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Desert Voice Magazine
Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

May 2, 2007

JCOOC

Joint Civilian Orientation Conference

Civilian leaders train with Third Army/U.S. Army Central



DV Contents

Page 3

Training officer at Camp Buehring doing what he loves best: preparing troops for combat

Page 4

Joint Civilian Orientation Conference: civilian leaders get the chance to experience the life a deployed Soldier in Kuwait, train with Third Army/ U.S. Army Central

Page 8

Passing the test...New Stryker vehicles test-firing at Udairi Ranges

Page 10

Bowling at Camp Patriot unites troops from different nations

Page 11

May in Third Army History

Page 12

Army Divers preview -- check next week for full story

On the cover

A Soldier works with a Joint Civilian Orientation Conference attendee during the weapons-familiarization section of JCOC at Camp Buehring, Friday

Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

Soldiers need to improve their foxholes by maintaining a positive attitude, approach

As we look forward to all the events and tasks that are going to happen throughout the year, let's remember to work on improving our foxhole.

I use that terminology from time to time as an expression for Soldiers to understand how to improve their overall lives. As we continue

into this year, some resolutions are successful and others are not.

But I challenge each Soldier to improve their foxhole at all times. As Soldiers, improving the foxhole is a saying to live by.

It's really a simple idea derived from a simple scenario. If you're out in the field, and you have to stop and dig a foxhole for self-protection, you'll work on making it a better fighting position depending on how long you're there.

By improving your foxhole, you improve your surroundings, your workplace, your relationships and your own self-image.

We need to find ways to improve ourselves every day by constantly challenging ourselves to learn more, exercise more and listen more to our families, friends and colleagues.

By doing this, we can become better Americans and better Soldiers.

So, get out to the gym, get out and



Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe
Third Army Command Sergeant Major

play a basketball game with your friends.

And improving your foxhole isn't just about self-improvement. It's also about improving your relationships with family and friends. Call home

and talk to your parents or your kids more often.

Repair any estranged relationships.

The message I'm trying to get across to you is that you don't need to begin or end resolutions with each new year. You can do this every day; you can start over any time – you decide.

The best way to start improving your foxhole is to start the day with a good attitude. Try and look at things in a positive way – by doing this, you will naturally start to feel better.

When all the little things at work start to drag you down, take a few moments to go outside and collect yourself. Look around you and appreciate your life.

Deployments can be a great place for Soldiers to improve themselves.

If you have not started improving your foxhole, start today – make this the first day of the rest of your deployment.

“Third – Always First”

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(Below) At the Camp Buehring Training Village, managed by Capt. Kenneth Smith, Soldiers hone their urban warfare skills.

(Inset) Capt. Kenneth Smith



Capt. Kenneth Smith

The Village Person

Sgt. Thomas L. Day
Desert Voice Staff Writer

When Capt. Kenneth Smith, 33, talks about his current assignment as operations officer for the Kuwait Armed Forces Training Center, it becomes clear how well his personality fits his job. “What I like about this job...it’s training Soldiers. I’m very passionate about it. I just enjoy it. I’ve always enjoyed training.”

And training is exactly what this Tempe, Ariz., native is doing. Nearly every servicemember serving in Iraq – American and coalition – has been through the training center before moving north.

Smith, a training officer with Third Army/U.S. Army Central, often oversees the training of huge numbers of Soldiers. “We’ve had months as low as 900 and we’ve had months as high as 35,000.”

Typically, troops spend about 15

days at Camp Buehring, according to Smith, with 10 of those days devoted to rigorous training at the training center – counter-IED measures, first aid and combat tactics are some of the most dominant subjects of training. The Kuwait Armed Forces Training Center is comprised of two components. Just outside Smith’s office at Camp Buehring is the “Training Village,” which aggregates combat simulation trainers, medical training, IED training, classroom training and an urban operations training area.

Several miles down the Kuwaiti horizon are the Udairi Range Complex, the second arm of the Kuwait Armed Forces Training Center.

Troops training here, regardless of their unit, temporarily fall under the administrative control of Third Army/USARCENT.

“We want to take proven tactics that are working in Iraq and we want to translate those into viable training missions,” Smith said. “We want to be able to take what’s working and what’s helping in Iraq and replicate that as well as we can here.

“We’re in a unique position because we’re close enough to the fight to get a feel for it and feel its impacts, but far enough to it take a step back (and) do the analysis,” he added.

Col. David Rodgers, the training operations officer for Third Army/U.S. Army Central, is more cogent when asked about his mission. “The way I look at it, we’re in the warfighting business and the warfighter is our customer.”

For Smith, this is his second tour in Southwest Asia, having served as staff officer for the 25th Infantry Division in Kirkuk and Tikrit from January 2004 to February 2005.



