going to be like up there."



PFC Allen R. Bevington (foreground) and PFC Jason D. Smith, 3rd Platoon, B Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, provide security while performing a route clearance exercise.

Engineers have received extensive training in IED identification in order to defeat threats before they endanger Coalition and Iraqi Forces. Once an IED is identified, the explosive hazard can be isolated until it can be safely destroyed.

"We've received training from IED specialists that have spent time dealing with them in Iraq" said B Co. Executive Officer, Captain Thomas E. Galeazzi. "We get information about the latest techniques being used in Iraq so that our training is up to date and we're able to recognize some of the latest tricks that the enemy is using."

The training familiarizes leaders and Soldiers with the most effective ways of recognizing IEDs, clearing them from routes, and planning for route clearance missions. This extensive training aids Coalition Forces in discovering these devices before Anti-Iraqi Forces detonate them. Soldiers were also introduced to new equipment designed to defeat IEDs in Iraq. "This is fantastic training, it is the most



1st Lieutenant Ryan C. Cleary; 3rd Platoon Leader, B Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, takes a knee while directing his platoon during a route clearance exercise.

given a training mission allowing them to apply what they learned. In addition, this training affords leaders an opportunity to hone their skills in planning route clearance missions, pre-combat checks and inspections, and ensuring that their Soldiers understand each mission and what is required to accomplish it. When the planning and preparations are

complete, the Engineers execute an IED training exercise which presents challenges that require them to perform as a cohesive team in real-world situations.

After the sappers of 3rd Plt., B Co. complete the IED training lane, the Soldiers and leaders analyze how the team responded to the training scenario. Specialist Allen R. Bevington, 3rd Platoon, B Co., 40th Engineers said, "They gave a lot of examples of what to look for – examples of what they're actually seeing in Iraq."

The training here in Kuwait enables the Soldiers of the 40th Engineer Battalion to be effective IED hunters. The Soldiers of B Company found the training very informative and definitely worth their while. PFC John D. Robinson, a Humvee gunner in 3rd

Plt., B Co. said, "After the training we have gotten this week, I feel better aware of what's going on up north."

"The instruction was informative and detailed, [the instructors] have first hand knowledge of what is going on up north."

Private First Class Gene H. Holten
3rd Platoon, B Co., 40th Engineer Battalion

During one recent training event, the sappers received two and a half days of instruction focusing on the most current enemy tactics before they were

Copasetic Performs for Enthusiastic Crowd at Camp Buehring

Story by PFC Joshua P. Ramey

Camp Buehring, Kuwait – Morale, Welfare, and Recreation sponsored a live music event at Camp Buehring with the Indiana based group *Copasetic*. The cover band was founded by two brothers, Jody Lundell on lead guitar and Jon Lundell playing bass. The two have been recording various projects and practicing together for more than ten years. The lead singer, Justin Butler, projects his voice with strikingly precise intonation and sense of dynamics while John Clark on rhythm guitar and Jeff Kaehr’s drumming provide a foundation that gives the band its authentic sound. *Copasetic* performed for an amassed crowd last Sunday night at the MWR stage in front of the main Post Exchange.

Soldiers from the 1st Armored Division, 4th Infantry Division, and many other separate units rocked out and joked with each other while singing along with titles from artists such as Aerosmith, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Sublime, Santana, and others.

“I’m glad that bands can come out here and give us something to break the monotony of training,” said PFC John Neal from B Co., 40th Engineers.

Copasetic started when the two brothers, Jody and Jon, were hired as musical entertainment on a cruise ship operating from New Orleans. The ship was out at sea when Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana, and the cruise liner was forced to dock in Texas. The Lundell brothers, anticipating unemployment, teamed up with guitarist John Clark while the ship was docked off the Gulf Coast. The new trio auditioned a number of musicians from the vast array of talent and *Copasetic* was born.

