

Spartan Chronicle

pointing out the weekly news from the 2nd BCT

Vol. 2, Issue 4

December 16, 2007



Girl gets gift of mobility
- page 2



Kalsu set to improve
- page 3



Hit the gym
- page 13



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Spc. Kalrissian Cooper, a trombone player with the 3rd Infantry Division Jazz quintet, plays Christmas tunes for Soldiers in Rocky's, the Forward Operating Base Kalsu dining facility, Dec. 14. The quintet entertained Soldiers throughout the lunch hour. For more pictures see page 15.



Soldiers give Iraqi teen gift of mobility

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

An Iraqi girl suffering from a disease that limits her ability to walk received the gift of mobility Dec. 7 thanks to Coalition Forces.

Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, delivered a wheelchair to 15 year-old Suha Hussein Yas, who suffers from a disease similar to polio.

The disease has left Yas unable to walk since birth, said 1st Lt. Greg Highstrom, Company B Fire Support Officer.

The Soldiers first learned of Yas' plight when initially setting up Patrol Base Hawkes. Wanting to build a good rapport with the local citizens, the Soldiers began to move into the community, said Highstrom, a native of Cedarbird, Wis.

The interaction was all part of the company's way to build goodwill



Photo by 1st. Lt. Greg Highstrom

Suha Hussein Yas (seated center), a 15-year-old girl who suffers from a disease similar to polio, smiles with her family at the gift she received from Soldiers of the Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. The Soldiers delivered the wheelchair Dec. 7.

toward the local Iraqi people. Seeing Yas' need, the company pushed for assistance from their higher command.

Eventually the battalion was able to secure a wheelchair.

"It was one of the coolest things I've been a part of," Highstrom said. "The smile on her face was pretty infecting. It just affected you."

The Soldiers plan on

"It was one of the coolest things I've been a part of. The smile on her face was pretty infecting. It just affected you."

-1st Lt. Greg Highstrom

Company B, 1-30th Inf. Reg. Fire Support Officer

continuing their positive relationships with the locals, a partnership that has paid high dividends in terms of security in the area.

By interacting

positively with the community, Soldiers are able to win their trust, while gaining more information that helps purge insurgents from their local community.



The Spartan Chronicle is an authorized electronic publication for members of the U.S. Army produced weekly by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Contents of the Spartan Chronicle are not necessarily official views of,

or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 3rd ID.

All editorial content of the Spartan Chronicle is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 2nd BCT public affairs office.

2nd BCT PAO
Maj. James Brownlee
1st Lt. Kalen Smith
Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
Sgt. Jason Stadel
Sgt. Randall Townsend

General discusses Kalsu improvements

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

While much of the rebuilding going on in Iraq is focused on improving Iraqi quality of life, the importance of improving Soldier's living conditions was highlighted during a visit by the deputy commander of Multi-National Corps - Iraq to Forward Operating Base Kalsu Dec. 13.

Maj. Gen. James Simmons came to meet with leaders of the 2nd and 4th Brigade Combat Teams, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., to discuss the leaders' proposed improvements to the base.

Areas of improvement were focused on environmental, force protection and anti-terrorism issues.

Simmons agreed with many of the ideas, and praised the Soldiers with their skills in combating terrorism in the area and helping make it safer for both Soldiers and Iraqi civilians.

Due to the results of offensive operations in the region, Simmons said violence is down across the area, noting the absence of indirect fire targeting Kalsu in the past few months.

"It sounds to me like things are going pretty good down here," Simmons said.

Simmons, who is serving on his second Operation Iraqi Freedom tour, also brought with him several ideas of his own on how some of the improvements could be made using "good old American ingenuity."

"I've got a lot of things running around in my head; what works and



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Lt. Col. Roger Shuck, deputy commander, 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. (left), Maj. Gen. James Simmons, deputy commander, Multi-National Corps - Iraq (center), and Col. James Adams, deputy commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division (right), discuss future plans for improving Forward Operating Base Kalsu in the 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, conference room Dec. 13. Simmons visited to discuss areas of improvement along environmental, force protection and anti-terrorism lines.

what doesn't," he said.