Sgt. Sarah Scully
Desert Voice staff writer

Braced against a strong, blustery wind, burdened by body armor and blinking away stinging sand, civilians held onto machine guns in the Kuwaiti desert and fired bullets into targets.

Nominated by the military, 45 Americans holding positions of leadership in education, government and industry arrived at Third Army/U.S. Army Central's training ground in Kuwait April 26 to experience the life of a Soldier.

For nearly 60 years, the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference has helped civilians understand and appreciate

what servicemembers go through on a daily basis.

"What's most impressive is how committed the Soldiers are and how proud they are to serve their country," said Chris J. Kanazawa, president and chief executive officer of Parker Ranch in Hawaii, the fifth-largest cattle ranch in America.

"This allows us to go back and share with our respective communities how well-trained our Soldiers are [and] how dedicated they are to the mission."

During two days of orientation and training with USARCENT, the civilians gained an overall view of Third Army's mission in supporting

the Global War on Terror from servicemembers met at the chow hall and firing ranges.

"This is a great chance to see men and women of the Armed Forces – this is your Army," said Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army/USARCENT commanding general.

"We're proud of what we do."

While at Camp Buehring and the Udairi Range Complex, they also learned some of the rigorous training processes Soldiers must complete before deploying north to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Flipped upside down in an up-armored Humvee, they scrambled to

perience

▶ Joint Civilian Orientation Conference offers civilian leaders the chance to experience the life of a deployed Soldier



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea

get out of the vehicle after a rollover while remaining calm and maintaining security, while on the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer.

It's just a taste of dangers Soldiers face while on convoys.

They got even more understanding when they became gunners on a convoy out at the Udairi Range Complex where simulated explosions and gunfire lent realism to the exercise.

"I was really awed," said Amy Coen, president of Population Action International, an independent research and advocacy organization based out of Washington, D.C.

"I now have some slight appreciation

Continued on next page



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

(Above) Ann Sloane, CEO and owner of Sloane and Hinshaw, Inc., practices performing a functions check on a .50 caliber machine gun during the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference in Kuwait, Friday.

(Above left) Dean Jernigan, president and chief executive officer of U-Store-It Trust, with the help of a Soldier from the 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, Alaska National Guard, eyes his target prior to firing a M4 rifle during the close quarters marksmanship exercise, April 27. Jernigan was one of 45 participants during the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference.



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

(Top) Deepak Advani, chief marketing officer for Lenovo, based in Morrisville, N.C., gets tips from a Soldier while firing the M4 rifle during a live-fire range at Camp Buehring, as part of Joint Civilian Orientation Conference.

(Top right) Gary Cohn, superintendent of the Port Angeles, Wash., School District, fires simulated rounds on the Engagement Skills Trainer 2000, as part of Joint Civilian Orientation Conference.

Story continued from page 5

for how scary it really is.”

Firing a weapon for the first time, Coen cocked her helmet to one side and adjusted her Interceptor Body Armor before settling down in the sand.

“It’s surreal,” she said. “Firing the gun was easier than I thought, but everything that went with it was so hard.”

Many of the participants said they wanted to experience life in a combat zone to see beyond the media’s reporting and hear the troops’ opinions.

“I learned that they actually want to know what we’re doing over here,” said Pfc. Philip Matz, a 20-year-old truck driver and gunner from San Diego, Calif., stationed with 89th Transportation Company.

“It was nice because they cared.”

A few of the participants felt a connection to the troops because they or their family members also served

in the military.

“I’m very proud to be out here,” said Jay Elmore, a Navy Vietnam War veteran and partner at the law firm, Bondurant, Mixon & Elmore in Atlanta.

“I’m most impressed at the risk involved and the professionalism of the Soldiers that are involved in these convoys.”

The civilians also learned close quarters marksmanship and medical training from Soldiers and former military now working as contractors with MPRI.

“It’s nice for them to see what we actually have to go through,” said Spc. Michael Galore, an infantryman with 3rd Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment, from Bethel, Alaska.

Galore helped the civilians learn how to fire a variety of weapons and answered questions from James Schmitt, the mayor

of Green Bay, Wis., about his life back home and his unit in Kuwait.

“It’s work for us over here, but it’s also family over here for us,” said Galore. “It’s good that they got to see how we’re doing.”

Before leaving the training grounds in UH-60 Black Hawks and MH-53E helicopters, the participants reflected on their experiences and talked with Whitcomb about Third Army’s influence on the war.

“We have our young men and women in harm’s way defending our country, and I think we owe it to them to learn as much about their experience as possible,” said Kanazawa, whose father served as an Army captain in World War II.

“They’re making a difference.”



Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day



Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea



Photo by Sgt. Thomas L. Day

(Above left) Dr. John D. Musil, president and chief executive officer of The Apothecary Shops, based out of Scottsdale, Ariz., was assigned to be the turret as a gunner during a convoy exercise, April 27. Musil, along with his fellow JCOC participants experienced war-like situations such as how to encounter vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and deal with displaced civilians.

(Above right) Keith J. Krach, chief executive officer of 3 Points LLC, mounts a M1 Abrams tank with Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army/U.S. Army Central commanding general, during the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference in Kuwait.

KUWAIT

A 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division Stryker vehicle test-fires at the Udairi ranges in Kuwait after Sgt. 1st Class John Abronski (right), a 4-2nd platoon sergeant, calls for fire on the radio.



Stryker

New Stryker vehicles tested

Sgt. Thomas L. Day
Desert Voice Staff Writer

The 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division is making a debut of sorts. For its first time in combat, the newest edition of the Stryker vehicle will roll into Iraq, under the direction of this Fort Lewis, Wash.-based unit.

The arrival of the vehicles drew a visit from Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb, Third Army/U.S. Army Central commanding general, during their training at the Udairi ranges in Kuwait.

What Whitcomb saw were armored vehicles that test the bounds of imagination. 2nd ID commanders talk

about their Strykers as if they were characters in a science-fiction film.

“What we’re doing here is making sure the computer solutions match up with the ballistics of the barrel,” said Maj. Keith Markham, the unit’s executive officer, as his Strykers were test-firing, April 20.



r Force

for combat at Udairi ranges

The Strykers use digital targeting to mark the wind factor, the cant of the vehicle, as well as the barometric pressure. The newest edition includes a mounted Mobile Gun System, an update which gives unprecedented firing capability for the Stryker vehicles.

The Mobile Gun System adds a 105-mm cannon, a mounted M240C machine gun and a pedestal-mounted M2 .50 caliber

machine gun to the four-year old Stryker.

The test fires at Udairi marked the first time the new unit had fired with live, explosive rounds.

“We are an Infantry support vehicle,” said Sgt. 1st Class John Abronski, a 4-9th Infantry platoon sergeant. With operational security concerns, Abronski would not discuss specifics about how the Stryker will be

used in Iraq, only providing this admonition: “If I was looking down this barrel, I’d consider it a deterrent.”

1st Lt. J. Dow Covey, a platoon leader with 4-9th Infantry, credits the Stryker as the primogeniture of the World War II-era assault guns. “This is just the next generation of that [Assault Gun]... It’s new to use, but the concept is actually very old.”



Photos by Sgt. Sarah Scully

(Above) Maj. Quasem Al-Fadhi, a Kuwaiti sailor and athletic director, throws a bowling ball down the lane to try and pick up a spare at the bowling alley near Camp Patriot during a bowling competition April 18. The lanes are named, from left to right, "Mary, Kate, Ashley and Ahruba."

Bowl Games

Bowling alley on Camp Patriot unites servicemembers from different nations

Sgt. Sarah Scully
Desert Voice staff writer

Concentrating carefully on the target, balancing neatly on his toes and sending the ball rolling toward the pins, a Kuwaiti sailor waited intently to see if he got a gutter ball or a strike.

Behind him, several of his comrades and opponents peered to see the results. Strike! Supporters clapped encouragingly as the competitors prepared to battle and win.

Most Americans stationed in Kuwait do not know that a bowling alley is available for use to servicemembers near Camp Patriot. Many also are not aware that Kuwaitis love to bowl.

"We invite the Americans to come and join us," said Maj. Quasem Al-Fadhli, Kuwaiti sailor and athletic director. "We are all a small family."

Learned from Europeans and Americans, Kuwaitis have been playing the sport for decades. And for the past 10 years, American and Kuwaiti servicemembers have gotten to know each other and build friendships through the sport of bowling.

There's just something about wearing

less than attractive shoes, clutching a multi-colored bowling ball, sliding gently on the floor as the ball heads down the lane and hearing the pins fall to the ground that brings people together.

Alas, there is no beer.

But, there is plenty of friendship.

Eliciting comments and smiles, players from different countries compete and form camaraderie.

The four-lane bowling alley looks just like one in America. Comfy, beige seats frame a computerized tracking system. Spectators can lounge in several couches behind the lanes.

Two teams can play at once, and the colorful walls are decorated with bowling pins.

The bowling balls are returned automatically

to the players, and the pins are automatically picked up and swept away.

That's pretty high-tech in a deployed Soldier's combat zone environment.

While there are many sports available at the athletic center for servicemembers from different countries to compete and get to know each other, the bowling alley is unique.

"More people should come down here and play," said Petty Officer 1st Class Brian Gonzales, a Naval Coastal Warfare Squadron 34 administration specialist. "It's a lot of fun."