Instead of just playing venues in the mid-western U. S., *Copasetic* decided to hit the road in a completely new way. John Clark, a member of the Army Reserves, connected the band to contacts he made at his local MWR. That

connection allowed *Copasetic* to travel overseas and entertain troops worldwide. “The first time I heard about playing for military troops, I thought: I didn’t even know we could do this! Sign me up!” said Jody Lundell, lead guitarist from Atlanta, Georgia. *Copasetic* practiced together for a short time before performing in front of military personnel stationed far away from home, filling out their set list with a number of hard rock and classic rock favorites.

Spec. Adam Maliszewski, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment Operations yelled “We need more shows like this one!” while standing on top of a picnic table with his lighter dutifully blazing in the night sky. “These shows make Kuwait just a little more enjoyable,” said PFC Brian Taylor of Headquarters, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. Regt. while helping Spec. Maliszewski test the structural integrity of the same picnic table. PFC Jacob Jones from the 204th Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Division was having an especially good time. “The music is a lot better than mortar fire,” he joked while laughing. It was sometimes hard to see who was enjoying themselves more, the Soldiers or the band. The members of *Copasetic* were grateful they seized the opportunity to entertain members of the Armed Forces while traveling around the world. “We’ve played for troops in Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Qatar, Djibouti, and other places,” said Jody Lundell. “This is the biggest audience that we’ve had on our tour.”



Soldiers from Camp Buehring, Kuwait wrap up their night watching and listening to the MWR show featuring Copasetic, a cover band from Indiana.

Photo by PFC Evan Richardson

PFC Christopher Krutzsch and Spec. Jeff Shannon from HHC, 2-6 IN listen to Copasetic while rendering the proper respect.

Photo by PFC Evan Richardson



2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers relax while listening to Copasetic, an MWR performance at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Photo by PFC Joshua Ramey



Tanks from 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment maneuver through the open desert near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Photo by 1st Lt. Timothy Conners

Ready to Conquer!

Story by 1st Lt. Zack Hadfield

Camp Buehring, Kuwait - 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment, “Conquerors,” have been training in the desert near Camp Buehring, Kuwait, for these past weeks in preparation for deployment into Iraq. 1st Bn., 35th Armd. Regt’s wartime capabilities make the Battalion lethal, sustainable, and highly mobile; able to strike anywhere in a moment’s notice. The most powerful and versatile direct-fire weapon in the 2nd BCT’s arsenal is the M1A1 Abrams main battle tank. By itself, it is a potent tool; but when a platoon of M1s move together, it becomes a truly awe-inspiring demonstration of battlefield lethality.

Highly trained in offensive, defensive, and sustainment operations, 1st Bn., 35th Armd. Regt. is at a high level of readiness

and eager to move northward. Captain Eliot Thomasma explains, “We will continue to fine tune and hone our ability to conduct operations in a desert environment. When the time comes, we’ll be ready.” Capt. Thomasma, a communications expert specializing in digital warfare, has been with 1st Bn., 35th Armd. Regt. since their last deployment to Iraq in ‘03-’04.

Soon after 2nd Brigade Combat Team’s arrival in theater, 1st Bn., 35th Armd. Regt. began training at multiple



Pvt. Edward Palacio (front) and Spec. Derral Escobar prepare their tank for bore sighting, a process where tanks align their main gun and sights.

Photo by Sgt. Devon Lomax



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment negotiate an urban training range in Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Photo by 1st Lt. Timothy Conners

throughout the nearby Udairi Range Complex. First Lieutenant Patrick Webinger, the support Platoon Leader, reports, “This is the pinnacle of Army training. We are learning the cutting edge tactics and procedures used by both Coalition and Anti-Iraqi Forces in a desert environment. It just doesn’t get better than this.” 1st Lt. Webinger’s platoon, known as the “backbone” of the Battalion,

handles logistical issues such as supplying fuel and ammunition. However, due to the modern nature of warfare, even the logisticians must be able to defend themselves. “We have to fight just as well as the tanks on the front lines,” says 1st Lt. Webinger, “and I’m confident we can do that.” 1st Bn., 35th Armd. Regt. has proven time and again that it knows one answer for its own motto, “Vincere vel Mori,” “Conquer or Die!” When the time comes there is only one option for these tankers,

Conquer!