Having served in his current position for four-and-a-half years, and being responsible for the command, control, logistics, aviation support, basing, force protection and detainee operations of 17 brigades, Simmons has visited many bases and outposts and has seen ideas that work that could also be implemented on FOB Kalsu. He shared several of these, such as constructing elevated sidewalks between buildings to avoid rainy season mud instead of graveling areas between them.

For areas that could not be fixed with simple ingenuity, Simmons pledged support for these issues, like increasing the size of

the base gym and Morale, Welfare and Recreation center.

Simmons said he would work on getting engineer support to help expand the buildings, which were originally built to support one brigade but now support two.

He also expressed interest in helping the Soldiers obtain equipment for a proposed golf driving range.

Simmons said he felt 2 BCT leadership is on the right track with improvements like a 24-hour snack bar, additional Army and Air Force Exchange Service vendors such as Green Bean's coffee and a barber

See GENERAL page 4



Photos by 1st. Lt. Adam Buchanan
Soldiers of Red Platoon, Company D,
1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment
take time whenever they can to visit
the children in the cancer ward of the
Iskan Children's Hospital, Mansour
District, Baghdad. The Soldiers help
the hospital by giving it supplies and
helps bring smiles to the children's
faces by bringing them toys and
candy.

GENERAL cont. from page 3

and beauty shop, and an Iraqi Warrior Leaders course to help the professional development of Iraqi Soldiers.

After discussing future options, Simmons toured the base to view improvements already made on

the base and eat lunch before departing.

Lt. Col. Roger Shuck, deputy commander, 4th BCT, said he was pleased with the meeting and was glad to be able to show the general all the work being done by both

brigades into base improvements.

Shuck, a native of Cape Girardeau, Mo., said he believes the group was able to show Simmons a good plan as well as get a good look into what the future may hold.

Safety Alert - Fire Prevention Safety

On Dec. 02 an electrical fire started in a patrol base Chaplain's office. The first Soldiers on the scene immediately checked to see that nobody was in the room, but the smoke was too thick to enter and fight the fire. Fire extinguishers were immediately brought to the scene, and the unit completed a 100 percent Soldier accountability drill within 5 minutes. Fifteen fire extinguishers, the base water truck and a vehicle pressure washer prevented the fire from spreading to other buildings and tents. Medics were brought to the scene and assessed that no Soldiers suffered smoke or burn injuries while extinguishing the fire. Damage to equipment and building is currently being assessed.

Fire Marshals initially assess that the cause of the fire is due to a faulty ballast in the fluorescent light fixture. A KBR fire marshal inspection was conducted on Oct. 23; the building was assessed to be in compliance with all stated codes and regulations.

Soldier prevention:

- * We must view electrical safety differently in Iraq than in the U.S. Turn off and unplug all non-essential electrical items when not in use.

Leader prevention::

- * Accountability drills work!
- * Conduct regular fire inspections and correct or abate all recognized hazards.

- Mr. Daryl Lusk, safety officer



Fluorescent light caused fire



Fire damage

Sharpshooters: photos from (of) your Soldiers



Courtesy photos

Capt. Alan Wetzstein, commander, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery Regiment (second from right) presents Raffid, an Iraqi worker on Logistical Support Area Anaconda, with a certificate of appreciation Nov. 28 at the base's East Entry Control Point. Raffid pointed out a potential improvised explosive device to the Soldiers at the gate in order to protect them and his fellow workers. Also pictured are 1st Lt. Robert Eisenhart, EECOP officer in charge (left) and 1st Lt. Andrew Holler, former EECOP OIC, both 1-9 FA.



Above: While waiting for an appointment with the doctor on Logistical Support Area Anaconda, a girl blows some bubbles in the company of her mother at the waiting room in the base's East Entry Control Point.