May in Third Army History

May 14, 1919 -- French Marshal Ferdinand Foch, the overall commanding general of all the Allied forces, draws up plans for the Third Army commander to move into Berlin in the event that Germany should refuse to sign a peace treaty, ending World War I. Up to that point, Third Army had been used to occupy northern and central Germany under the command of Maj. Gen. Joseph T. Dickman. Two weeks later, Koch informed Gen. Jack Pershing that his Allied forces needed to be ready to resume offensive operations.

May 6, 1945 -- Under the command of Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, Third Army liberates the Czechoslovakian town of Pilsen and western Bohemia. The Soviets liberated the rest of Czechoslovakia and, in accordance with Allied agreements with the Red Army, Patton quickly withdrew Third Army to hand the rest of the country to Soviet occupation. Patton, a feverish anti-communist, had planned on marching into Prague before his advance was recalled.

Information courtesy of GlobalSecurity.com and Czech Republic Radio

Just One Question...

“What do you like about your job?”



“We make an impact on the war. We’re making a difference, because we see the end result of seeing the Soldiers get the ammunition where it’s needed.”

Master Sgt. Lisa Mrotek
Fishersville, Va.
Senior Ammunition NCO
377th TSC Munitions Branch



“I can’t say. People would get mad, because my job involves preparing Article 15s on people.”

Sgt. David Marczak
Ocklawaha, Fla.
Military Justice NCO
Office of the Staff Judge Advocate



“Every week, I get to go to the (U.S.) Embassy and meet people from the Army, Air Force and Marines. It’s not on Camp Arifjan, and it’s a good way to see how all the groups interact.”

Lt. Joe Hayes
Ashland, Mo.
S2, Counterterrorism Officer
Navy Customs Battalion Sierra



“I drive heavy equipment, and it’s something I never thought I’d be doing.”

Sgt. Sarah Rout
Pottersville, Mich.
Supply Sergeant
107th Quartermaster Battalion



“Mostly, preparing medical personnel for combat operations and ensuring all Soldiers are equipped, trained and executing combat missions.”

Sgt. Maj. Ly Lac
St. Cloud, Minn.
Surgeon Sergeant Major
Third Army/U.S. Army Central Surgeon



Hometown Hero

Master Sgt. Carlo Vassalle
377th Theater Support Group

Vassalle is the Distribution Integration Branch noncommissioned officer in charge for the 377th Theater Support Group.

Vassalle talks about why he misses his hometown, Kansas City.

“Food, real food. The barbeque...Arthur Bryant’s Barbeque.”

UNDERWATER ENGINEERS



Sgt. Nathan Haney performs a visual check with Spc. Jonathan Luchak before he dives into the water during a partnership dive on the Kuwaiti shores of the Persian Gulf.

For full story, check out the April 12 issue of the Desert Voice.

MWR Events

May 2 - May 31

Life Support Area

May 5 -- Sombrero Relay, 2:00 p.m., Scorpions Den

May 6 -- Sears Tower Stepper Challenge, 4:00 p.m., Cardio Tent

May 19 -- Hip Hop and R&B Night, 10:00 p.m.-1:30 a.m., Scorpions Den

May 28 -- Memorial Day "Deal or No Deal," 7:30 p.m., Scorpions Den

Camp Arifjan

May 5 -- Cinco de Mayo Celebratoin, 7:00 p.m., Zone 6 Stage

May 13 -- Mother's Day Fashion Show, 7:00 a.m., Zone 1 Community Center

May 20 -- Who Wants \$100 Dollars, 7:00 p.m., Zone 6 Community Center

Camp Buehring

May 5 -- Cinco de Mayo Latin Night Dance, 9:00 p.m., Oasis

May 12 -- Camp Barbeque, 12:00 p.m., State Area

May 13 -- Mother's Day Fun Run, 6:00 a.m., Green Beans

May 28 -- Memorial Day Barbeque/Talent Show, 2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m., Stage Area

Camp Patriot

May 5 -- Cinco de Mayo, 7:00 p.m., MWR Stage Area & Tent

May 11 -- Mack the Comedian's Final Show!, 8:30 p.m., MWR Stage

May 27 -- Indy 500 Race Day, Time TBA, MWR Movie Tent

Camp Virginia

May 5 -- "Step Up Your Game" Competition, 7:00 p.m., Dusty Room

May 11 -- Dead-lift Competition, 7:00 p.m., Fitness Tent

May 25 -- Cycle Competition, 7:00 p.m., Fitness Tent

May 26 -- Doubles Horseshoes Tourney, 7:00 p.m., Horseshoe Pits

May 27 -- Memorial Day Splash Bash, 1:00 p.m., Volleyball Courts

Camp Navistar

For information, call 430-3759