



Anaconda Times

OCTOBER 31, 2007

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

You can do it, DPW can help

Self help center is here
for do-it-yourself projects

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Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

T-wall art

Take a look at some of
the artwork around LSAA

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Web Image

Boy Scout recognized

TF XII pilots fly flag, recognize
new Eagle Scout

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Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Capt. Brian Stickney, the company commander for A Co. 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, gives his crew a safety briefing before they take off on a "VIP Mission." Stickney is also a pilot in "VIP Company."

'VIP Company' transports Coalition Force's top leaders

by Sgt. Brandon Little

12th Combat Aviation Brigade

LSA Anaconda, Iraq - As the rotor blades slowly begin to spin on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter here, its crew conducts last minute checks.

The flight crew from A Co. 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment, focuses intently on the mission at hand as the blades begin to pick up speed.

Their mission is to transport a few of the most senior and influential personnel in Iraq.

Transporting passengers ranging from the Commander of Multi National Forces-Iraq to CBS news anchor Katie Couric each day has earned A Co. the nickname "VIP Company."

"Because of the threat to wheeled vehicles, we have been tasked with the vital mission of transporting VIPs," said Capt.

Brian Stickney, the commander of A Co. "Flying with us gives leaders the freedom to move around the battle field."

Accomplishing this mission isn't an easy task considering there are only 55 personnel in "VIP Company."

"Everyone in our company flies except our supply clerk," said 1st Sgt. Allen Morgan, from A Co. 5-158th. "In addition to my duties as the company first sergeant, I am also a door gunner."

A Co. handles any VIP request to fly regardless of what time of day or night. These requests are usually sent to them a few days in advance.

"We fly when we are needed, so we are on their schedule," said Stickney, also a pilot in "VIP Company." "There are usually about 12 missions a week, and

that can mean anywhere from 60 to 80 hours of flying each week."

This company has also transported U.S. Senators and many Iraqi dignitaries.

"I love to fly, and I think our mission here is very important," said Spc. Jimmy Blundell, a crew chief in A Co. "Plus I get the opportunity to meet a lot of important people."

To accommodate some of these important people, these aircraft have been equipped with a few special features.

"We have a special type of communications console with radios and computers that allow commanders to track the battle on the ground," said Stickney.

Although these aircraft may have high tech communications equipment and influential passengers on the inside, the out-

side looks like any other Black Hawk.

"I don't feel like we're a bigger target, because we look like any other aircraft and we fly the same areas," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Susan Pensinger, a pilot in "VIP Company." "I don't think anyone knows the difference between the people we carry and who everyone else carries."

Each VIP mission transports up to ten personnel, so it's pretty much the VIPs and whoever they invite to fly with them, said Stickney.

Every time the rotor blades of a UH-60 Black Hawk from "VIP Company" slowly begin to turn, and last minute checks are completed, each flight crew member is focused on transporting the most senior and influential personnel in Iraq.

CFC encouragement letter to the troops

Dear fellow servicemembers and civilian staff personnel:

As we begin the 2007 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) season, I encourage each member of the 316th ESC and subordinate units to join Command Sgt. Maj. Davis and me in making 2007 a banner year through your charitable donations to noteworthy organizations which help improve the quality of life for all.

CFC is the world's largest and most successful annual workplace alms campaign. There are more than 300 CFC campaigns throughout the country and internationally which raise millions of dollars each year. These pledges made by federal civilian and military donors support eligible nonprofit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

The theme for this year's campaign is "Help Our World Forward." Based on the movie, "Pay It Forward," we are reminded that any one of us can make a difference.

All of us, at some point in our lives, will be touched by the services provided by one or more of the nonprofit agencies your gifts will assist. If you or your children have ever been in the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts; if you have ever taken a Red Cross CPR class; if your children use the YMCA or even a military base Child Development Center, you have already seen the benefits of CFC contributions.

Many people do not realize just how important each and every contribution to the CFC can

be. A mere pledge of \$2 every pay period when added to hundreds of other similar contributions will make a major impact in helping people.

By giving we can lend a hand to those that are less fortunate. CFC is our way to give back; it is our way to help make this world a better, healthier and safer place to live. I encourage each servicemember and civilian serving here to participate. See your local CFC representative for further information on how you can make a donation.

Sustain the Victory!



Gregory E. Couch
BG, U.S. Army
316th ESC Commanding General



Point of contacts for making donations

Below are the points of contact for more information on making a donation to the Combined Federal Campaign. Please feel free to contact the designated personnel with any questions you may have.

ONLY 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) HHC Soldiers should contact 1st Lt. Thomas Bourne, 316th ESC, HHC via DSN (318) 433-2424 or email : thomas.bourne@iraq.centcom.mil

ALL other subordinate units need to contact 1st Lt. Jean-Paul Padron, 316th ESC, G-1 Plans and Operations via DSN (318) 433-2505 or email: jean-paul.padron@iraq.centcom.mil

Provost Marshal Office: Weekly police blotter

Week of Oct. 14- 20

The PMO conducted: (147) security checks, (40) traffic stops, issued (25) DD Form 1408 Armed Forces Traffic Ticket, registered (304) vehicles on the installation, (32) Common Access Cards were turned in to PMO and (1) lost weapon was reported.

The PMO is currently investigating: (8) cases of Larceny Government/Personal Property.

PMO Recommendations: Secure all personal belongings. Secure all government issued equipment. Lock your doors even if you are away for five minutes. Travel with a Battle Buddy (especially during hours of darkness). Practice weapons retention; know where your weapon is at all times and always maintain positive control. Maintaining positive control of your identification card at all times is just as important.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua J. Garcia

PMO tag team Senior Airman Dorina Kelly and Airman 1st Class Stephanie Moreno, enforce traffic and speeding laws here.

ANACONDA TIMES

316th ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch

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3rd Sustainment Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
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1st Sustainment Brigade
CJSOTF-AP

316th ESC team visits Kirkush, assesses readiness



Courtesy photo

Col. Michael Timberlake (front) of the 316th ESC examines weapons at the Kirkush military training base in October.

by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - A recent mission of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) (ESC) Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) cell and the 213th Area Support Group (ASG) has advanced efforts to stand up Iraqi Security Forces.

The groups visited the Kirkush military training base near Kirkuk earlier this month to confer with staff officers from the coalition and to assess the readiness of Iraqi forces in the area.

"The 316th ESC is assisting with coordinating training to enhance the capabilities of the Iraqi Army," said Col. Michael Timberlake, chief of the 316th ISF cell.

"As the Iraqi Army continues to develop, the need for specialized training in various MOSs (military occupational specialties) continues," said Timberlake, adding that the Iraqi Army has been receptive to logistical training and seems eager about future training opportunities.