Right: Sonya, an explosive detection dog at the gate, seems to have lost her owner, a real bummer as she looks ready for a walk.



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

The Task Force Marne rock band, 'The Surge', performs for diners at Forward Operating Base Kalsu Dec. 12. The band plays a variety of cover hits at bases throughout Iraq where Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division are stationed.

Surge band performs for surge Soldiers

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

On Dec. 12, 'The Surge' bandmembers ventured off their large home base at Camp Victory to come to the smaller outpost at Forward Operating Base Kalsu to better interact with Soldiers who regularly patrol the Arab Jabour and Hawr Rajab areas.

The quintet, consisting of vocalist Sgt. Holli Davis, drummer Spc. Aaron Rademaker, lead guitarist Spc. Theodore Dipietro, rhythm guitarist and the noncommissioned officer in charge Sgt. Joshua Gardner, and bassist Sgt. Benjamin Smith, played for a little more than an hour to diners at Rocky's, the FOB Kalsu dining facility.

Although the musical set for the evening consisted mainly of

country songs, including Rodney Atkins' number one hit, "If you're going through hell," Little Big Town's "Boondocks," and recent Kalsu visitor Kellie Pickler's "Things that never cross a man's mind," the band also devoted some time to other musical genres.

The variety of music the band plays is one of the reasons behind the its appeal. To best satisfy their audience, the band takes requests from audience members, said Smith, a native of Geneva, Ill. Any requested song unknown by the band is rehearsed between gigs and added to the bands repertoire.

The rehearsals, which Smith said the band tries to hold twice a day, also help keep the band's old sounds fresh in addition to teaching them new songs.

"They're an awesome band,"

said Sgt. 1st Class Mike Goodro, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Div., provost marshal NCOIC. "They are really good as far as a traveling band."

Even more amazing for the band, which travels around Iraq performing roughly 15 shows a month at outposts manned by 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers, is that with the exception of Smith, none of the Soldiers holds the band member military occupation specialty, 42R. Instead, the Soldiers come from a variety of jobs and were chosen for the role after auditioning for the part.

"You'll be surprised at how music can bring people together," Davis said.

The statement applies to more

See SURGE page 7

than just the band. One of the most rewarding experiences about playing is seeing the audience unite in “hoots and hollers” as the band plays, Gardner said.

For Soldiers at Kalsu, the experience did just that. As songs played, feet tapped, heads bobbed and when songs stopped hands began to clap.

“The Army has a lot of talent,” said Staff Sgt. Joseph Lemos, 2nd BCT, plans and operations NCO. Lemos, whose family lives in Hinesville, Ga., said he never heard the band before the dinner show and left with a favorable first impression.

“They were very good,” he said, adding that as a person with no musical talent, he admires the Soldiers.

On a different note, because he does contain some music talent, having played brass instruments in high school, Goodro said he can better appreciate the Soldiers’ skills.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Spc. Aaron Rademaker bangs out some beats during a song while performing at the Forward Operating Base Kalsu dining facility Dec. 12. Rademaker has been playing in the band since October last year.

“It takes a lot of guts,” Goodro said of getting in front of a crowd and performing.

Due to their guts, Goodro, whose family resides at Fort Stewart, said Soldiers can get a little something positive. “It is a little touch of home; familiarity.”

Lemos agreed, adding that

Soldiers can get lost in the music and forget about where they are and the troubles they may experience.

Editor’s note: Next week’s feature will provide an indepth look at the band, their job and experiences with Soldiers touring Iraq.



Bassist Sgt. Benjamin Smith and vocalist Holli Davis sing Rodney Atkins’ number one hit, “If you’re going through hell,” for Soliders at Forward Operating Base Kalsu Dec. 12.



Soldiers (above) and civilians (below) both got into the Dec. 12 act.



Sergeant first class selection board to meet

Spartan Staff
2nd BCT PAO

The 2008 promotion board for sergeant first class is scheduled to convene on Jan. 29.

