



IRON STRONG DAILY

PAGE 1

OCT. 06, 2008

COB Speicher hosts Army Ten Miler

**Story and photo by
Spc. Ryan Elliott
14th Public Affairs Detachment**

Shoulder to shoulder, Servicemembers and civilians from across Contingency Operating Base Speicher crowded the starting line in anticipation of the opening whistle, as they took part in the annual COB Speicher Army Ten Miler, Oct. 4.

"All the competitors here today are highly motivated," said Staff Sgt. Patrick Goodman, the event coordinator. "They all came in here at zero six this morning bouncing around and smiling, just waiting to get out there and run," Goodman said with excitement.

For many of the COB Speicher Ten Miler competitors, this year's race was not their first time competing.

"I ran the Army Ten miler last year," said Spc. John Bentely, of 1st Brigade 101st Airborne Division. "And I've been training a lot since the last race so I can improve my performance this year."

The ten mile course, which started in the parking lot of the main gym on COB Speicher, wove a ten mile path to a turnaround point and back.

The race covered varying terrain, from hard ball surface to

a soft granule soil, each terrain posing a different challenge to the competitors.

The competition was broken into different age categories, ranging from eighteen to fifty-plus.

"We have got people in the fifty-plus category out there on the course right now, running and competing, I think that says something very inspiring about these competitors," said Goodman.

Coming in First place overall was Air Force Capt. Marty Conrad, of Task Force Troy,

with the astonishing time of one hour two minutes and forty three seconds.

"I've been running for a long time," said Air Force Capt. Marty Conrad, of Task Force Troy; "I just went out there and did the best I could," Conrad went onto say glowing with sweat and pride.

The top three competitors of each age category received prizes along with the prestige of knowing there are among the fittest and the fastest Task force Iron has to offer.

For results see **Miler** on Page 3



Soldiers and civilians from Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, took part in an Army Ten Miler. The top three winners of the individual age categories won prizes that were presented after the race.

Mountainous terrain no longer threatens communication

**Story and photos by
Pfc. Adam Carl Blazak
11th Public Affairs Detachment**

Conducting operations around high-altitude terrain can be a communications nightmare. From losing frequencies to static over the communication network, anything could go wrong. Luckily, Soldiers with

Regimental Headquarters Headquarters Troop, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment are helping to maximize the range for effective communication.

Located on top of Sinjar and Maqloob Mountains, the RHHT is maintaining the existing retransmitting sites.

“Sinjar has been in existence since 2003 at least,” said Cullman, Ala.

native, Staff Sgt. Matthew Blakemore, regimental communications platoon sergeant, RHHT. “Right now we have about 12 different nets on each mountain.

“Let’s say we’re trying to transmit long range or around an object,” he said. “The (retransmitting) mountains will pull the signal in, boost the strength and rebroadcast it. It extends the range of the voice networks.”

Units using networks without retransmitting capabilities can only plan to use their communications within a 25 kilometer (15.5 miles) radius.

Blakemore said that having the retransmitting equipment atop of a mountain extends the range to 90 kilometers (55.8 miles).

“This is important, because it allows units that are out past that 25 kilometer range on the other side of the mountain to coordinate for support and report their status from a longer distance,” Blakemore said. “It allows command and control basically.”

To ensure the networks are properly functioning Blakemore said Soldiers must “change the communication security of

the radios every week.

Every time there’s a shift change, they have to do communication and serviceability checks. They must service the antennas to make sure they are functioning right, and do diagnostics on the radios to make sure they’re working right. A lot of it is just listening to the radios and making sure they work.”

“Well first of all, each shift change requires that we check radios,” said Athens, Ga. native, Christopher C. Gabriel, retransmitting team member, Remington Troop, RHHT. “Usually there are anywhere from 20 to 30 radios at a time up on a retransmitting site depending on who we have to help and how many people we’re retransmitting for.

“The most difficult part is keeping everything connected,” he said. “Since there are over 20 radios, you find one that’s something wrong with, you’ll probably find something else. If one goes out, then the entire connection is lost.”

With the antennas set up at high altitudes, weather has been a constant factor in providing reliable communication.

Blakemore said snowstorms have broken all of the antennas and left his Soldiers without power for a couple days. Wind and lightning storms have also blow down antennas.

“If there are not critical missions going on, they can lower the antennas,” he said. “But if, say, there’s a snowstorm up on the mountain or a lightning storm and we got guys out doing missions, they have to leave their stuff up and just rebuild it after it gets messed up.”

