

DV

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

May 16, 2007

Flightline to frontline

Tracking the distribution of medical supplies from Kuwait to Iraq, and the Soldiers who get it done



DV Contents

Page 3

Third Army/U.S. Army Central gives Kenyan soldiers tour of specialty schools

Page 4

Central Command Deployment and Distribution Center manages movement to and from Southwest Asia

Page 6

Flightline to frontline: Tracking the distribution of medical supplies from Kuwait or Qatar to Iraq

Page 8

Biggest Loser competition kicks off at Camp Arifjan

Page 10

335th Theater Signal Command Soldier wins powerlifting competition

Page 11

Marines land at Camp Buehring for sustainment training

Page 12

Gear up for the Armed Forces Day 5K Run/Walk

On the cover

Spc. Jasmine Bryant, controlled substance specialist, assigned to the 32nd Multifunctional Medical Battalion, inventories and stockpiles controlled substances in a locked vault.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea

From the Top

Q&A with Third Army commander

Question: What is a typical day like for you as the Third Army/U.S. Army Central commander?

Question submitted by Maj. Dragomir Marinkovich, G7 Engineers

Response: Whether I begin the day in Kuwait or Atlanta, I start by reading the names and circumstances of our servicemembers who have fallen throughout the theater. I follow that by

reading the news, the intelligence and operational reports the staff has prepared overnight.

A typical day at Camp Arifjan finds me visiting troops and units in Kuwait, attending briefings or meeting with dignitaries. Like everyone, I have a boss, the CENTCOM commander. And like all commanders, I must keep him informed.

I'll work in a PT session during the course of the day, preferably around lunchtime.

I spend my late evenings working e-mails (Washington is wide awake) or reading professional and leisure material. I enjoy history.

A typical Sunday finds me at church in the morning, at the office in the afternoons, followed by visiting troops on Arifjan and patients at the Naval hospital.

I do a lot of traveling throughout our AOR visiting other Army or National leaders and engaging with our trainers. We conduct over 100 exercises or engagements with 23 of 27 countries in the AOR.

Question: What can be done to speed up the entrance to Camp Arifjan? *Question submitted by Sgt. Alonso Zavalasoto, MARCENT Driver*

Response: The security of our camps is a primary concern for me and our first line is the outer perimeter at our gates. Area Support Group – Kuwait (ASG-KU) has instituted many measures to improve the security and safety of our servicemembers and the contractors who enter Camp Arifjan. These measures are taken into consideration and weighed against the current threat level and force protection conditions we face in Kuwait.

Even with our protective measures in place,



Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb
Third Army Commanding General

most of the wait is due to a large number of vehicles trying to get on camp.

With this in mind, we created high and low occupancy vehicle lanes to encourage car pooling. In addition to this, a parking lot was built to encourage people to park and ride with others and use the bus service readily available. These two measures significantly reduce access

time to Camp Arifjan for those willing to "Park and Ride" and

enabled us to maintain a strong force protection stance.

We will continue to improve access to Camp Arifjan as long as we are able to maintain the force protection our servicemembers and contractors need.

Question: What can be done to allow the servicemembers in USARCENT the opportunity to interact more with the local Kuwaitis? *Question submitted by George and Kim Hartzog, Joint Portal Shield System Civilian Contractors*

Response: Protecting the force is one of my top priorities while accomplishing the mission. Therefore, commanders must manage our presence here in Kuwait as in other areas of our responsibility. Since we are classified in the same category combat zone as Iraq and Afghanistan with the same entitlements, the opportunity to engage with the local Kuwaiti populace will be on limited bases and in most cases for official engagements. While not visible to most, there continue to be threats to US forces that we assess frequently and I make decisions and we update our force posture based on the threat level to our servicemembers. With this said, our Morale, Welfare and Recreation professionals offer small group tours that include cultural, educational, dining and shopping tours in Kuwait. Each of these opportunities are based upon force protection and threat level assessments that will ensure we stay safe and provide a positive, safe environment for our host nation. ASG Kuwait continues to look for other opportunities and if you have ideas, we'd be happy to consider them.

Patton's Own!

DV
Desert Voice
Magazine

Volume 28, Issue 46

The Desert Voice is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of the Desert Voice are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Third Army Public Affairs Office. This newspaper is published by Al-Qabandi United, a private firm, which is not affiliated with Third U.S. Army. All copy will be edited. The Desert Voice is produced weekly by the 40th Public Affairs Detachment. Find us online at www.arcent.army.mil.