While many new Iraqi soldiers are learning primary military functions and spending time on basic skills training, a

"This is a win situation for the 316th ESC."

Col. Michael Timberlake
316th ESC

few smaller Iraqi operations, such as an Iraqi central issue facility, are now being independently administered by the members of the Iraqi Army.

"The 213th command is having an impact on improving the capabilities of the regional support unit at Kirkush," said

Timberlake.

Areas still needing operational support include small arms repair, ammunition storage and vehicle maintenance capabilities. Medical issues, including supply and distribution, are still a focus, and food preparation and dining facilities are also being assessed.

Personnel at Kirkush were in good spirits, however, and were happy to see their higher command and American trainers pay them a visit.

"This is a win situation for the 316th ESC," said Timberlake.



Courtesy photo

Officers visiting the Iraqi security forces cell near Kirkuk take turns inspecting small arms confiscated from insurgents in October.

Worship services

PROTESTANT - TRADITIONAL

Sunday 7:30 a.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel
9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel
10:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
7:30 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

PROTESTANT-GOSPEL

Sunday 11 a.m. MWR East Building
Noon Freedom Chapel (West Side)
2 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel
3:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
7 p.m. Provider Chapel

PROTESTANT-CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

Sunday 9 a.m. MWR East Building
10 a.m. Town Hall (H-6)
2 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
6:30 p.m. Eden Chapel
7 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
Wednesday 8 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

PROTESTANT - LITURGICAL

Sunday 9 a.m. Episcopal (Freedom Chapel)
11 a.m. Lutheran (Provider Annex)
11 a.m. Episcopal (Tuskegee H-6)

PROTESTANT- MESSIANIC

Friday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

PROTESTANT-PRAYER SERVICE

Saturday 7 a.m. Signal Chapel

PROTESTANT-SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Saturday 9 a.m. Provider Annex

PROTESTANT-CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday 2 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS

(Sacrament of Reconciliation 30 min prior to Mass)

Saturday 5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
8 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West side)
9:30 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

11 a.m. Provider Chapel

Mon-Sat 5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MEETING

Sunday 2 p.m. MWR West

LATTER DAY SAINTS- (LDS)-(MORMON)

Sunday 1 p.m. Provider Chapel
3:30 p.m. Freedom Chapel
7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday 7 p.m. Signal Chapel

ISLAMIC SERVICES

Friday 12 p.m. Provider Chapel

PAGAN/WICCAN FELLOWSHIP

Thursday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel

BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel

Contraband: it's not worth your career

by Spc. Jay Venturini

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - If there is one thing every servicemember here should know it is the first general order. Most see it as a vital part of staying mission ready. For those who don't, the Provost Marshal Office (PMO) is always vigilant for contraband and violators.

A common misconception is that General Order No. 1 one only applies to American servicemembers, which is not true. The order applies to anyone within the perimeter of LSA Anaconda.

"General Order No. 1 prohibits many things from the area of operation," said Tech. Sgt. Kevin Copeland, an investigator with the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron (ESFS), PMO. "The most common violations are possession of alcohol, pornography and steroids."

Some people will try almost any avenue to smuggle contraband onto the base. Most of it comes through mail from the U.S. and trucks traveling to and from various destinations throughout the Iraqi footprint.

The PMO can conduct health and welfare inspections in the different civilian areas here at any time, and in military quarters if they have reason to suspect the presence of contraband, or upon a request from a unit's commander. To date, they have



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

Tech. Sgt. Kevin Copeland, an investigator with the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron (ESFS), Provost Marshals Office (PMO), performs a drug test on suspected marijuana, which was confiscated in a health and welfare inspection here. The PMO makes frequent health and welfare inspections throughout the post.

been very successful in finding illegal items.

"In a recent inspection of 20 rooms we confiscated ten bottles of alcohol, 91 items of pornography and over \$4,000 worth of steroids," said Air Force Master Sgt. Isaac Resurrection, a 332nd ESFS,

PMO. "It was a successful inspection."

There are several different punishments that can be administered when a person is caught with contraband. For civilians it usually means immediately being barred from anywhere on LSA Anaconda.

For servicemembers, the repercussions can range from nonjudicial punishment, Uniform Code of Military Justice action, to a military court-martial, to possibly being given a dishonorable discharge.

"Your career is worth a lot more than having these items," said Copeland. "If you have contraband, you will be caught."

After the investigation process is over and the contraband is no longer needed, it's destroyed, either at the burn pit or with a compacter for metal items.

The PMO urges everyone here to not have or buy any items that are illegal or that are in violation of General

"In a recent inspection of 20 rooms we confiscated ten bottles of alcohol, 91 items of pornography and over \$4,000 worth of steroids. It was a successful inspection."

Air Force Master Sgt. Isaac Resurrection
332nd ESFS, PMO

Order 1. If you have contraband you should destroy it immediately.



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

(Above) There are many things considered contraband here. Alcohol and steroids are the biggest offenders for servicemembers, while many weapons are confiscated from the local nationals and contractors.

(Right) Air Force Tech. Sgt. Kevin Copeland, an investigator with the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, shows an out-of-production British Sterling submachine gun which was retrieved from an Iraqi national during a search.



Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler

Taji Soldiers prepare for it all at Thunderdome

by Sgt. Rob Pinches

302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TAJI, Iraq – Sitting on benches flanking an elaborate sand table in a warehouse here nicknamed the Thunderdome, Soldiers of the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB) stand up one by one, say their name, truck number and their duty within that vehicle. The projection on the wall lists all the vehicles in the convoy going out that night, in marching order; ready for yet another mission.

This is what happens every time a combat logistics patrol (CLP) plans to leave Taji.

Planning starts with the naming of a mission commander and gun truck commander. The mission commander has authority when the CLPs are on a forward operating base and the gun truck commanders have control when they are outside the wire for security purposes, said Lt. Col. Lee Ellis, 1103rd CSSB commander.

Since the CLPs are made up from multiple transportation companies, the commanders are usually chosen from the units providing the most vehicles and personnel for the mission, said Ellis.

There are usually two Thunderdome briefs for each mission. The first is held roughly 18 hours before the CLP leaves, usually around 6 a.m. since most depart at night.

The morning brief in Thunderdome covers the route to be traveled in-depth, including when attacks are most likely to occur, weather



Photo by Sgt. Rob Pinches

Sgt. Brian Stafford, Bravo Battery, 2-138th Field Artillery, uses Thunderdome's sand table to show that evening's convoy route.

conditions, high incident areas, vehicle tasks (aide and litter, recovery, etc.), mission timeline, communication requirements and anything else specific to the mission.

Soldiers from each gun truck team then go through battle drills using miniature wooden vehicles along a miniature road on the side of the sand table. Everything from traveling under a bridge to vehicle rollovers and water egress are covered.