Redlegs Celebrate Tradition and Pride from Afar

Story by Capt. Andrew Schwartz

"God fights on the side with the best artillery."
-Napoleon Bonaparte

1st Armored Division Artillery held their annual St. Barbara's Day Ball at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany. There was only one problem with the age old celebration this year; one of the Division Artillery's most cherished units, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, was deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Refusing to let this spoil the traditional event, Division Artillery (DIVARTY) coordinated with the 4th Bn., 27th FA Regt. to participate in the celebration using the latest technology. Field Artillery units at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, and Ramstein Air Force Base set up cameras, projection screens, and video teleconferencing equipment that electronically united husbands and wives, adding an emotional boost to the annual ceremony.

At the Ball, the Molly Pitcher Medal and the Order of St. Barbara were presented. The Order of Saint Barbara is one of the oldest and the most prestigious awards, unique to members of the

Field Artillery, which dates back to the Revolutionary War. The Order recognizes individuals who have demonstrated the highest levels of integrity and moral character, professional competence, selfless service, and contributed to the promotion of the Field Artillery. Dedicated spouses, who have contributed their time and hard work, earn the Molly Pitcher Medal for helping the Field Artillery community function together as a single family. The St. Barbara's Day Ball is an important event for artillerymen and their spouses who together celebrate the colorful heritage and history of "The King of Battle."

Despite the vast distances between 4th Bn., 27th FA Regt. and the ballroom at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, the deployed unit was still able to participate in the ceremony. The teleconferencing equipment was the backbone of an emotional ninety minute video conference where a number of unsuspecting wives saw their hus-



Wives of the Thunder Battalion gather for a group photo at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany. The wives came to Ramstein to represent the Iron Thunder Battalion at the St. Barbara's Day Ball. They were pleasantly surprised to see their husbands who attended via video teleconference from Camp Buehring.



View of the VTC screen in Ramstein Germany. The VTC equipment enabled those attending in Germany to interact with 2nd BCT personnel attending.



The Story of Molly Pitcher

The history of the Molly Pitcher Award begins during the Revolutionary War with the heroic actions of Mary Hays McCauly, a Field Artilleryman's wife. Mary Hays McCauly earned the name 'Molly Pitcher' when she fearlessly brought pitchers of water to thirsty cannoners on the battlefield while the men engaged the British. Her selfless service and exemplary courage were demonstrated without hesitation during the battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778. Many of the artillerymen, including her husband, were killed or severely wounded during the battle. Recognizing the need for continued indirect fire support, Molly Pitcher worked side by side with the artillerymen as they continued to fire onto the enemy.



Awardees display their medals after receiving the Order of St. Barbara. From left to right: (back): Capt. Cogger, Col. Scurlock, Capt. Randall, Capt. Errington, Capt. Gerber, and Capt. Cherilus. (front): Capt. Steward, SSgt. Thames, SFC Darby, SFC Smith, and SSgt. Bright.

bands face to face for the first time since the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, deployed.

The ceremony began with the infamous punch bowl mixing, followed by its sampling by the junior officer attending the Ball. The event quickly moved into select-

ing and awarding the coveted Order of St. Barbara medals to individuals who stand out as examples of fine character. DIVARTY awarded medals to Colonel Scurlock; Captains Randall, Cogger, Cherilus, and Steward; Sergeants First Class Darby and Smith; and Staff Sergeants Bright and Thames, who were all attending in Kuwait. DIVARTY also recognized the dedicated artillerymen from the Division Artillery, 1st Bn., 94th FA Regt., 1st Bn., 27th FA Regt., 2nd Bn., 3rd FA Regt., and 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regt., who all attended from Germany.