Third Army Commanding General
Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb
Third Army Command Sgt. Maj.
Command Sgt. Maj. Franklin G. Ashe
Third Army Public Affairs Officer
Col. John B. Snyder
Third Army/USARCENT Dep. PAO
(FWD)
Lt. Col. James A. Sams

Questions? Comments? E-mail the editor at desertvoice@arifjan.arcent.army.mil

40th Public Affairs Detachment
Commander
Maj. April N. Olsen
40th Public Affairs Detachment NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Patrick N. Moes
Desert Voice Editor
Sgt. Chris Jones
Desert Voice Staff Writers
Sgt. Thomas L. Day
Sgt. Sarah Scully





Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Watson

Kenyan soldiers Staff Sgt. Hillary Osore, Lt. Charles Kirichiu, Maj. Ahmed Saman, and Sgt. Nicholas Ndwinga listen to a U.S. Army Pathfinder School instructor as he demonstrates slingshots. The Kenyans spent a week at Fort Benning to gain a better understanding of Army run specialty schools.

Third Army/U.S. Army Central gives Kenyan soldiers tour of specialty schools

Staff Sgt. Mark Watson
129th MPAD

Kenyan soldiers received an inside look at several U.S. Army specialty schools at Fort Benning, Ga., this week in hopes of taking lessons learned back to Kenya to start their own specialty schools.

The visit was part of the Third Army/U.S. Army Central's Theater Security Cooperation program that hosts foreign soldiers and sends U.S. Soldiers to participating countries to interface with their counterparts.

"This builds relationships at all levels from the most junior enlisted to the most senior general," said Navy Lt. Jesse Nice, who is assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Kenya. "It is an information exchange."

He added of the foreign junior soldiers who see our processes, when they become senior enlisted or commissioned officers, they will then be in a place to help strengthen their military. He said this experience with TSC is one that can last for the length of their careers.

The Kenyan soldiers received an up-close look at Airborne, Jumpmaster, Pathfinder, Drill Sergeant School, and a Noncommissioned Officer Academy. While Kenya currently has an Airborne school, they would like to start a Ranger indoctrination program. The training will

be based off the U.S. program and the soldiers used as American Rangers are used.

"Our Rangers will be a fast strike force," said Maj. Ahmed Saman, the commandant of the Kenyan parachute training school. "They will be trained in counter terrorism and for other high speed operations."

The visiting soldiers included Saman; Lt. Charles Kirichiu, a platoon commander for their Ranger strike company and a recent graduate of the U.S. Army Ranger School; Staff Sgt. Hillary Osore, a parachute jumping instructor; and Sgt. Nicholas Ndwinga, platoon sergeant for the Ranger strike company.

Third Army conducts TSC activities throughout 24 countries in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. This includes enhancing or establishing relationships with regional national militaries, which promote's bilateral and multilateral interoperability, strategic access and operational basing.

With these programs, Third Army helps its partner countries to strengthen their defense relationships and improve their ability to effectively participate in coalition operations.

Third Army TSC events can take many forms and can be conducted in the United

States or in the partner country.

"In the future, our Ranger instructors may have the opportunity to go to Kenya to advise their Ranger instructors," said Maj. Andrew Harmon, the Ethiopian and Kenyan country desk officer for Third Army.

The TSC program benefits both countries, he said. Not only does it broaden the Army's contacts throughout the area of operations, but the Soldiers gain a mutual understanding of each others culture. The program also supports the Global War on Terrorism.

"This is a way to make our allies stronger so they can take care of their problems internally, which in turn helps us," Harmon said. "If we can have allies that are both with us in thought and the fact they are willing to devote troops to fight basically our enemies, we are in effect helping the United States as a whole, so that we don't have to send our Soldiers out to fight in other countries."

"Third Army is the critical piece that brings everything together," Harmon said. "We have our senior leadership, Lieutenant General (R. Steven) Whitcomb who meets with leaders in Kenya, and together with Theater Security Cooperation, we work together to address the needs of both countries."