Following a question-and-answer style back-brief, the Soldiers are taken out in front of Thunderdome and do a walk-through of each battle drill.

At 8 p.m., a second brief is held with all the Soldiers in the CLP. At this point, any updates or changes are put out as well as the most recent intel on their routes.

Involving all the Soldiers in the brief makes sure everyone knows what's going on, said 1st Lt. Jerran Hill, S-2 for the 1103rd CSSB.

"I think the rehearsals for us, getting the intel together, is great. It gives everyone, every member of that crew, knowledge on the enemies' (tactics, techniques and procedures). I don't have to worry about 'did it make it down the chain?' I know most platoon size elements don't get that," said Hill.

Maj. Joseph Thomas, 1103rd CSSB support operations, adds "the whole process of mission analysis is passed down. It's more confirmation on knowing the mission; that Soldiers are tracking everything for the mission."

Constant communication and awareness of changes is used to maintain a high success rate on missions. After every leg of the mission is completed, the Soldiers participate in a 'hot wash' to go over key points, said Thomas. Every mission also ends

with a back brief to the unit leaders.

"The mission commander and gun truck commander give us a back brief after every mission," said Thomas.

"The commanders recreate the route in Thunderdome and go over lessons learned; anything that stands out, any improvements that can be made," adds Hill. "They let us know if there are any changes to the route." Hill continues, "That information is taken and the land owner for that area is contacted to find out why the changes were made. It will be checked out."

The goal is to make sure every CLP is a success not only in terms of completing a mission but in keeping everyone as safe as possible.

"We'll continue to improve this process," said Thomas, "to make sure everyone gets back inside the wire alive."



Scheduled activities for National American Indian Heritage Month

Oct. 31-Nov. 2
Basketball Jamboree
East Fitness Center
starting at
7 p.m.

Nov. 10
Heritage Hunt
(Time and place to
be determined)

Nov. 17
Fry bread Social
Outdoor pool
starting at 6 p.m.

Nov. 25
5k Run
Holt Stadium
starting at 6 p.m.

Nov. 30
Social gathering
(Time and place to
be determined)

Thursdays in November:
Movies with American
Indian theme will be played
every Thursday at the MWR
Building

Dining facilities will have
Native American displays and
foods throughout the month of
November.

*If you are interested in
future activities or would like
to volunteer during American
Indian Heritage Month,
please contact Staff Sgt. Kurt
W. Chebatoris at DSN (318)
433-2011 or via email: kurt.
chebatoris@iraq.centcom.mil



Photos by Sgt. Rob Pinches

(Above) Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Barron, Bravo Battery, 2-138th Field Artillery, shares with his Truck Commanders their next show time. (Right) Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Barron of Bravo Battery, 2-138th Field Artillery, leads Soldiers in a walk through of battle drills in preparation for that evening's combat logistics patrol.



Q-West highlights National Disability Employment Awareness Month

by Pfc. Gaelen Lowers

3rd Sustainment Brigade

FOB Q-WEST, Iraq – Forward Operating Base Q-West brought to light National Disability Employment Awareness Month Oct. 16 during a ceremony with this year's theme, "Americans with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team."

"National Disability Employment Awareness Month is an opportunity to recognize the contributions and accomplishments of Americans with disabilities and to underscore our nation's commitment to advancing employment opportunities and ensuring equality for all Americans," said Maj. Stephanie Gradford, 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. "Disabled Americans strengthen our country, and their achievements serve as a constant reminder to other nations that Americans don't give up no matter what obstacles are placed before them."

National Disability Employment Awareness Month has a long history. In 1945 Congress enacted Public Law 176, which designated the first week in October as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed from the title to recognize the needs of all Americans with disabilities.

In 1988 Congress expanded the week to a month and changed its name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

October has evolved as the kick-off month for year-round programs that highlight the abilities and skills of Americans with disabilities. Each year during the month of October, Americans acknowledge the employment accomplishments and potential of individuals with disabilities.

The opening remarks were given by Col. Darrell K. Williams, commander for the 3rd Sustainment Brigade and FOB Q-West, who reminded us of the disabled veterans and wounded warriors.

"If you take a look at the various creeds and mottos of the armed forces you will find that many of them contain some of the same (term) such as duty, honor, coun-



Photo by Pfc. Gaelen Lowers

Soldiers raised their lit candles to show respect for disabled Americans during the National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebration at Forward Operating Base Q-West Oct. 16.

"If you take a look at the various creeds and mottos of the armed forces you will find that many of them contain some of the same (term) such as duty, honor, country, courage, commitment and selfless service. These words are without question truly descriptive of our wounded warriors."

Col. Darrell K. Williams
3rd SB

try, courage, commitment and selfless service," said Williams. "These words are without question truly descriptive of our wounded warriors."

Williams spoke about the number of disabled vets and how they are rising.

"Currently there are over three million disabled veterans and wounded warriors in the U.S.," said Williams. "As America continues to defend the nation's interests abroad we are seeing the number of wounded warriors increase, sadly, on a daily basis. I dare say they have done more than their share and we owe it to them to use every opportunity we can to acknowledge their sacrifices."

The celebration featured singing performances by Capt. William S. West,

332nd Rear Operations Center (Area Support Group), Wisconsin National Guard, who sang "God Bless the USA." There were also performances by Sgt. Joey Jaques, 962nd Ordnance Company, Sgt. Zoraya A. Brown, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 87th CSSB, and Sgt. Kieana Peluso, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade.

After the performances, each member of the audience participated in a candle lighting to represent the strength and unity of America.

"As you extinguish your candle remember to carry its light in your hearts forever as a reminder of the courage and commitment of Americans with disabilities," said Gradford.



Photo by Pfc. Gaelen Lowers

Sgt. Joey Jaques, 962nd Ordnance Company, 87th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, sings and plays his "Mississippi saxophone" during the National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebration at Forward Operating Base Q-West.



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

Senior Airman Leon Garza, 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron (ESFS) Provost Marshals Office Airman, drills a screw into what will be a new file shelf at the DPW self help shop here. At the self help shop a servicemember can make a stand for an IBA, a TV and so much more.

DPW: some assembly required

by Spc. Jay Venturini

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq — Servicemembers are always trying to make their rooms feel a little more like home. That's why they buy televisions, videogame systems and stereos. The question is, where do you put it all?

That's where the department of public works (DPW) self help shop comes in. At the DPW you can build a TV stand, a book shelf or anything else you can think of.



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

Senior Airman Andrew Klodt, who works at the DPW self help shop, builds a flag box here.

“What Soldiers have to understand is we are still in a war zone so you can't do a lot of the more detailed work to their projects, we don't have the money for it.”

Staff Sgt. Aaron Alley
2-159th AVN BN

“We are here for the Soldiers to build their own projects,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Eric Garcia, the DPW noncommissioned officer in charge. “We will give advice to the Soldiers but they have to build the projects themselves.”