After communications are up and running, Soldiers living on the mountaintops learn not to expect the conveniences offered on forward operating bases.

Blakemore said because of its



Inspecting an antenna on top of Sinjar Mountain, Iraq, Sgt. Eric M. Gerber, communications noncommissioned officer in charge with Regiment Headquarters Headquarters Troop, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, ensures that it is tightly secured. The mountain is home to 14 retransmitting stacks, which are used to help facilitate military communication in the surrounding areas.

See **Communication** on Page 4

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Mark P. Hertling
Public Affairs Officer: Maj. Margaret Kageleiry
Public Affairs NCOIC: Master Sgt. Nancy Morrison

Contributing Writers: Spc. Ryan Elliott, Pfc. Adam Carl Blazak,
Spc. Karla P. Elliott
Layout and Design: Spc. Karla P. Elliott, 14th PAD
Editor: Staff Sgt. Mark Albright, 14th Public Affairs Detachment

Contact the *Iron Strong* at VOIP: 242-1190, DSN: 318-849-0089 or email mark.albright@iraq.centcom.mil

The “Iron Strong” is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of the “Iron Strong” are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the Task Force Iron. All editorial content of this publication is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Task Force Iron Public Affairs Office.



Miler from Page 1

RESULTS

Results provided by Staff Sgt. Patrick Goodman, 391st CSSB

COB SPEICHER
ARMY TEN MILER
OCTOBER 04, 2008

OVERALL WINNERS:

1st Male: Capt. Marty Conrad (1AD)
TIME: 1hr, 2min, 29sec

1st Female: Capt. Amy Swiatecki-McCabe (C
co./426)
TIME: 1hr, 13min, 10sec

AGE GROUP WINNERS:

18-24:

1st: Spc. Christopher Netzley (326)
2nd: Chief Warrant Officer2 Jacob Rettig (6-17)
3rd: 1st Lt. Cody Wrooblewski (6-17)

25-31:

1st: Capt. Matry Conrad (1AD)
2nd: John Clough (1EASOS)
3rd: Justin Dowmen(TF-16)

32-38:

1st: Maj. Russell Stewart (501MP)
2nd: Chief Warrant Officer3 Abimel Hernandez
(6-17)
3rd: Capt. Jason Wright (1AD)

39-45:

1st: Sgt. Maj. Geoffrey Schmalz (3 ACR)
2nd: Staff Sgt. Patrick Goodman (391st CSSB)
3rd: Capt. Gareth Lintt (1AD)

46-50:

1st: Capt. Stephen Aycock (345)
2nd: Lt. Col. Tim Ackinson (HHC 18 EN BDE)
3rd: Staff Sgt. Janice Jones (1AD)

51-Above:

1st: Maj. Irene Talarico (345CSH)
2nd: Sgt. 1st Class Leonard Robins (1AD)
3rd: Col. Miriam Rosa (345th CSH)



Soldiers re-enlist in Mosul



(ABOVE) Soldiers from various units on Logistical Support Area Diamondback and Forward Operating Base Marez raise their right hands and take the re-enlistment oath during a mass re-enlistment ceremony. More than 30 Soldiers came together for the ceremony held outside the Morale, Welfare and Recreation building on LSA Diamondback, Iraq.

(LEFT) Maj. Gen. Mark Hertling, commanding general for Multinational Division – North, prepares to reenlist a group of Soldiers during a mass re-enlistment ceremony held outside the VIP Palms on Logistical Support Area Diamondback, Iraq. More than 30 Soldiers from LSA Diamondback and Forward Operating Base Marez came together for the ceremony.

Photos by Pfc. Adam Carl Blazak, 11th PAD

Communication from Page 2

isolated location and flights arriving on an as needed basis, there can be some inconveniences such as administrative work that the Soldiers need.

“It’s an isolated environment,” he said. “They get resupplied about every 10 days. My NCOs are pretty much staying up there for the deployment, but I’m rotating Soldiers out about every month.”

Soldiers who head to the mountains understand the importance of having communications.

“My job is critical, because without constant communications with the retransmitting sites it would be like a mission failure,” Gabriel said.

“If the user can talk and complete the mission without communications being an issue and all the data is getting passed, then it’s a success,” Blakemore said. “Honestly, without them we would not be as nearly as successful in Iraq as we are. A lot of people forget they’re there, but it’s what they do that makes the combatants, the war fighters, successful.”



Entering a communications frequency, Sgt. Richard Martinez Jr., communications noncommissioned officer, 586th Network Support Company, 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, ensures the retransmitting stacks are functioning properly at Sinjar Mountain, Iraq. Because of the mountain’s high altitude, 14 retransmitting stacks serve as an essential communications tool for those Troops in the surrounding areas.