Joint service team accomplishes

Central Command Deployment and Distribution Operations Center manages movement of troops, supplies

Staff Sgt. Houston F. White, Jr.
Third Army/USARCENT PAO

Responsible for the formidable task of coordinating the transportation of supplies, equipment and personnel throughout the Third Army/U.S. Army Central theater of operations, the members of the U.S. Central Command Deployment and Distribution Operations Center, commonly known as CDDOC, use a

variety of methods to accomplish what has been half-jokingly referred to as “Mission Impossible.”

Separated into subdivisions that link available land, sea and air assets with theater requirements, the operations center is adept at overcoming virtually any obstacle that presents itself, said Air Force Master Sgt. David Oates, airlift validator, CDDOC.

“Some of the problems we run into include not having the whole

picture of what we want to do, and the weather factor plays into our operations,” he added. In the first case we ask questions to get a clearer picture of what is going on, and since we can’t change the weather, we simply have to adapt and overcome it by shuffling and reprioritizing our plans.”

By fielding a joint military staff that uses the knowledge and specialized talents of each of the four major



(Left) Marines attached to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (15th MEU) are seen at Camp Patriot, Kuwait. The 15th MEU was redeploying after completing their mission in Iraq.

(Top) Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) are seen at Camp Patriot, Kuwait, after completing their mission in Iraq.

Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brian Anderson

ishes 'mission impossible.'

d Distribution Operations Center plies to and from Southwest Asia

services, CDDOC is able to stay flexible and meet requirements, said Marine Lt. Col. James M. Blair, requirements chief, CDDOC

"We have more than 50 personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines all serving joint assignments that possess a broad amount of experiences. They can be accessed as a resource in order for us to achieve a high level of fidelity in providing direct support to the warfighter on the

front lines," said Blair, a native of Augusta, Ga.

Teamwork plays an integral part in making such a challenging mission happen, he added, noting that the CDDOC's cohesion is tied directly to the detailed training program each person receives throughout their tenure with the unit.

According to Lt. Col. Kevin LaFrance, Army senior sustainment

officer, the diversity that exists within CDDOC is an advantage rather than a hindrance.

"I don't know if one service could do our mission alone," said the Satellite Beach, Fla., native. "Because we bring the expertise of each individual entity to the table, it creates a greater focus and efficiency, since all of the services working together gives them more of a stake in the process."

"Having such a vast pool of knowledge to draw from really gives you a better understanding and appreciation of the broad scope of operations we have going on," said Oates, a native of Buena Park, Calif.

Also at stake is the bottom line of the men and women who serve forward in war zones from Iraq to Afghanistan and rely on the unseen influence of CDDOC, so it is not surprising that the personnel who contribute to the mission take pride in the results of their efforts.

"It's good to know that we are helping both the warfighter and the humanitarian missions that occur in this part of the world," said Oates. "I feel a lot of personal satisfaction knowing that we not only deliver supplies and equipment to the guys on the battlefield, but we are also sending personnel back home to their families on [rest and relaxation] flights."

Whether handling the routine passage of personnel in and out of theater or the more complex undertaking of a major force rotation, the CDDOC mission remains the same, Blair said.

"Our job is to develop a transport plan for the customer with minimal delays, so in a way, CDDOC is sort of like a travel agent," he said. "We'll book you door-to-door and get you where you need to go. It's a 'mission impossible,' but we do it every day."



Photo by Sgt. Chris Jones

nit get some rest, while awaiting their ride out to ships anchored off the coast of completing their mission in the Anbar Province, Iraq.

board a bus at Camp Virginia, Kuwait. The buses then took them to an airfield to fly

Flightline to front

Tracking the distribution of medical supplies from Kuwait to Iraq, and the Soldiers who

Staff Sgt. Alex Licea
Third Army/USARCENT PAO

Numbers are a big part in the day-to-day operations for Soldiers assigned to Alpha Co., 32nd Multifunctional Medical Battalion, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Alex Licea

Spc. Shawn Johnson, a medical lab technician with the 32nd Multifunctional Medical Battalion scans a unit of blood prior to handing it off to Staff Sgt. Patrick Kaer, platoon sergeant of the medical lab team. The battalion currently stocks up to a 1,000 units of blood at any given time. The Fort Bragg, N.C.-based battalion can pack, ship and track the delivery of critical units of blood to hospitals around Iraq in less than four hours and as fast as two.