There are many different types of tools, both power and manual, that are available for the Soldiers to use.

“This place is great,” said Staff Sgt. Aaron Alley, Echo Company 2-159th Aviation Battalion. “This is much easier to come here and build something than try to do it with materials we find lying around.”

Unfortunately there aren't unlimited resources available which means Soldiers can only use so much material.

A Soldier can only use \$250 of materials which equates to about ten sheets of plywood, which is plenty for most products.

“What Soldiers have to understand is we are still in a war zone so you can't do a lot of the more detailed work to their projects, we don't have the money for it,” said Garcia.

With subject matter experts, wood and building tools at the DPW, the projects are only limited to a servicemember's imagination.

Mother, son re-unite in Iraq

by Senior Airman Travis Edwards
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing PA

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq - Deploying to a strange and unfamiliar base for the first time can be difficult. Throw in parting with your four-month old son for the next four months of his life, and it's enough to make a grown man cry.

Such is the case for one senior airman deployed from Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., except he has a shoulder to lean on, his mom's.

Senior Airman Owen Brickell, a sheet metal fabricator with the 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron here, spends most of his weeks fabricating replacement parts for damaged structures on aircraft, but what would normally be a day off running on the treadmill by himself, turns into a day he and his mom can spend bonding.

“It's reassuring to have my mom here with me. If I need to talk to someone about anything, she is right there for me, and I appreciate her for that,” said Airman Brickell.

His mom, a reservist stationed at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, already had orders to Iraq when she heard the news of her son.

“We already knew I had orders to spend four months in Iraq,” said Maj. Brenda Owen, Airman Brickell's mother and an emergency room nurse at the Air Force Theater Hospital. “But we weren't sure when or if Owen was coming at all.”

Major Owen is the night shift head nurse for the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, helping save lives almost everyday.

Amazingly, it worked out for the two. “It was hard to leave my wife and new son, but knowing that my mom was going to be there a month after me gave me something to look forward to,” he said.

Ironically, the mother and son see more of each other in Iraq than they have in years.

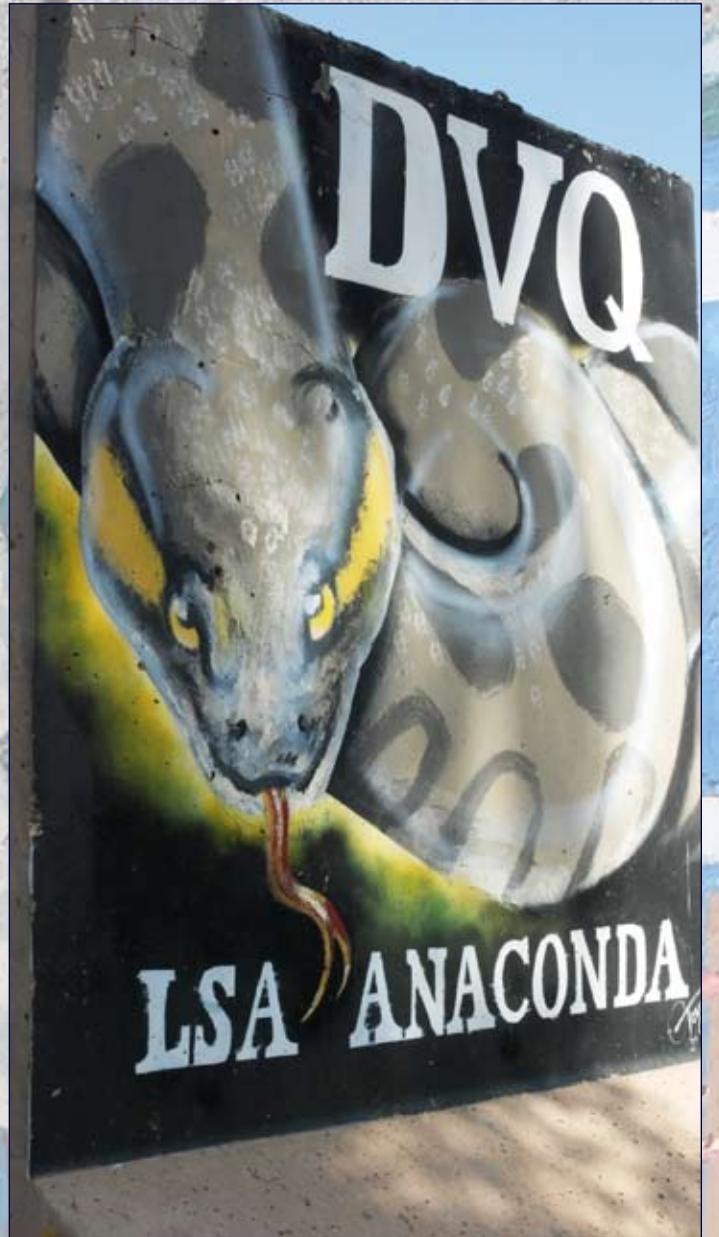
Airman Brickell is scheduled to redeploy this month, where he will leave someone he loves, to find comfort again in the embrace of his wife and child.



Air Force Photo by Senior Airman Travis Edwards

Maj. Brenda Owen, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group emergency room nurse, stands with her son, Senior Airman Owen Brickell, 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron sheet metal fabricator. The mother and son have enjoyed their time here together as they do not get the chance to visit each other often in the states. Major Owen is a reservist from Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, and Airman Brickell is stationed at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark.

Art of A



anaconda



Connecting war front to home front through free phone calls, Internet

by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Anaconda Times staff

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq- For many servicemembers, the toughest part about deployment is saying “goodbye” to family and friends. But thanks to a few determined Soldiers from the 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB), and patriotic civilians, the Freedom Calls Foundation and Broadwave Corporation, servicemembers here are saying “hello” to loved ones through telephone and the Internet quickly, easily and for free.

“I couldn’t believe it,” said Sgt. Jason Molina, the battalion commander’s driver with the 264th CSSB. “I just dialed my (home) phone number and seconds later I was talking to my wife. No calling card, no ‘all circuits are busy,’ no waiting in line for a phone. Just her beautiful voice and then my daughter squeaking, ‘daddy, daddy, I love you.’ It means everything to me just to get to hear that.”

Molina was among the first to enjoy free phone calls here provided by Soldiers who on their free time installed and now maintain communications equipment supplied by the non-profit organization, Freedom Calls Foundation. The new phone and Internet café opened Oct. 10 in a bunker which servicemembers converted into a comfortable, functional getaway from work and war.

Deployed servicemembers and their families have been taking advantage of Internet and telephone communication tools for several years. The Freedom Calls Foundation is unique in that services and equipment are free to military personnel thanks to contributions by corporate sponsors and individual donors.