ENTERTAINMENT

(AP) The unlikely stars of Ice Cube's new video are the grieving relatives of a 17-year-old high school football star who was shot to death outside his home.

The song "Why Me?" speaks out against senseless violence and gun crime devastating communities. Cube says Jamiel Shaw Jr.'s family is a powerful illustration of the pain that lingers after a murder.

"It just was a tragic, tragic story of why," Cube says. "Young people are dying for no reason all over the world that don't know why. It's ugly, everywhere."

Shaw had been on track for a college sports scholarship when he was gunned down in March a few yards from his house in a working-class neighborhood south of downtown Los Angeles. His mother was serving in the Army in Iraq at the time.

Pedro Espinoza, an illegal immigrant and suspected gang member who had been released from jail a day earlier on weapons charges, has pleaded not guilty to murder.

Prosecutors say Espinoza drove to Shaw's neighborhood and shot him after asking him about his gang affiliation. Police

have said Shaw was never in a gang.

The rap video begins with the tightly framed, sorrow-filled faces of Shaw's parents and aunt. His father recounts a final conversation with his son.

"To drive this home, it was only right to use real family and not use a bunch of actors," Cube says.

His video features photographs of dozens of other crime victims blowing from a tree, then across the sand in the desert. It also depicts a young man in a football jersey being gunned down on a street. As he lays dying, he asks, "Why me homie, why me?"

Espinoza's early release from jail led the Shaws to call for the passage of "Jamiel's Law," which would push Los Angeles police to crack down on illegal immigrant gang members.

Cube says the video is not meant as an endorsement of the move.

"It ain't really a commentary on that," he says. "You've got a person being killed by a person he don't know for a reason he don't know ... Who cares if it was an immigrant or if it was a taxpaying citizen?"

For the Shaws, appearing in the video was a chance to further their petition drive to

qualify the proposed law for the November ballot.

"Every time I start watching it, I start crying," Jamiel Shaw Sr. says. "At the same time, I feel good that we are getting the word out."



ELECTIONS

(AP) Hundreds of thousands of potential voters will pass through Albuquerque over the next several days. Their purpose: to eat too many breakfast burritos as they sip hot chocolate and take in the spectacle of the annual international hot-air balloon fiesta.

But this year — a presidential election year when Americans are worried about the economy and feeling the pinch of growing energy pressures — some groups are using the event to share their points of view with as many people as possible.

Armed with his clipboard and dozens



of voter registration forms, Chris Foster greeted some of the people who poured into Balloon Fiesta Park early Saturday. Fellow volunteers for Barack Obama's Democratic presidential campaign were stationed at other entrances and at park-and-ride locations throughout the city, he said.

Their goal has been to register 30,000 voters in 30 days, and the deadline to register in New Mexico is Tuesday, he said.

"This campaign is very important to us," Foster said. "This is a perfect thing here at the balloon fiesta."

Across town, members of the international environmental watchdog Greenpeace geared up to launch their new Stop Global Warming, Save the Climate balloon. The balloon is colored like Earth to get people thinking about global warming, organizer Kristin Wheeler said.

"This is a historical and cultural event for the state of New Mexico," she said of the fiesta, first held 36 years ago. "It's a great way to elevate our message of stopping global warming to the thousands of people that will be here this week."

Although fiesta officials acknowledged the political and environmental messages sneaking in,

they have tried to keep politics off the launch field. They have strict rules about campaigning and handing out fliers, spokeswoman Kathie Leyendecker said.

"This is a huge event. It's a spectator event. It's a family event," she said. "You're pretty much looking up in the air and ooh-ing and aah-ing at all the beautiful balloons, and you don't need someone tugging on your shoulder."

Between 800,000 and 850,000 people are expected for the nine-day event. And Saturday was the perfect day for this year's first mass ascension, as hundreds of balloons in all shapes and colors lifted off.

"There are new, exciting balloons every year, and seeing them rise up above you is better than looking at them from afar," said Christie Wente, of Albuquerque, who brought her family to the fiesta. "There's nothing like being down here on the field."

Three waves of balloons soared from the field just after dawn while tens of thousands of people watched from below. Part of the attraction for the audience is that they can stand right next to the balloons as they are being inflated.

More than 600 balloons are registered for this year's fiesta. It will also serve as the starting point for a cross-country gas balloon race that's expected to start Monday.