Take Maj. Christopher David, for instance. As a support operations officer, the Seekonk, Mass. native has to analyze more than \$10 million worth of medical equipment and supplies being shipped and distributed into Iraq, track the movement of more than 615,000 pounds of cargo a month supporting

over 450 units in Iraq. There is also the added pressure of coordinating and tracking dozens of ground and air movements leaving each day to six forward distribution teams in and around Central and Southern Iraq dispensing medical supplies for immediate use, a mission supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

However, for David, there is only one number that he looks at.

“The only figure I care about is decreasing the waiting time of units receiving their medical supplies,” said David, a father of two. “Although we have a good turnaround time from request to delivery of the product there is always room for improvement. That’s what’s important. Getting the right product to the right unit in the fastest time.”

The 32nd MMB serves as the only major medical supply and distribution center in Iraq. From bandages to blood, the 32nd MMB facilitates more than 450 customers in Iraq.

“We receive up to 400 customer requests a day,” said Spc. Mathavy Yasa, a native of Pomona, Calif., who works for the control center. “We ensure that we are not only tracking the items but that they get to their final destination. Following up is key.”

Along the logistical aspect of their mission, the unit is also responsible for the maintenance of all medical equipment in Iraq as well as reacting to emergencies such as making an urgent shipment of blood in just a matter of hours.

Army and Air Force assets based in Kuwait and Qatar account for 70 percent of medical supplies movement in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa on a daily basis.

Most of these supplies are housed and flown in from the United States Medical Material Management Center-Southwest Asia or (USAMMC-SWA) based at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar.

“The center stocks more than 2,700 lines of medical supplies,” said Lt. Col. Jonathan Branch, commander of the USAMMC-SWA. “We have the available stock to supply all the major hospitals in Iraq and Afghanistan with what they need.”

After the cargo is packed and placed on pallets, the cargo is taken by air to its destinations. Half of all shipments to Iraq are sent to

Outline

Supplies from get it done

the 32nd MMB's forward distribution teams located at medical shipment hubs across Iraq; the other half goes to the 32nd MMB headquarters in Balad.

"Medical logistics is not perfect, but we are all a team and make it work," said David. The USAMMC-SWA is under the control of the 377th Theater Support Command and Third Army/USARCENT, based out of Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Third Army/USARCENT, the Army component for the U.S. Central Command, is responsible for the logistics support for all military assets entering Iraq, Afghanistan and across the Middle East and Central Asia.

Maj. David Hammer, medical logistics officer for Third Army/USARCENT, sets the policy of all medical logistics entering the CENTCOM theater. Hammer said most of the supplies then travel to the 32nd MMB, who places orders of dozens of items to keep their shelves in stock. There is a similar set-up in place for Afghanistan.

"On average, ARCENT typically transports 450,000 pounds of medical supplies each month all across the theater," said Hammer. "That equals to 15,000 pounds a day."

When supplies are moved, military and civilian personnel hold the cargo in a 35,000 square foot warehouse and then distribute it by air to troop clinics across Iraq. The use of ground movement is also used and accounts for one-third of medical movement in the region. Due to the constant threat of improvised explosive devices, the command is slowly trying to eliminate that.

"We are trying very hard to maximize use of air assets to get us off the roads," said David. "However, sometimes the



Spc. Rashard Banks, medical maintenance technician, assigned to the 32nd Multifunctional Medical Battalion, works to repair a blood fluid analyzer. The native of Newport News, Va., and his team receive more than 200 work orders a month on equipment such as CAT scans, X-rays and chemical scanners. The battalion maintenance team is the only maintenance medical team in Iraq.

only way we can receive is by convoy."

Despite only having 10 months of being home between combat tours, the 32nd MMB is a cohesive group of Soldiers.

"We have a great bunch of Soldiers out here," said Sgt. 1st

Class Corey Lord, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the medical maintenance section.

"For us, its about making sure the customers have everything they need at all times," said David. "The efforts really do save lives every day."



Photos by Sgt. Sarah Scully

Contestants weigh in to begin Camp Arifjan's "The Biggest Loser," a spin off the popular television show.

Biggest Loser competition kicks off

Sgt. Sarah Scully
Desert Voice staff writer

He wasn't fat enough.

After putting together a videotape detailing his personal struggles and his hope for the future, Staff Sgt. Michael Smith didn't make the cut for "The Biggest Loser" television show.