In order to make the calls and Internet possible though, servicemembers on the ground needed to be willing to set up, monitor and maintain the satellite dish, phones and computers. A location was also needed. A handful of Soldiers on this largely Marine base, including Lt. Col. Jason Vick, commander, 1st Lt. Richard Telesco, information management officer and Spc. Jefferey Sosack, an electronic devices repairer, all with the 264th stepped up to the plate.

“None of us are satellite engineers so we learned on the job through calls back and forth with Chris Cook from Broadwave (the corporation that donated the satellite.) My guys spent hours everyday getting this to work,” said Telesco.

Getting all the equipment to work was a mix of art and science, said Sosack. Volunteers initially perched the satellite dish atop a platform and con-

nected all the components but obtained no signal.

“We would angle the satellite one way and get nothing. Then we would move it a little to the left, and get nothing, a little to the right still no signal. We did this ‘dance’ with the satellite, but just couldn’t get the thing to work. It was so frustrating at times,” said Sosack.

“Sometimes we’d say, ‘Screw it. Let’s try again tomorrow,’” said Telesco.

It was eventually learned part of the equipment was not operational so these dedicated warriors had to wait for a replacement to come in. When it did, they quickly got the satellite up and running.

“When we finally were able to make that first call, we were like, ‘alright, we did it!’ All of our effort was worth it,” said Sosack.

The first call placed was from Sosack to Chris Cook, the director of Broadwave Corporation.

Since that call, Soldiers and Marines here have been exchanging “I love you(s)” with their significant others, hearing their babies’ first words and catching up on all the latest gossip from friends back home. The result is improved morale and increased ability for troops to cope with long separations and extensions, said Telesco. Loved ones back home can also call directly to phones in the café by using an 800 number set up by Broadwave Corporation.

For more information about the Freedom Calls Foundation and Broadwave Corporation, go to www.freedomcalls.org and www.broadwave.com.



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Sgt. Jason Molina, the battalion commander’s driver with the 264th CSSB, calls his wife and children in the U.S. using free phones and service provided by the Freedom Calls Foundation.



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Pictured above is a satellite donated by Broadwave Corporation and the Freedom Calls Foundation. Soldiers in the 264th CSSB based at Al Taqaddum worked for hours during their free time to set the system up.

Former Iraqi citizen returns to serve as Air Force officer



Air Force Photo by Airman 1st Class Jonathan Snyder

ALI AIR BASE, Iraq – Capt. Rasul Alsalih, a project officer for the 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, discusses a construction project with an Iraqi national. An Iraqi by birth, Captain Alsalih fought against Saddam Hussein shortly after Desert Storm and found refuge in an Army camp in Saudi Arabia. He was educated in the U.S. before seeking a commission in the Air Force. He is one of four servicemembers recognized as an “Outstanding American by Choice” this year.

TF XII pilots fly flag to recognize Boy Scout's accomplishment

by Sgt. Brandon Little

12th Combat Aviation Brigade

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - There have always been two U.S. flags inside the cockpit of every AH-64D Apache taking off or landing here until Monday, Oct. 15.

That was the day a few Soldiers from Task Force XII decided to make room for one more.

In addition to the flag on each of the two pilots' uniforms, a flag would also be flown for 17-year-old John Willis Morris.

Morris, a member of Boy Scout Troop 97 in Katterbach, Germany, achieved the difficult task of becoming an Eagle Scout.

"I used to be a Boy Scout myself," said Chief Warrant Officer Kevin Oaks, an Apache pilot from 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment helping with the flag mission. "I know how difficult it is to become an Eagle Scout. You really have to work for it, and only a small percent of Scouts make it."

Most young men that join the Boy Scouts are around 11 years-old, and it can take them anywhere from five to seven years to become an Eagle Scout; if they make it, said Sgt. 1st Class David Sweitzer, a former Scout Master and one of the organizers of the flag mission.

Sweitzer, a brigade aviation maintenance officer in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force XII, also has a son that is a member of Troop 97.

"Pretty much all the parents of the Scouts get involved, and that's what keeps the troop going," said Sweitzer. "So the request for the flag to be flown originally came from John's mother."

Chief Warrant Officer Keith Langewisch, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force XII, also an organizer of the flag mission, decided to place the flag in his pilot compartment during their flight.

"This is the first flag Task



Photo by Sgt. Brandon Little

Task Force XII Soldiers at Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq, hold the flag that will be given to an Eagle Scout in Germany, after being flown on combat service support missions around Iraq in an AH-64D Apache from 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment.

Force XII has flown for a Scout," said Langewisch. "It's always nice to do things for those guys."

Morris' flag will accompany Langewisch and Oaks as they fly the skies of Iraq providing combat service support for

troops on the ground.

"I know this will mean a lot to him," said Oaks. "So I'm more than happy to do."

America's warrior

by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

A snapshot of servicemembers in the Global War on Terrorism

Full name and rank: Tech. Sgt. Aldomar Genao.

Unit: 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron.

Job Title: Tech Control & Communications Operations, noncommissioned officer in charge.

Time in service: 11 Years.

Age: 29.

Hometown: Bronx, NY.

Pastimes: Latin dance instructor and DJ.

Life-changing event/moment: The birth of my son. Hopefully every man can attest to this. When you hold your first born for the first time, something changes inside you. All of sudden, all your previous priorities seem so trivial.

Lesson Learned: Too many to list, but if I had to choose one specific to being in Iraq, it would be: "You can never have too many baby wipes."

The person I admire the most: My Father, he is the reason I am the man I've become.

Why I joined the military: Serving in the U.S. Air Force has been a tradition in my family. It all began with my uncle retired, Master Sgt. Diomedes Genao, who served as an Air Traffic Controller. I remember as a kid looking at pictures he sent home in his class A uniform and thinking how cool it was to have an uncle who was in the Air Force. In high school I began as an Army JROTC cadet. Right out of high school I joined the Air Force through the delayed enlistment program. It has been 11 years for me since I joined the Air Force and it still feels like it was yesterday. Now my younger sister, 2nd Lt. Omayra Genao, is continuing our family tradition when she was commissioned in the Air Force last June.

If I wasn't in the military I would be: I joined the Air Force at the age of 17. I became an adult in the military and the Air Force way of life is all I have always known. While in the Air Force I have had the opportunity to work in three different career fields, beginning with the medical field, then personnel management and finally computer-communications operations. I have never thought about my life without the military. I will begin thinking about that as I get closer to retirement.

The one thing I would change about the Air Force: I would implement the warrant officer program. There are many capacities in the Air Force, where the utilization of warrant officers would benefit the Air Force tremendously.

Our sister services have validated its benefits time and time again.

The one thing I think the Air Force got right: One simple statement: "Quality of life."