After individuals were inducted into the Order of St. Barbara, DIVARTY recognized the efforts of military spouses. 4th

Bn., 27th FA Regt. Molly Pitcher awardees included: Mrs. Scurlock, Mrs. Cheatham, Mrs. Steward, Mrs. Vensor, Mrs. Randall, Mrs. Cherilus, and Mrs. Cowles, all of whom continue to bear the burden of supporting a deployed husband from their homes in Baumholder, Germany. Mutual

messages of love and support were exchanged between the spouses who were uncertain when they would again look into the eyes of their loved ones. Messages ranged from a simple "I love you!" to a triumphant "Iron Thunder!"—a gesture that brought 4th Bn., 27th FA

Regiment's own Command Sergeant Major, Robert E. Clark, to tears. As the end of the St. Barbara's Day formalities drew near, husbands and wives used the last remaining minutes of the video feed to say their goodbyes.

The Iron Thunder Battalion concluded the evening with the traditional cutting and eating of the St. Barbara's Day cake. The evening enriched all who attended with the feeling of gratitude, knowing that others shared the burden of the challenging and difficult year ahead.

"I do not have to tell you who won the war. You know; the Artillery did."

—Gen. George S. Patton

The Legend of Saint Barbara

According to legend, about the year 300 A.D. Barbara was the extremely beautiful daughter of a wealthy heathen named Dioscorus. Because of her singular beauty, he jealously shut her up in a tower to protect her from the outside world.

Barbara had heard of the teachings of Christ, and while locked in the tower, spent much time in contemplation. Gradually, she came to accept the Christian faith. As her belief became firm, she decided that the idols of wood and stone worshipped by her parents must be condemned as false.

When her father learned of this, he was enraged that Barbara was a Christian. He arranged for the provincial judge to sentence her to death and Dioscorus himself beheaded her. On his way home he was struck by lightning and his body was consumed.

The legend of the lightning bolt which struck down her persecutor caused Barbara to be regarded as the patron saint in times of danger from thunderstorms, fires and sudden death. When gunpowder made its appearance in the Western world, Saint Barbara was invoked for aid against accidents resulting from explosions—since early artillery pieces often blew up instead of firing their projectile, Saint Barbara became the patroness of the artillerymen.

Sunday Religious Services Schedule

Main Chapel	Chapel Annex
0800 - 0900 : Traditional Protestant	0930 - 1100 : Full Gospel Protestant
0930 - 1030 : Contemporary Protestant	1130 - 1230 : Contemporary Protestant
1100 - 1200 : Catholic Mass	1300 - 1400 : Liturgical Protestant
1230 - 1400 : Full Gospel	1800 - 1900 : Catholic Mass
1500 - 1600 : Latter Day Saints	
1900 - 2030 : PM Protestant Fellowship	



2nd BCT Commander, Col. Scurlock, presents Sgt. Erick De Alba with his re-enlistment certificate atop "Bullets-N-Octane."

Photo by PFC Evan Richardson



Spec. David Perez from A Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment receives a bag of Holiday gifts from Santa. Operation Christmas Basket was sponsored by local civilians in Kuwait.

Photo by SFC David Dockett

Better Than Walking

Story and Photo by 2nd Lt. Seth Norman



Soldiers of the 47th Forward Support Battalion help to push their bus out of the sand.

Camp Buehring, Kuwait - In late November 2005, members of B Company, 47th Forward Support Battalion, in an act of necessity, pushed their primary mode of transportation out of a sand ditch at the entrance of an M-16 firing range. Their motivation: the large, immobile, civilian bus created the possibility of at least one night's stay in the desert.

A number of Soldiers from B Co., 47th FSB decided to use their collective strength to break the bus out of its sand trap. "The whole job was a huge morale booster for the unit," said B Co. Specialist Ben Hensley. "We were pumped up to go back out and shoot after that."