The 5-foot-6-inch Soldier weighed in at 240 pounds. But he soon found out that he had to weigh at least 300 pounds to even get considered for the show.

Two years later, he found his opportunity at Camp Arifjan.

Enrolled in a smaller version of "The Biggest Loser," sponsored by the Troop Medical Clinic and Fitness Center, Smith stepped onto the scale and started his transformation into an improved Soldier and father.

"The Army's giving me the chance to accomplish my dream," said Smith, a 38-year-old father of four children and native of Chicago. "I want my Soldiers and my kids to look at me as an example – I don't want to let them down."

Smith and more than 120 other servicemembers deployed

in support of Third Army/U.S. Army Central – of all ages and ranks started the two-month competition with a weigh-in May 4.

Made up of four members each, the 35 teams with names ranging from "Fatty McFat Kids" to "The Motivators" will find out who lost the greatest percentage of body weight to win the title of "The Biggest Loser" on Independence Day, July 4.

They'll get weighed every other week and take mandatory nutrition and exercise classes to ensure a successful lifestyle change.

Troops can often struggle between demanding physical requirements from the military and the food-loving culture of the civilian world. With a growing obesity rate in America, some servicemembers find it harder to deny temptation and find themselves getting taped and flagged for being overweight.

Navy Lt. Cmdr. Paul Allen saw an opportunity to help those troops.

As the Expeditionary Medical Facility – Kuwait nutritionist, he went to the Fitness Center staff and asked if they could put together a program styled after the TV show.



(Above) Servicemembers take off their boots to weigh in, before the start of “The Biggest Loser,” May 4 at Camp Arifjan. The two-month competition will end on July 4, with the winning team going to the those who lost the greatest percentage of body weight.

(Top right) Before beginning “The Biggest Loser,” servicemembers eat a hearty meal, May 4 at Camp Arifjan.

ff at Camp Arifjan

“I’ve had a lot of people come in and ask me to help them,” said Allen. “By doing this, we can address all aspects in a fun and motivating way.”

The competitors have to avoid the fatty foods and sweets served at the dining facilities, while training together to burn off the extra weight.

“It’s an opportunity to get fit, to learn a little bit more about nutrition and exercise, to work together with their teammates toward a common goal, and to have fun while they’re doing it,” said Lu Albanese, Fitness Center supervisor and native of Morton Grove, Ill.

“I expect that everyone will have a wonderful time.”

With temperatures soaring above 100 degrees in the desert and with missions always needing to get accomplished, troops have an added need to get fit.

It’s not just about looking good in uniform.

Smith has high-blood pressure, and his extra weight limits his physical capabilities.

“I’m trying to make a life-style change, and I think this is the start,” said Smith, who has already lost several pounds and plans to lose 25 pounds by competition’s end.

He believes in accomplishing his goals, and after rounding up



Lu Albanese, a Camp Arifjan fitness center supervisor, checks the final teams of those who are participating in “The Biggest Loser.”

three other motivated Soldiers, he named their team, “The Believers.”

“If you don’t have any faith, any confidence, to pull yourself through...it’s not going to happen,” said Smith. “You have to believe.”



Courtesy photos

(Top left) Capt. Terry Butler, current operations officer for the 335th Theater Signal Command, takes part in the United States All Armed Forces European Powerlifting Championships. Butler won the overall competition, lifting a combined weight of 1,625 pounds for squats, bench press and dead lift. The overall winner is calculated by body weight and amount lifted.

(Top right) Capt. Terry Butler holds his first-place trophy after the powerlifting competition.

335th Theater Signal Command Soldier wins powerlifting competition in Europe

Lt. Col. Mike Walton

MNF-I Coalition Information Sharing

Constant discipline coupled with a desire to compete at the highest level recently brought Capt. Terry Butler the recognition he had long sought in the world of powerlifting.

Butler trained for the United States All Armed Forces European powerlifting Championships in April while assigned to the 335th Theater Signal Command (Provisional) at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, supporting Third Army/U.S. Army Central.

The top lifter overall at the competition — measured by comparing body weight to amount lifted — was 182-pound Butler, who totaled 1,625 pounds of squats, bench press and dead lift.

Butler, a native of Altoona, Pa., was the only Soldier currently assigned to a combat zone who competed. He serves as the current operations officer in the 335th's operations directorate.