What makes a good Airman: A good Airman is one who finds a healthy balance between his or her professional and personal goals, while being a good wingman to his fellow Airman, Soldiers, Sailors and Marines. Our Airmen must understand that they are ambassadors not only for the Air Force, but most importantly for our great nation.

What makes a good leader: Someone who's able to inspire others through leading by example. One who does not fear making the tough decisions, even when those around them may disagree. Leadership is not a popularity contest.

Motivations in life: My family. When all has come and gone, they'll be the ones by my side, no matter what.

Goals: Short-term, I will continue to focus on my education, fitness, professional and personal growth. Long-term, one day becoming a chief master sergeant, the top 1% of the enlisted force.

Best part of my life: Waking up everyday and knowing I am making a difference in someone's life. For me it happens daily as I am training or mentoring my young Airmen, or through my daily interactions with our sister services, civilians, and local nationals. Every person you come in contact, you have the opportunity to make a positive impact on their life. In the words of Maya Angelou, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."



Photo by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

Army marks 50 years since first Vietnam casualty

by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Jones

Army News Service

WEST POINT, N.Y. - A wreath-laying ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the death of the first U.S. service member to die in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam Conflict was conducted Sunday at West Point Cemetery.

Capt. Harry G. Cramer Jr. died Oct. 21, 1957 near Nha Trang, South Vietnam, from an explosion.

In 1957, Capt. Cramer was placed in command of a Mobile Training Team with the mission of organizing and training the cadre of the South Vietnamese Special Forces. A graduation exercise in late October was to include realistic ambushes and raids in a field about 10 miles south of Nha Trang.

At dusk on Oct. 21, Capt. Cramer was watching the initiation of the ambush drill. The official report of death states that a "TNT block exploded" while a trainee was "in throwing position." Two Special Forces medics who treated Capt. Cramer, however, said that several Viet Cong mortar rounds were also fired at the Special Forces advisors when the ambush drill began.

Capt. Cramer was a member of the United States Military Academy Class of 1946 and he was buried at the West Point Cemetery.

The wreath-laying ceremony was West Point's opportunity to render, on behalf of the Army, recognition to a



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Roger Jones

A procession opens a ceremony Sunday at West Point Cemetery commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first casualty in the Vietnam Conflict, Capt. Harry G. Cramer Jr. From left: Brig. Gen. Patrick Finnegan, dean of the Academic Board at the U.S. Military Academy; Kai Bolger, daughter of Capt. Cramer; and son Harry G. Cramer III. The flag carried is the original one used in 1957.

distinguished American leader and his family, according to the West Point Operations office. Additionally, because of CPT Cramer's position in history as the Army's first combat-related fatality in Vietnam, the ceremony afforded West Point the privilege to recall the sacrifices of all Vietnam Veterans, living and deceased.

The ceremony began with a procession that included: Harry G. Cramer III, son of Capt. Cramer; and his wife Kit; Kai Bolger, Capt. Cramer's daughter; and the grandchildren, Harry G. Cramer IV and Kelly Frazier.

Prior to laying the wreath, Harry Cramer III provided remarks that he felt best portrayed the life and death of his father: "First, I would like to begin by acknowledging the presence of my family. I would then like to acknowledge the contingent of H-2 cadets, the same company in which my father was a member," he said.

"Now, I would like to tell you a little bit about the man we called Dad," said Mr. Cramer. "My father, who was the son of an Infantry captain, always wanted to be a Soldier. He wanted to be like his father as well as his father's father who was a first sergeant in the Army."

"As a young man, my father took pride in finishing first. He was the youngest graduate of his West Point Class. He was the first USMA graduate to become a member of Special Forces and he was the first casualty of Vietnam. However, I can

if my father's death was a waste, I vehemently respond with a resounding No! My father set an example of what a warrior does. A country could conceivably fail its Soldiers, but a Soldier will never, ever fail his country, said Mr. Cramer.

Once Mr. Cramer had completed his remarks, the family, along with the Dean of Academic Board Brig. Gen. Patrick Finnegan concluded the ceremony by placing a wreath at the gravesite of Capt. Cramer.

assure you that if my father were present here today, he would tell you that he was involved in one too many firsts."

Mr. Cramer also said that his father served his country from his heart: "My dad was proud to be a Soldier. He wouldn't have had it any other way. He lived by a creed as a Soldier: Serve your country; be the Best you can be; Love your family and always place yourself last."

Upcoming sports on AFN

Wednesday 10/31/07 (Happy Halloween!!)

Pittsburgh Penguins @ Minnesota Wild live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
Portland Trail Blazers @ San Antonio Spurs live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 10:00 a.m. AFN/sports
Houston Rockets @ Los Angeles Lakers live 5:30 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 12:30 p.m. AFN/sports; replay 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports

Thursday 11/1/07

World Series: game 6 (if necessary) live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 2:00 p.m. AFN/sports; replay 8:00 AFN/sports
Dallas Mavericks @ Cleveland Cavaliers live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
Seattle Supersonics @ Denver Nuggets live 5:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

Friday 11/2/07

Virginia Tech @ George Tech live 2:30 AFN/xtra; replay 10:00 a.m. AFN/sports
Game Series: game 7 (if necessary) live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports
Phoenix Suns @ Seattle Supersonics live 5:30 a.m. AFN/sports
MLS Soccer playoffs: Teams TBD replay 7:30 a.m. AFN/xtra

Saturday 11/3/07

Nevada @ New Mexico State live 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
Philadelphia Flyers @ Washington Capitals replay 7:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: Teams TBD 7:00 p.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: Teams TBD 7:00 p.m. AFN/sports

Sunday 11/4/07

Oregon State @ USC live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports
NASCAR Busch Series: O'Reilly Challenge replay 4:00 p.m. AFN/xtra
NFL: Teams TBD 8:00 p.m. AFN/xtra
NASCAR Nextel Cup Series: Dickies 500 live 11:00 p.m. AFN/xtra

Monday 11/5/07

Cleveland Cavaliers @ Phoenix Suns 3:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
Dallas Cowboys @ Philadelphia Eagles live 3:15 a.m. AFN/sports

Tuesday 11/6/07

Philadelphia Flyers @ New York Rangers live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
Baltimore Ravens @ Pittsburgh Steelers live 3:30 AFN/sports
Dallas Stars @ Anaheim Ducks live 5:00 a.m. AFN/xtra

Shout outs from home

Cody Vest,

We miss you, we love you!
 We are very proud of you!
 For your safety, we pray
 Each and every single day!
 May God bless and guide,
 As your needs, He provides.
 Separated from family &
 friends,
 Some of us can't comprehend
 The sacrifices you make every
 day
 In order to serve the U.S of
 A.
 Our love we will continue to
 send,
 Until your time in Iraq draws
 to its end!
 All my love,
 your sis-in-law, LeAnn