BASEBALL

(AP) It's a century and counting for the Chicago Cubs. Manny Ramirez and the Los Angeles Dodgers shoved Chicago into another long winter Saturday night, completing a three-game sweep of their first-round playoff series with a 3-1 victory.

The Cubs' latest flameout has to be among the most galling, considering they fell flat against the Dodgers after their best regular season since 1945.

James Loney hit a two-out, two-run double in the first to get Los Angeles started, and Hiroki Kuroda worked 6 1-3 brilliant innings in the first postseason outing of his career.

"Man, right now this is the place to be," Ramirez said. "We're going to the second round."

The three wins boosted first-year manager Joe Torre's postseason total to 79 — the most in baseball history. His first 76 came in the last 12 years as skipper of the New York Yankees, including 16 in four World Series triumphs.

After earning their first postseason series win in 20 years, the Dodgers will face Philadelphia or Milwaukee in the best-of-seven NLCS starting Thursday — at Philadelphia should the Phillies win, at Dodger Stadium should the Brewers prevail.

And the Cubs head home without having come close to their first World Series triumph since 1908. They have lost nine straight playoff games, including three to Arizona in the first round last year.

"We just didn't hit, you have to score runs," manager Lou Piniella said. "We had opportunities and you have to take advantage of them. This is six games I've managed now in the postseason and we have scored just 12 runs. That doesn't get it done."

While the Cubs clinched the NL Central on Sept. 20 and won a league-high 97 games, the Dodgers had a losing record as recently as early September before turning things around behind Ramirez. They went 84-78 and won the NL West, baseball's weakest division.

Make no mistake, the Dodgers dominated this series, outscoring Chicago 20-6 thanks in part to a lot of help from the bumbling Cubs. Cursed or not, they were outplayed in every way, committing six errors and doing a woeful job of hitting with runners in scoring position.

"We have the best team in the league, and we struggle in the playoffs," Cubs outfielder Alfonso Soriano said. "We did not play good, like a team. That's the reason we didn't win."

The Dodgers, meanwhile, entered having won only one postseason game since beating Oakland in the 1988 World Series. They tripled that output against the Cubs, who became the first team to finish with NL's best regular-season record and be swept in the first round of the playoffs since the Astros in 2001, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

Ramirez, who hit .396 with 17 homers and 53 RBIs in 53 games after joining the Dodgers, went 1-for-2 and scored a run, giving him five hits in 10 at-bats with two homers, five runs scored and three RBIs in the series. Rich Harden (0-1) walked Ramirez intentionally twice.

"I did it before, I'll do it again," Ramirez said. "When you're relaxed and you're in a place you really like, this is what happens."

The Dodgers acquired an unhappy Ramirez from the Boston Red Sox at the trade deadline.

The Dodgers began their locker room champagne celebration within a couple minutes after the final out, and several returned to the field shortly thereafter to share their joy with the fans. Russell Martin and Matt Kemp went into the left-field pavilion, and Kemp poured champagne into Kuroda's

mouth in front of the Los Angeles dugout as the fans cheered.

Torre spoke to the fans some 20 minutes after the game ended.

"Dodger fans, you are very special," he said. "The way you supported us all year when we struggled, when we couldn't get out of our own way ... I can't tell you how much we appreciate it. Just don't go away, we'll be back next week, because we still have eight more games to win."

With that, the fans roared their approval.

Kuroda, a 33-year-old rookie who signed a \$35.3 million, three-year contract with the Dodgers last winter, scattered six hits before being relieved by Cory Wade with two on and one out in the seventh. Kuroda never appeared in a playoff game during 11 seasons with the Hiroshima Toyo Carp of the Japanese Central League.

This wasn't Kuroda's first outstanding performance against the Cubs — he shut them out on four hits while striking out 11 on June 6 at Dodger Stadium.

The Cubs were pretty awful in the first two games at Wrigley Field, where they were an NL-best 55-26 during the regular season. Game 1 starter Ryan Dempster matched a career high with seven walks in 4 2-3 innings in a 7-2 loss, and each of the four Chicago infielders committed errors in Game 2, leading to a 10-3 setback.

A move to Los Angeles didn't help the Chicago offense, which scored a league-leading 855 runs this year. The Cubs had only four hits in 17 at-bats with runners in scoring position in the first two games before going 1-for-11 in Game 3.

At least the long-suffering Cubs fans weren't around to boo them in Game 3, although the Dodger Stadium faithful made up for that.