Soldiers can confirm their eligibility by viewing MILPER Message 07-283, subject: FY08 SFC Promotion Board Announcement.

Log on to <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/index2.asp> and click on MILPER Messages to view the message. It is important that Soldiers complete the actions outlined in this message as soon as possible.

To review their electronic file, Soldiers must click on the “My Promotion File” icon link at the HRC – Alexandria website <https://www.hrc.army.mil>. Click on “Enlisted” then “Active”.

* Click the “OMPF” tab to review the Official Military Personnel File. Special emphasis should be made to ensure the commendatory and education areas of the OMPF are updated. Past boards have stated that it detracts from the record when award certificates, academic reports and other school completion documents (including civilian transcripts) are missing. The suspense date to get documents to SRDC for this board is Jan. 11.

* View and check the date of the official photograph by clicking on the “DA Photo” tab. If a Soldier does not have an official photograph on file in DAPMIS, if it is out of date (taken prior to Jan. 29, 2003), or it is not in the current grade, a new photo is needed.

DAPMIS photographs are valid



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

for five years and are deleted after that period. Non commissioned officers with a photo taken prior to Jan. 29, 2003 will not have a photograph in their file for this board.

Information on photographs may be found in AR 640-30. Soldiers currently deployed are exempt from the periodic update requirement.

DA photos must be taken in the Class A uniform. Soldiers who need to get an updated photograph but are unable to get one should consider sending a short memo to the board president to explain the situation.

They can also use the ERB validate with comments feature (para 2c below) and enter comments in the “other” area. Photographs must be uploaded into DAPMIS by the photo lab and accepted by midnight eastern standard time Jan. 28 to be seen by this board.

* To review the Promotion ERB, follow the instructions provided. The ERB is an online version of the hardcopy ERB providing only board-related

Eligible staff sergeants should begin to set their sights on promotion to sergeant first class. The next board convenes Jan. 29. Staff sergeants can confirm their eligibility by viewing MILPER Message 07-283, subject: FY08 SFC Promotion Board Announcement.

information. The information on the ERB is pulled from eMILPO.

If any of the ERB information displayed is incorrect or missing, visit the servicing S-1/PSB/PSC/MPD to have the correct data submitted to update eMILPO.

Updated information should be viewable on the online ERB within 48 hours of submission by the personnel office.

The only method of updating the ERB is by visiting the S1/PSB/PSC/MPD. Once the information is correct, click on “ERB Validation” to authenticate your ERB.

If corrections cannot be made for some reason, there is a feature to “Validate with Comments” and explain the discrepancy. If changes are required after validation, Soldiers can use the “unlock ERB” feature to allow new information to update the Promotion ERB.

Contact the Board Eligibility Section at bdspt@conus.army.mil or DSN 699-3641/3642/3691 if problems are encountered. The suspense date to validate

See SFC page 9

Promotion ERBs is midnight eastern standard time Jan. 28.

* Declination Statements. Click on the "Statements" tab to decline promotion consideration. Soldiers who complete a declination statement will not be considered by the board. Declining consideration this year does not affect eligibility for next year's board. Review the board announcement message (MILPER Message 07-283) for complete details.

* Soldiers who are considering writing a memorandum to the board president should click the "Memo to the Board President" button at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/MSDSecretariat/EnlistedBoards/EnlistedBoards.htm> for helpful hints.

Remember, only write a memorandum if there is something significant to present to the board that is not already reflected in the OMPF. The suspense date to submit memos is Jan. 11.

Soldiers who are due an NCO evaluation report should ask their rating chain and S-1 to complete it promptly and process it through the S1/PSB/PSD/MPD for forwarding to HRC - Indianapolis. If the ending month of the last NCOER on file is October 2006 or older, then the Soldier's NCOER is overdue or will be overdue prior to the convening of the board.