At night, he transforms into a fitness machine, lifting various weights, holding them upwards for seconds and then lowering them to the floor.

His powerlifting career began in 1996,

when he began playing football for Gannon University in Erie, Pa.

"I started getting serious about lifting, in order to get stronger, faster and better at football," said Butler, who played linebacker at Gannon. "I wanted to prove that even though I was only a freshman, I could be as strong as the seniors on the team."

Butler also played three years of semi-pro football in Rothenberg, Germany.

His powerlifting career hit a detour in 2006, when he was reactivated from the ready reserve and back to active duty. At the time he was called back, he was working as an information assurance manager for the Department of the Army in Wurzburg, Germany.

"Being called back to duty to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom has been a very hard time in my life," said Butler. "But I would not let this set me back from accomplishing the goals in my life."

According to Butler, mental toughness is just as important as physical strength.

"Powerlifting is as much of a mental game as it is a physical strength game," said Butler. "If you do not have your head on straight and believe that you will lift the weight then you

can forget about doing it."

Butler uses the same drive and determination in his workouts to help him perform his duties with the 335th.

"You do not have to go around the gym like a tough guy for people to notice," said Butler. "People will know who does the work, and when it comes down to crunch time, they will always come to you or expect you to take the lead."

Lt. Col. Deborah Vacik, chief of operations division for the 335th, is Butler's supervisor at work.

"He has always accomplished every mission with dedication and professionalism, never letting his situation interfere with the completion of his duties," said Vacik.

Butler is also the 335th's Master Fitness Trainer.

He regularly lends his personal training skills to help Soldiers within the command.

"I always tell them results do not come easy; if they did, then everyone would be a world record holder, and Olympian or Mr. Olympia," said Butler. "If you work hard, you will see results."



Fit to Fight

Photo by USMC Staff Sgt. Trent Kinsey

Marines from Battalion Landing Team 2/2, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit, conduct a physical training run at Camp Buehring, May 4. The 26th MEU was in Kuwait from April 24-May 4, conducting scheduled sustainment training. The routine deployment also included exercises in Djibouti, Kenya, along with various other locations in Southwest Asia. According to 26th MEU commander Col. Gregg A. Sturdevant, "Kuwait was the only real opportunity we've had to get the majority of the [26th] MEU off the ships during this entire deployment. Camp Buehring offered a chance to conduct individual and unit training and focus on maintenance sustainment." The stop in Kuwait was the fourth ashore exercises during the deployment, which began Jan. 6.

Just One Question...

"What did you get your wife/mother for Mother's Day?"



"I got my wife some perfume from one of the bazaars in Balad, Iraq."

Sgt. Chris Reilly
Wallingford, Conn.
Quality Control Technical Inspector
Task Force AVCRAD



"I ordered her roses and carnations, because they're her favorite."

Raye Honan
Killeen, Texas
Administrative Assistant
Zone 1 Fitness Center



"I called her and said, 'Happy Mother's Day.' I sent some flowers to the house."

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Daniel Curtis
Selma, Ala.
Aviation Maintenance Officer
2nd Bn., 227th Aviation Regiment



"I sent her a card - I love her, and she loves me."

Griffin Falvey
Louisville, Ky.
Assistant Station Manager
American Red Cross - Camp Arifjan



"A Vermont teddy bear, because I can get a mommy and two little cubs embroidered with the children's names."

Sgt. Daniel Bennett
Eldora, Iowa
NCOIC, Arifjan Food Inspection System
949th Medical Detachment



Hometown Hero

Master Sgt. Anthony Dill
336th Transportation Group

Dill is the movement supervisor, and he oversees all convoys moving from Kuwait to Iraq.

Dill talks about why he misses his hometown of Chicago.

"Chicago is just a melting pot for everybody - you can get anything you desire in Chicago."

ARMED FORCES DAY

★ DESERT 5K RUN/WALK



19 MAY
0600 HRS
ZONE 6

**PRE-SIGN-UP NOT
NECESSARY!**

**MEET AT THE TAC IN ZONE 6 FROM
0400-0530 HRS TO RECEIVE YOUR
SWATCH/NUMBER**

**AWARDS PRESENTED TO 1ST, 2ND AND
3RD PLACE FINISHERS IN EACH
CATEGORY**

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