Dana Howett,

Mom and Dad miss you very
 much. We can't wait for you
 to come home. Elizabeth
 misses you too and mentions
 you frequently. We pray ev-
 ery day for you safe return.
 Mom and Caron are looking
 forward to shopping trips and
 lunch dates. Love you, God
 Bless
 MOM & DAD
 ~Honey,
 You mean the world to us!
 We love you with all we have
 and can't wait for you to come
 home!
 There is not a breath I take,



Tim Bemiss
 With Love Daddy! From your Little Pumpkins ~ Happy Halloween :-)

a beat of my heart, when I am
 not thinking of you....you are
 the light of my life! I love
 you! Rich
 ~Mommy,
 I have been being good for
 daddy and have been learning
 a lot at daycare, but I miss you
 more with each passing day
 and can't wait for you to come

home! I am looking forward
 to you, daddy and I all singing
 "Danny Boy" together!
 Love Always,
 Emmy

Michael Acker,
 Hope you are doing well. I
 miss you and love you lots.
 Take care of yourself and re-

member I'm here waiting for
 you. Always yours, Paula

Jesse Bascombe,
 We miss you so much and
 can't wait for you to come
 home for "daddy daycare"
 again!
 Love,
 Shana and Brayden

Want to see
 your shoutouts
 here?

Your family can
 email us, send
 pictures at:



anaconda.times@
 iraq.centcom.mil

Subject: Shout outs

(Schedule is subject to change)

SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER	Wednesday, Oct. 31	
	5 p.m.	30 Days of Night (R)
	8 p.m.	Halloween (R)
	Thursday, Nov. 1	
	5 p.m.	Mr. Woodcock (PG-13)
	8 p.m.	30 Days of Night (R)
	Friday, Nov. 2	
	2 p.m.	Sydney White (PG-13)
	5 p.m.	3:10 to Yuma (R)
	8 p.m.	Dan in Real Life (PG-13)
	Saturday, Nov. 3	
	2 p.m.	3:10 to Yuma (R)
	5 p.m.	Dan in Real Life (PG-13)
	8 p.m.	The Kingdom (R)
Sunday, Nov. 4		
2 p.m.	Dan in Real Life (PG-13)	
5 p.m.	Sydney White (PG-13)	
8 p.m.	3:10 to Yuma (R)	
Monday, Nov. 5		
5 p.m.	Dan in Real Life (PG-13)	
8 p.m.	The Kingdom (R)	
Tuesday, Nov. 6		
5 p.m.	3:10 to Yuma (R)	
8 p.m.	Dan in Real Life (PG-13)	

Pvt. Murphy's Law

<p>MURPHY THE ADVENTURER STAGGERS THROUGH THE BLISTERING HEAT...</p>	<p>HE STUMBLES. THEN FALLS... BUZZARDS CIRCLE... OUR HERO'S END SEEMS IMMINENT!</p>
<p>BUT WHAT IS THIS?! A BEAUTIFUL DESERT GODDESS GENTLY NURSES MURPHY BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS WITH LIFE GIVING WATER.</p>	<p>WAKE UP MURPHY! I'M BACK!</p>

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ANACONDA ACTIVITIES

INDOOR POOL

aqua training: Thursday- 7:45 p.m.

Endurance and pacing:

Saturday- 10 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

swim lessons:

- *beginners:* Tuesday- 6 p.m.

- *intermediate:* Thursday- 6 p.m.

- *advanced:* Saturday- 6 p.m.

EAST FITNESS CENTER

basketball tournament: all week- 7 p.m.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: Monday, Wednesday and Friday- 8 p.m.

Kyu Kyu Kempo: Sunday- 2 p.m.

modern army combatives: Tuesday and Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

open court volleyball: Sunday- 6 p.m.

Shotokan Karate Do: Thursday- 6:45 p.m., Saturday- 8:30 p.m. and Sunday- 5:30 p.m.

step aerobics: Monday, Wednesday and Friday- 5:30 p.m.

swing dance: Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

wrestling & physical fitness class: Tuesday- 6 p.m. and Saturday- 7 p.m.

EAST RECREATION CENTER

8-ball tourney: Monday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

9-ball tournament: Wednesday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Battle Field 2: Thursday- 8 p.m.

Country Dance Class: Thursday- 7 p.m.

Dominoes: Friday- 8 p.m.

Hip Hop Dance Class: Friday- 7 p.m.

karaoke: Monday- 8 p.m.

model building: Sunday- 1 p.m.

poetry/ open mic: Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

poker tourney:

Sunday- 6 p.m.

salsa dance class: Saturday- 7 p.m.

swing dance: Tuesday- 7p.m.

salsa dance class: Wednesday- 8:30 p.m.

ping pong tourney: Tuesday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

WEST RECREATION CENTER

8-ball tourney: Wednesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

9-ball tournament: Monday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Battlefield 2 Tourney: Thursday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Dungeons & Dragons: Saturday- 8 p.m.

Friday- 8 p.m.

Friday nights in Balad:

Friday- 8 p.m.

foosball: Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Green Bean karaoke: Wednesday and Sunday- 8 p.m.

Hip Hop dance lessons: Saturday- 9 p.m.

Magic: The Gathering: Sunday- 8 p.m.

Middle Eastern dance class: Thursday- 10 p.m.

ping pong tourney: Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

salsa dance class: Wednesday- 8:30 p.m.

Texas hold 'em: Saturday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

WEST FITNESS CENTER

3-on-3 basketball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

6-on-6 volleyball tourney: Friday- 7 p.m.

aerobics: Monday, Wednesday and Friday- 7 p.m.

open court basketball: Thursday- 7 p.m.

open court soccer: Monday- 7 p.m.

soccer tennis tourney: Wednesday- 7 p.m.

Task Force XII Halloween 5K: Wednesday- 6 a.m.

Whiffle ball game: Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.

8 p.m. West MWR

STARTS



Friday Nights

Bones




Jeepers, Creepers... it's Halloween!

by Maj. Christopher E. West

316th ESC PAO

"Double, double toil and trouble; fire burn and cauldron bubble..." these words chanted in unison by the three witches in William Shakespeare's play Macbeth are the frightful and wicked visions most people associate with Halloween. Both children and adults alike don ghoulish and sometimes amusing costumes to celebrate this most queer holiday with the serendipitous intent of being the receiver of a trick or treat. However, very few people truly understand the origins of this day and how it evolved into the holiday we now commemorate.

The beginnings of Halloween date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, a ceremony held October 31 where the dead were thought to return to earth and cause turmoil, damage crops, and also assist the Celtic priests in making predictions about the future, particularly the winter season. To the Celts winter was an uncertain and scary time of year with short days, long nights, and often limited food supply. While observing Samhain, they would wear animal type costumes to shield them from being recognized and possibly attacked by other worldly spirits. They would also build huge sacred bonfires where crop and animal sacrifices

would be made to Celtic deities.