Information concerning "Complete the Record, 60 Day Option and Senior Rater Option NCOERs" is contained in AR 623-3 and DA Pam 623-3. The suspense date to submit an NCOER

for this board is Jan. 11.

Completion of Basic Non Commissioned Officer Course is a requirement to be considered by this board.

Soldiers who have not completed BNCOC may be granted a waiver by the Army's G-1 office if they have not attended due to operational deployment reasons. See paragraph 2F in MILPER message 07-283 for details.

Because waivers may be granted up to the day the board convenes, Soldiers should complete the actions outlined above to ensure their records are complete if they are given a waiver.

Eligible Soldiers should follow these important steps and complete them early. If they do, their board record will be complete and accurately reflect their career.

We Want YOU! Shoutout for DVIDS shoutouts

We are currently looking for Soldiers to participate in the following DVIDS programs:

WEDNESDAYS

1. **Radio Lia:** Seattle, Wash. at 4 a.m. - Radio Lia is hosted by Lia Knight and her interviews reach an audience of over 4 million. This is a basic interview where she asks a couple of questions, but really wants to hear the service member speak.

THURSDAYS

1. **Martha Zoller live news show** from WDUN in Gainesville, GA – e-mail for more info.
2. **Ray Steele live news show** from WBMQ in Savannah, GA – e-mail for more info.
3. **Soldier Stories:** WDBO-AM Orlando, Fla. at 8 p.m. – Open to Orlando residents, but central Florida is also acceptable. This is a weekly interview; a photo is also required.
4. **Fox Game Time React:** Los Angeles, Calif.

pick time from 5 to 9 a.m. - hosted by JT the Brick, and has a weekly segment on Thursday where he speaks to deployed service members and gives them a chance to talk sports.

DVIDS Sports Shout Outs – Say hello to your favorite football teams. Teams can be collegiate or professional.

Hometown Interviews – talk to your local media stations – television, newspaper, radio – from back home and tell them about your job here in Iraq.

*All interviews are taped and can be shared over the Web with your family – and it's free! See www.dvidshub.net for more details and to see what the world's finest Soldiers have been up to.

To participate, e-mail 1LT Kalen Smith at: kalen.marie.smith@2bct3id.army.mil

'Santas' visit 2nd Brigade Soldiers early

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

Like Santa, Soldiers are known for their giving nature, having sacrificed much to defend their country, family and friends from harm. But at Christmas time, it is not just Soldiers and Santa delivering joy and gifts during the holiday.

Thanks to the generosity and charity of several organizations, Soldiers, despite being

far from home, are able to surround themselves with many holiday tokens which carry the Christmas season across the waters to Iraq.

One of the most unique gifts received by Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat team was a shipment of live Christmas trees.

The trees, donated by Operation Christmas Tree, provided 20 live trees to brighten Soldiers' days and moods.

One of the recipients, Capt. Dawn Fick, S1, personnel office, said the tree does more than just decorate her office and add a scent of pine.

"It brings me nice memories of picking out real trees with my son," she said.

Besides the memories accompanying the gifts, the care packages invoke feelings of thanks and gratitude to the Soldiers.

"It shows the wonderful generosity of people," said Chap. (Maj.) Jay Hearn, 2nd BCT chaplain.

While all gifts of charity bring forth good feelings, Hearn said it is especially fun to see kids get involved.

"We have boxes filled out with Christmas cards from kids thanking us for our service," he said, adding that his own children's schools are getting involved by sending cookies, stuffed animals and soccer balls.

These in turn, especially the soccer balls and stuffed animals, will be further disseminated to Iraqi children by Soldiers, Hearn said.

In this sense, the Soldiers themselves will

be playing Santa to the young children of Iraq. Some Soldiers have already fulfilled this role, having sent gifts to their fellow Soldiers.

For Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, some of their fellow Soldiers sent them gifts including a Christmas tree.

"I'm more into the Christmas spirit," said Walterboro, S.C., native Spc. Sherri Bryant, HHC, 26 BSB, brigade maintenance office, upon unpacking the tree.