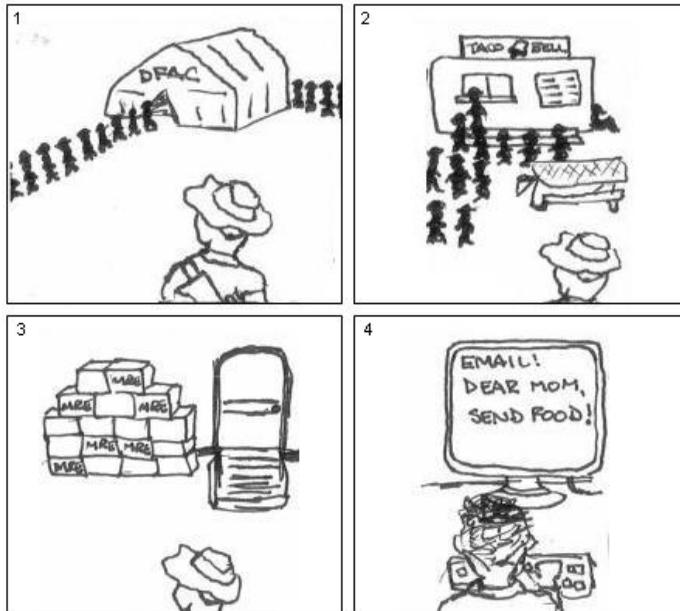
Soldiers of the 47th FSB were concluding the test firing of their entire

weapons inventory, when their ride home approached the range. At the entrance, the driver misjudged his route and sank the rear tires in an area of deep, loose sand. The Modern Pioneers who were available to help, rushed to the rear of the bus and began pushing under the careful supervision of their NCOs. After some time manually pushing the four ton bus, it eventually broke free as Soldiers cheered. The result of their hard labor was a thankful Kuwaiti bus driver and an air conditioned ride home.

The chance to help the bus driver and each other was a welcome break for Soldiers of the 47th FSB. They have been engaged in intensive training, preparing to deploy to Iraq. In addition to common task training, primary marksmanship instruction, and deployment readiness drills, many Modern Pioneers have been working maintenance and medical jobs in support of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's mission. Of all the training thus far, joining together to solve a real world problem has been an unlikely emotional high-point. Despite the fact that the successful outcome evoked a sense of pride in B Company, Spec. Hensley remarked, "It's probably not something we'd like to do again."

The Torch Comix

"Baker's Dozen" by PFC Mitch Baker



Can you draw? Do you have an idea for a comic strip? Do you have too much time on your hands? We are looking for talented cartoonist from within the Brigade. If you're interested, contact us and we can get YOU published!

See last page for Contact Information

Don't Waste Water!

Story and Photo by PFC Joshua Ramey

Unfortunately for those Soldiers and civilians living in Kuwait, abundant reserves of crude oil cannot replace the nearly non-existent supply of natural water. Since Kuwait gets an average of two inches of rainfall per year, all water must be shipped to Camp Buehring from two Kuwaiti desalination plants near the Gulf Coast. The U.S. Military goes to great lengths and expense to ensure troops have an adequate supply of water to maintain the health of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines stationed here at Camp Buehring. The most essential thing an Armed Forces member can do while staying in Kuwait, is to conserve water - the desert's most valuable resource.

The time when Soldiers should be the most careful is during personal hygiene and while taking showers. The water faucets should never be left running while brushing teeth or shaving. Taking

a "combat shower" is important because it greatly reduces the amount of water consumed while bathing.

The goal is to average about 10 to 15 gallons of total bulk water use per Soldier per day. According to the Base Support Battalion, the current levels are nearly double that average. The 10 - 15 gallon goal of water use does not include bottled drinking water.

The amount of water each Soldier should drink varies greatly on the outside temperature, as well as the level of physical activity conducted throughout the day. A minimum amount of water during winter months with low level of activities is between 3 and 4 liters per day. As the summer months approach and training continues, that number should at least double. Simply put, this means to drink 2 to 6 bottles of water per day. Remember that trash space is limited so always crush your water bottle. Conservation is critically important for all Soldiers, especially because Camp Buehring

houses a large number of troops. All resources are trucked in, all waste is trucked out; your responsibility and discipline will help to keep this a sustainable and comfortable living area.



Muhammad, a local national, observes the flow of water from a 10,000 gallon truck into a container that holds shower water. The Base Support Battalion monitors the daily levels of these tanks and directs the drivers to which ones to refill.