When the Romans conquered the Celts about 43 A.D., two festivals of Roman origin were combined with Samhain. The first was Feralia, a day in October when the Romans traditionally honored the passing of the dead. The second was a day to honor Pomona, the goddess of fruits and trees. Moreover, with the spreading of Christianity, Pope Boniface IV designated November 1, "All Saints Day," in homage to saints and martyrs. It is widely believed that he spearheaded the effort to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a church-sanctioned holiday. As a result, the night before Samhain, became known as All-hallows Eve and eventually Halloween.

The tradition of "trick or treating" dates back to the early All Souls' Day parades in England, where poor citizens would beg for food and families would give them pastries called "soul cakes" in return for their promise to pray for the family's deceased relatives. Taking from the traditions of the English and Irish, Americans began to dress up in costumes



Web Image

and go house to house asking for food or money, a practice that eventually became today's "trick or treat" custom.

Today yards, homes, community centers, and schools are meticulously decorated with witches' broom sticks, frothing kettles, candle lit jack-o'-lanterns, creepy web covered skeleton-filled coffins, and other eerie devices designed to scare the wit out of both young and old. Halloween, which once was a most frightening and superstitious time of the year, is now a day to be enjoyed by many around the world—with trick or treating, costume parties, and howling tons of unending fun for all ages.

Do you or someone you know have an interesting story to tell?

Does your unit serve a special function others may not be aware of?



At the Anaconda Times, we want to tell YOUR story, so email us and we'll do the rest.

anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil

Army helping attack California wildfires

by Staff Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Army News Service

SAN DIEGO - Army National Guard helicopters were attacking southern California's ferocious wildfires Tuesday as Soldiers on the ground were manning traffic control points and were prepared to provide people who had lost their homes with some of the necessities of life.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was also preparing for relief missions to communities affected by the spate of wildfires across Southern California. The Corps prepared for missions such as ice and water delivery, and installing generators to provide temporary power at critical public facilities.

National Guard helicopters carrying big Bambi water buckets were trying to bring under control the firestorm that has forced some 500,000 residents to flee the devastated, seven-county region since last weekend.

"This is true and pure homeland defense. This is my home. I live here. This is what I joined to do," said California Army Guard 1st Lt. Robi Yucas, who was coordinating the Guard's aviation assets even as his wife and daughter and dog were preparing to evacuate their fire-threatened home in Oceanside, Calif.

1st Lt. Yucas, from the 1st Battalion, 140th Aviation, was part of the crew that was diverted from the Operation Jump Start mission along the California-Mexican border to support civilian authorities.

Four UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters were dispatched from the border duty to the firefighting mission in support of the California Department of Forestry, and two more Blackhawks and two larger CH-47 Chinooks were expected to fly in Tuesday.

The aircraft attacking the



Photo by Pfc. Denae J. Davis

California Army National Guard Soldiers with the 184th Headquarters and Headquarters Company on mission to fight the southern California wildfires prepare to board a C-130 at the Modesto Airport in Modesto, Calif.

flames was the most visible of the firefighting mission, and the Guard helicopters were expected to fly water-drop missions all day.

A California Guard S-70 Firehawk, specially designed for firefighting missions, was also expected to join the battle against the inferno of a dozen fires that, by Tuesday, had scorched 600 square miles and destroyed a reported 1,800 homes.

It prompted the largest evacuation in California history, from north of Los Angeles south to San Diego, the Associated Press reported.

Meanwhile, 1,500 Soldiers from the California Guard's 40th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conducted presence patrols to prevent looting, manning traffic control points and preparing to assist people at the Qualcomm Stadium and the Del Mar Fairgrounds in San Diego. The Guard Soldiers were supporting the San Diego County sheriff's department.

"(This has) been probably the most proactive response to a domestic event that I have seen in my 40 years in uniform," said Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau. "And we continue to be flexible and agile to meet the needs of Governor Schwarzenegger and the citizens of California as they're ravaged by what is a very dangerous and unpredictable fire."

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger on Monday directed that the 1,500 Guard troops be made available for the firefighting mission.

About 70 Guard Soldiers were on duty at the stadium where large stockpiles of water, food and clothing were

ready for the displaced people who needed them.

Some of the Guard Soldiers were pulled off border duty to help with the firefighting mission and for their own safety from the fires.

The Air National Guard was expected to reinforce the fight from the air with four C-130 Military Airborne Fire Fighting Systems from North Carolina and Wyoming. The planes that drop large amounts of fire retardant were set to

be staged at the Navy's Point Mague facility.

"Disaster responses are a team effort," said Beau Hannah, Emergency Support Function #3 team leader for the Army Corps of Engineers. "The Corps, along with city, county state, and federal agencies will work together as part of a team coordinated by the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We know how important it is to affected individuals, families and communities that we provide a fast, competent and complete response to this crisis."

In the Los Angeles District, the Emergency Operations Center is now active and will be staffed continuously until the need passes. The Rapid Response Vehicle team has been dispatched to the vehicle's station and is standing by for its mission. Other Corps teams are en route and will be in place ready to assist Californians.

"We have team members in the community and we're prepared to do more," said Col. Thomas H. Magness IV, Los Angeles District commander for the Corps. "When you see the Corps' castle insignia on a truck or on a helmet, you are seeing the federal response. Most of the Corps team members you see on disaster relief missions have volunteered for that duty."

The Corps, as part of the federal disaster response team coordinated by FEMA, has a number of missions, including temporary housing, water and ice delivery, infrastructure assessment support, debris management and removal and other engineering and logistical missions that are needed.



Web Image

Firefighters work around the clock to try and contain the wildfires that have already claimed many homes in Southern California.



Image by NASA

Pictured above is a satellite image of the wildfires burning throughout Southern California.

Anaconda volleyball tournament



Photo by Spc. Jay Venturini

(Above) Spc. Eric Smith (left), of Echo Company 2-159th Aviation Battalion, and Staff Sgt. Edger Santiago, Bravo Company 315th Aviation Battalion, try to block an opponents spike during a volleyball tournament at the West MWR here.

(Below) Spc. Francis Manning, of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) G8 section, returns a serve during a volleyball game. There is a volleyball tournament every Friday night which alternates between four and six person teams and is open to both military and civilians.



Photos by Spc. Jay Venturini

(Above) Spc. Comfort Stelzer, 2-147th Aviation Battalion, hits the ball to a teammate during a volleyball tournament.

(Top) Spc. Eric Smith (left), Echo Company 2-159th Aviation Battalion, prepares to spike the ball on his opponent during a volleyball tournament. The tournament consisted of 15 six-man teams in a double elimination format.