The tree was a gift from Spc. Jim Husband and Sgt. 1st Class James Letman, two 26 BSB Soldiers working at Baghdad International Airport. It was a good supplement to another tree already provided to the Soldiers by Warrant Officer Ron Leggins' wife.

Leggins, combat service support support management office, HHC, 26 BSB, said his wife Bobbie Ann, a West Plains, Mo., native, sent the previous tree along



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

A live Christmas tree adorns the office of Capt. Dawn Fick, S1, personnel office. The tree was one of 20 donated by Operation Christmas Tree to Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. Fick said the trees bring back memories of holidays with her son, St. Clair Mellard.

See CHRISTMAS page 11

CHRISTMAS cont. from page 12

with several other gifts to his unit.

Bobbie Ann, an employee at Fort Stewart's library, also sends books and other treats for her husband and his Soldiers. In this, she is not alone.

Hearn said that many organizations, including Soldiers back at Fort Stewart, sent gift packages. The top three givers he said were the Adopt a Platoon, Adopt a Chaplain, and Soldiers' Angels organizations.

Gifts received ranged from the common, like hygiene items and candy, to the exotic, such as a Playstation 3 that the 26 BSB is going to be given out at the battalion Christmas Eve party.

In order to express their thanks for all gifts received, Hearn said units are doing several things. Hearn said he is writing thank-you cards to the organizations, while the 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion and 26 BSB are sending certificates of appreciation.

Fick said she is trying to find more information on the

See CHRISTMAS page 12



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Spc. Sherri Bryant, brigade maintenance office, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team holds up a Christmas tree Dec. 15 in the 26 BSB tactical operations center. The tree was a gift from Spc. Jim Husband and Sgt. 1st James Letman, two 26 BSB Soldiers working at Baghdad International Airport.



Bryant decorates the live Christmas tree with lights (left and above). "I'm more into the Christmas spirit," said the Walterboro, S.C., native. Many charities and organizations sent care packages to Soldiers to help bring them the Christmas spirit.

CHRISTMAS cont. from page 12

organization that sent her the tree so she can respond with a thank-you card.

Although Christmas is a natural time to send gifts, families can send their own thanks anytime they want via letters or gifts.

For those looking to send gifts, the best choices are non perishable snack foods, eye glass wipes, baby wipes, gum and candy, said Hearn, who said he also saw people provide CDs and books for Soldiers.

Organizations that specialize in sending packages can also be contacted. Many charities have Internet sites which can be located with a Google search.



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Sgt. Jason Stadel, brigade public affairs office non-commissioned officer in charge, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, passes a stocking in a dramatic fashion to Spc. Yasser Affi, a linguist with the 2nd BCT, Dec. 9.

A screenshot of a Microsoft Internet Explorer browser window displaying the website 'Operation Home Front'. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://www.operationhomefront.org/Info/info_troopstuff.shtml'. The website features a header with an eagle logo and the text 'Operation Home Front' and the quote 'To care for him who shall have borne the battle' - Abraham Lincoln. Below the header is a navigation menu with links like 'Home', 'Benefits & Rights', 'News Items & Resources', 'Information Library', 'Community', 'Home Front Help', 'Site Map', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area is titled 'Stuff for Troops and Their Families' and contains a list of links to various organizations providing care packages, such as 'www.operationhomelink.org', 'www.prweb.com/releases/2004/2/prweb106818.htm', 'www.operationuplink.org', 'anyssoldier.com/ForSoldiersOnly.cfm', 'www.appreciateourtroops.org/foroutroops.shtml', 'www.operationshoobox.com', 'www.treatthetroops.org', 'bluestarmoms.org/airfare.html', 'bluestarmoms.org/care.html', '66.241.249.83', 'www.heromiles.org', 'www.bluestarmothers.org/airlinespecials.php', and 'www.honkforsoldiers.com/forum/index.nhn'. On the right side, there is a sidebar with a 'Stuff for Troops' section containing links like 'Deployment Docs and Info', 'How To Page', 'Fun Stuff for Kids', 'Laws and Legislation', 'Military Branches & Organizations', 'History and Tradition', and 'VA Information'. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows several open windows and the system clock indicating 3:49 PM.