Upcoming MWR Events

Sunday, 25 December 05

- 1200 : Holiday Movie Marathon @ Theater
- 1400 : Spades Tournament @ Oasis
- 1500 : 8 Ball Tournament @ Rec. Center
- 1900 : Holiday Bingo @ Events Tent

Monday, 26 December 05

- 1900 : USO Army Band @ MWR Stage
- 1900 : Ping-Pong Tournament @ Rec. Center

Tuesday, 27 December 05

- 1900 : Dominoes Tournament @ Oasis

Wednesday, 28 December 05

- 0600 : 5k Jingle Bell Jog @ Hole-n-One
- 1400 : Spades Tournament @ Oasis
- 1900 : Spoon Tournament @ Oasis

Thursday, 29 December 05

- 1400 : Bingo @ Oasis
- 1900 : Scrabble Tournament @ Oasis

Friday, 30 December 05

- 2000 : Karaoke Night @ MWR Stage

Saturday, 31 December 05

- 1000 : Spa Day @ Events Tent
- 2100 : New Year's Eve Bash @ Events Tent



Spec. Ryan Yurchison of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment takes a second to make Kelly Hu (star of "X-Men 2" and "Scorpion King") laugh.
Photo by PFC Evan Richardson



Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston shakes the hand of PFC Christopher Roberts of C Company, 40th Engineer Battalion during his visit to Camp Buehring, Kuwait.
Photo by PFC Evan Richardson



1st Sgt. Donald Sparks from B Company, 40th Engineer Battalion shops around at the local AAFES bazaar for jewelry. Local merchants come every Saturday and Sunday to sell their merchandise on Camp Buehring.
Photo by PFC Evan Richardson



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 35th Armored Regiment think of creative ways to stay in shape during their stay in Kuwait.
Photo by 1st Lt. Patrick Webinger

From Your Financial Advisors

Compiled by PFC Jeremy Neece

What you are entitled to during your deployment:

1. Hardship Duty Pay-Location (HDP-L)

All Soldiers assigned to OEF/OIF AORs may receive \$50 to \$100 per month depending on the deployed location. Effective 1 January 2005, Kuwait and Iraq HDP-L is \$100.00 per month or \$3.33 per day. Entitlement shows as "SAVE PAY" on LES.

Hardship pay begins on the day you officially arrive in theater. HDP-L is prorated and paid at a daily rate for partial months. Entitlement to HDP-L stops on the day you depart the designated area.

2. Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay (HFP)

Hostile Fire/Imminent Danger Pay (HFP) is a special pay intended to compensate Soldiers serving in locations where they are subjected to imminent danger and/or hostile fire. It is payable to all Soldiers performing official duties in a designated HFP area.

As of 01 October 2002, the normal specified rate for HFP is \$225 per month. Entitlement to Hostile Fire Pay (HFP) stops the day you depart the designated area. One day spent in a designated HFP area qualifies the member for the entire monthly amount.

In-theater finance units will automatically start both HFP & HDP-L entitlements after arrival in theater.

3. Combat Zone Tax Exclusion (CZTE)

Exemption from federal income taxes and state income taxes withholding continues through the last day of the month of departure from the designated area. Taxes will resume being withheld on the 1st of the following month.

Soldiers have 180 days after redeployment to file income taxes. Write "OEF/OIF from (start date) to (end date)" at the top of your return to avoid a late fee or penalty.

Other Deployed Pay Benefits:

1. Family Separation Allowance (FSA)

Family Separation Allowance is intended to offset added housing expenses incurred by a member due to forced separation from dependents. As of 01 October 2002, FSA is payable at \$250 per month (\$8.33 per day). Entitlement begins the day of departure from home station and ends the day prior to returning to home station. It will appear as FSH on the Leave and Earning's Statement (LES).

FSA is payable to any Soldier with dependents who is TDY for more than 30 consecutive days and the dependents are not residing near the TDY station. Entitlement stops if the Soldier returns to home station for more than 30 days during the TDY period.