Martin hit a one-out double in the first and took third on a single by Ramirez. After Harden struck out Andre Ethier, Loney hit a liner down the right-field line, giving the Dodgers a 2-0 lead and sending the towel-waving fans into an early frenzy.

Rafael Furcal walked with one out in the fifth and scored on a double by Martin.

The Cubs got their run in the eighth off Wade on a leadoff double by Derrek Lee, who had three hits, and a two-out RBI single by pinch-hitter Daryle Ward. Jonathan Broxton relieved and struck out Mark DeRosa to end the inning, and worked a perfect ninth with two more strikeouts to earn a save.

Harden allowed five hits and three runs in 4 1-3 innings. He had gone 5-0 with a 1.99 ERA in his last 10 starts of the regular season.



GEORGIA

(AP) Russian troops began dismantling positions Sunday in the so-called security zones inside Georgia they have occupied since August's brief but intense war, a Georgian Interior Ministry official said.

The moves came as Russia faced a Friday deadline for pulling back its troops under terms of a deal brokered by French President Nicolas Sarkozy on behalf of the European



Union. Hundreds of EU observers began monitoring Russia's compliance with the pact last week.

Russia and Georgia went to war in early August after Georgia launched a massive barrage on the capital of South Ossetia, one of two Georgian separatist regions where Russia has troops stationed as peacekeepers. Russian forces then declared what it called a security zone roughly 4 miles deep inside Georgia south of South Ossetia and the other separatist region, Abkhazia.

The EU-brokered agreement obliges Russia to pull its troops out of the zones by Friday, but Russia says it plans to keep thousands of troops inside Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia recognized the independence of both regions after the fighting, a move denounced by Georgia and the West; only Nicaragua and the Hamas government in Gaza have followed suit with recognition so far.

On Sunday, troops lowered the

flag at a Russian base in Nadarbazevi, about 30 miles northwest of the capital, Tbilisi. Georgian Interior Ministry spokesman Shota Utiashvili described the position as a communications center and said Russia had promised to fully leave it on Monday.

Utiashvili also said a checkpoint in Ali, in the zone around South Ossetia, was dismantled on Sunday and that Russian forces were leaving another position in Zugdidi, in the zone south of Abkhazia.

A spokesman for the European Union monitoring mission, speaking on customary condition of anonymity, confirmed that the Ali checkpoint was being taken down.

Georgian and EU officials could not immediately clarify how many Russian positions in total would have to be dismantled to meet the agreement's terms. After the war, Russia said it would set up a total of 36 checkpoints in the security zones — 18 in each.

BOLIVIA

(AP) President Evo Morales said Saturday that Bolivia does not need U.S. help to control its coca crop, stepping up his anti-Washington rhetoric days after rejecting an American request to fly an anti-drug plane over the South American nation's territory.

Morales also compared U.S. counter-drug efforts in the country, including Drug Enforcement Administration flights, to espionage.

"It's important that the international community knows that here, we don't need control of the United States on coca cultivation," the president told a gathering of coca farmers. "We can control ourselves internally. We don't need any spying from anybody."

U.S. Embassy spokesman Eric Watnik said the DEA makes periodic requests to fly a plane transporting U.S. and Bolivian anti-narcotics personnel around the country. The aircraft is not used for surveillance, he said.

Relations between Washington and La Paz have increasingly deteriorated

in recent weeks. Morales expelled the U.S. ambassador last month, accusing him of supporting deadly protests organized by his conservative opposition. The former ambassador denies the allegations.

Washington responded by ousting Bolivia's ambassador and later placed the Andean nation on an anti-narcotics blacklist, saying Morales has not sufficiently cooperated with international anti-drug efforts.

"We've certified Bolivia twice before under the Morales government, even though they have taken a very different approach to counter drugs, especially to eradication, than previous

governments," Thomas Shannon, the top U.S. diplomat for Latin America, told The Associated Press on Thursday.

"But what we've noticed over the past couple of months," he added, "was a declining political willingness to cooperate, and then a very precise attempt by the part of some of the government ministries to begin to lower the level of cooperation and try to break the linkages" between U.S. and Bolivian anti-drug efforts.

Washington did not cut off anti-narcotics aid, but the decertification prompted President George W. Bush to recommend suspending Bolivia's special exemption from U.S. tariffs under an Andean-wide act that Congress has just renewed for another year.

Bolivian business leaders estimate that loss of the tariff exemptions would cost South America's poorest country as many as 20,000 jobs.

Bolivia is the world's third largest producer of coca — the base ingredient in cocaine — after Colombia and Peru. The Andean trade preferences have also benefited the latter two countries and Ecuador.