Many organizations that provide Soldiers with care packages have pages on the Internet Soldiers' families can log onto and order gifts for their Soldiers. Sites can be found via a simple search using any search engine such as Google or Yahoo. Pictured here is the website for Operation Home Front, which contains several links to organizations. The website can be found at: http://www.operationhomefront.org/Info/info_troopstuff.shtml.



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Soldiers work out at the Forward Operating Base Kalsu gym Dec. 14.

Kal-zoo gym helps Soldiers stay fit

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT PAO

As the New Year approaches, many people begin to form resolutions on how they can make a new image. A common goal for Soldiers, and many others, is to improve their physical fitness, drop a few pounds and look better.

Although the New Year is still a few weeks away, the Forward Operating Base Kalsu gym, the Kal-zoo, is already offering Soldiers a way to bring out their inner animal.

The gym, which features a

variety of free weights, machine weights, and cardio equipment like row machines, treadmills and steppers, and miscellaneous exercise aids like exercise balls, exercise mats, jump ropes and weight belts, is hoping to add even more gear to its arsenal to help Soldiers in their personal “battle of the bulge.”

Dale Robinson, the Morale, Welfare and Recreation coordinator on FOB Kalsu, said he plans to begin incorporating the changes in January.

One big change is improving the

cardio room, he said. Currently the room is housed in an adjacent tent connected to the gym via a wooden hallway. Robinson said plans are in the works to replace the tent with a solid building.

The exterior is not the only thing to change. He said he is working to secure more treadmills for the Soldiers, as the current five are not enough to meet user demand. He also said he plans to add TVs to the cardio room to give

See LIFTING page 14

Soldiers something to take their mind off of the rigors of their workout. The addition of a TV to the cardio room, which also features a large soft mat area for martial arts practice, will also help increase the number of programs available to Soldiers.

The TV will allow the gym to play workout and aerobics videos for Soldiers to use for their benefit, Robinson said.

He hopes to start up a martial arts program in the future, similar to those run by the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, who were stationed at Kalsu until redeploying and being replaced by the 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Robinson said he is working to find instructors and has found a few potential



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Spc. Ryan Davenport, Company A, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, unmanned aerial vehicle operator, works out on the row machine at Forward Operating Base Kalsu's gym, the Kal-zoo Dec. 14. Davenport works out twice a day to improve his physical fitness. Knowing that many Soldiers may make resolutions to get fit during the new year, the gym is working on expanding and offering more options for Soldiers.

volunteers.

He hopes to start the program in January.

While many programs and improvements are planned for the future, the present is also packed with activities. Robinson

said currently there are basketball and flag football leagues, and several weight lifting and fitness competitions are schedule for Christmas Day, including a 10-km "Jingle Bell Run," a bench press competition and a strong man competition at the gym.

For these current activities, Soldiers don't have to wait until the new year to begin their new fitness goals. The gym is open 24-hours-a-day to accommodate all Soldiers no matter their work shift.

One Soldier who is taking advantage of these and giving himself an early gift of fitness is Spc. Ryan Davenport,

Company A, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, unmanned aerial vehicle operator.

Davenport, a native of Port Allegheny, Pa, said he works out twice a day, before and after his shift, performing cardio in the morning and weight training in the evening.

In addition to working out to get in better shape, he also said it helps him blow off steam and reduce stress.

To help even more Soldiers like Davenport reduce their waistline and stress, Kalsu is also planning to increase the number of gyms. Plans for a second gym are in the works.