NOTICE: In order to receive this pay, Soldiers are required to complete a DA Form 1561 before this entitlement may start. Agents may not sign the DA Form 1561 on behalf of the Soldier. See your Company Training Room or BN S-1 shop for this action.

FSA is generally payable to a dual military with no dependents, if the couple were residing together before being separated, and are deployed to different locations. (Only one member is entitled even if both are deployed).

2. Savings Deposit Program (SDP)

The Savings Deposit Program provides an opportunity for Soldiers to deposit an amount up to their current unallotted pay into a government

savings program that earns 10% annual interest, or 2.5% compounded quarterly. The program pays interest on amounts up to \$10,000. So if a Soldier has \$10,000 in the program for one year, they will earn \$1,000 extra.

Soldiers performing official duties in designated areas may participate in the program. Those deployed to OIF or OEF are eligible. Soldiers on orders for more than 30 days, can make their first deposit on the 31st day after arrival into the theater up to the amount of that month's pay.

Active component Soldiers may contribute through allotment (preferred method) or cash deposits (cash or negotiable instrument). Monthly deposits are limited to net pay after allotments. Agents with a power of attorney authorizing them to start, stop, or change allotments may start a SDP allotment on behalf of the deployed member. Agents with a power of attorney authorizing them to make investments on the Soldier's behalf may deposit cash, money orders, traveler's checks or cashier's checks. Agents may not deposit personal checks nor make withdrawals from a SDP account.

3. Temporary Duty (TDY)

Per diem is a travel allowance provided as a daily payment in lieu of reimbursement of actual expenses during government directed travel. The amount of per diem is based on the availability of lodging, meals, and the incidental expense rate specified for the location. The current specified incidental expense rate for all overseas locations is \$3.50 per day.

All active duty Soldiers must submit their final vouchers within 5 days of redeploying to home station. Ensure you keep a copy of the entire final settlement packet mailed or faxed to DFAS.

Information from
18th Soldier Support Group (Airborne) Booklet
Updated 01JAN05

What Do YOU Think?

"How do you plan to use your extra pay?"



PFC Richard Laureano
Unit: 40th EN

Save it for my family!



PFC Phillip Hickox
Unit: HHC 2 BCT

I plan to put it in a savings deposit plan to be prepared for my future.



SPC Anthony Mack
Unit: 2-6 IN

I will put it in low risk mutual funds and then roll that over into high risk stocks.



1LT Daniel Cross
Unit: 1-35 AR

Invest it and put it towards Graduate School.



PFC Jon Beige
Unit: 1-41 SIG

Pay off my car loan.

Next Week: What is your New Year's resolution this year?

Questions and Photos by PFC Jeremy Neece



Why “Striker Torch”?

Operation Torch, during World War II, was the first combat action of which the 2nd Brigade took part. Below is an excerpt from the unit history.

The Second Brigade of the First Armored Division was organized on 5 April 1942 at Fort Knox, Kentucky, as Combat Command B. In those days, the Soldiers of the Brigade, their tanks, and other fighting equipment were forged into the spearhead for the action in World War II.

During Operation Torch, the Second Brigade deployed as part of the North African invasion force and was committed in the first armored fight of the war. Bloodied during the landing at Algeria and the desert reaches of Bizente, Tunis, and Kasserine Pass, the young unit was forged into the decisive force that defeated Rommel’s veteran African Corps. Following victory in the African continent, the Second Brigade fought as part of the U.S. Fifth Army’s primary strike force in Italy.

(Unit History as posted at www.globalsecurity.org)



SGT Doug Yonker (bottom) & PFC Joseph Bettacavoli (top) of C Co., 2-6 IN practice their marksmanship skills. Photo by SFC David Dockett



CPL Terry Bullard of C Battery, 4-27 FA sights in on a collimator during his section’s table evaluations. Photo by PFC Jeremy Neece



PFC Allen Crandall of HHC, 1-6 IN at the M16/M4 qualification range. Photo by SFC Nick Wilkinson

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This Edition will be on our website soon.

We’re looking for any type of submissions to include: letters, articles, comic strips or artwork, and photographs.

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