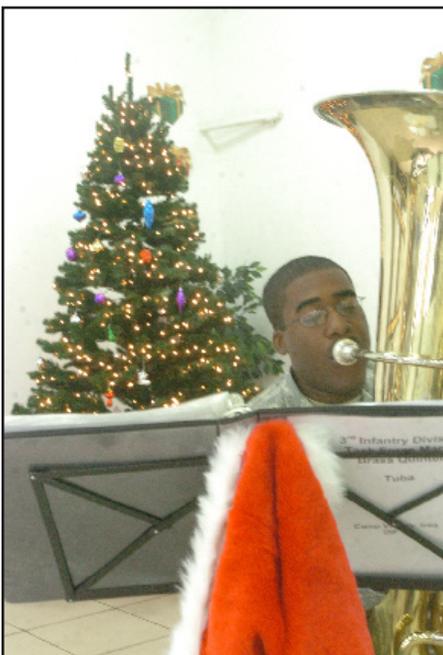
Soldiers will be able to challenge themselves and each other this Christmas when the FOB Kalsu gym offers a bench press competition. Other activities are also scheduled for Soldiers, including the Jingle Bell Run, a 10-km run.

Jazz band plays Christmas carols



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

The 3rd Infantry Division Jazz Band, performs some Christmas carol instrumentals at Forward Operating Base Kalsu's dining facility Dec. 14. The quintet, which consists of trumpet player Spc. Justin Miller, trombone player Spc. Kalrissian Cooper, tuba player Calvin Scarborough Jr., French horn player Staff Sgt. Chris Wallace, and trumpet player Staff Sgt. John Ochs (left to right), played a variety of songs over the lunchtime meal.



Ochs and Wallace (right to left), play a Christmas tune during a performance. At left, Scarborough Jr. plays the tuba in front of one of the many trees decorating the dining facility.



Above: French horn player Staff Sgt. Chris Wallace looks at his music while trumpet player Spc. Justin Miller (also pictured below) continues the tune during a performance at Forward Operating Base Kalsu's dining facility Dec. 14.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Above: Trombone player Spc. Kalrissian Cooper reviews his sheet music for an upcoming Christmas tune. The 3rd Infantry Division Jazz Band played throughout lunch for diners at the dining facility Dec. 14. The band is traveling around Iraq during the holiday season bringing a little bit of the American sound of Christmas to the deployed Soldiers.



Left: The band performs one its songs.

Word on the street

“What is the most important thing you learned this year?”



“A new perspective of the things you take for granted back home.”

Chap. (Capt). Michael Oliver
2-3 BTB chaplain



“Some Arabic phrases. They help me show some courtesy when I am out on missions photographing locals.”

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd Brigade Public Affairs Office



“Keep rolling with changes; what works in one place may not work in another.”

Capt. Jeffry Prokopowicz
Company A commander, 2-3 BTB



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Halo 2 Oldies music night	3 Ping Pong Chess	4 Monopoly Spades	5 Flag football Salsa music night	6 Pool Dominoes	7 Movie Night Spades	8 <i>Kellie Pickler concert</i>
9 <i>Mayor Cell Meet and Greet</i>	10 Checkers Chess	11 Monopoly Spades	12 <i>Marne Band concert</i>	13 Pool Dominoes	14 <i>Jazz Band concert</i>	15 Texas Hold'em R&B music night
16 Halo 2 Oldies music night	17 Ping Pong Chess	18 Checkers Spades	19 Flag football Salsa music night	20 Pool Dominoes	21 Movie Night Spades	22 Texas Hold'em Country music night
23 Halo 2 Oldies music night	24 <i>CHRISTMAS EVE</i>	25 <i>CHRISTMAS RUN</i>	26 Pull up competition Salsa music night	27 Pool Dominoes	28 Movie Night Hip hop music night	29 Texas Hold'em R&B music night
30 Halo 2 Oldies music night	31 <i>NEW YEAR'S EVE</i>	1 <i>NEW YEAR'S Talent Show</i>	Unless otherwise stated, all events begin at 1930. Times and events are subject to change. Special events are in <i>red italics</i> .			