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An issue dedicated to soldiers' stories

Childhood friends reunite in Iraq



Photo by Spc. Darryl L. Montgomery

Lt. Col. Jake Conway, Assistant Chief of Staff ,G2, 10th Mountain Division (LI), and Lt. Col. Jim Moore, liaison officer for the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, lifelong friends from Branchdale, Pa., have known each other since early childhood. When Conway received his commission in 1989, Moore pinned him as second lieutenant and swore him into the United States Army.

SPC. DARRYL L. MONTGOMERY
MND-S



COB BASRA – Two childhood friends that use to play ‘army’ together have recently crossed paths in Iraq.

Lt. Col. Jake Conway and Lt. Col. Jim Moore, both natives of Branchdale,

Pa., ran into each other at COB Basra in what they call a meeting of fate.

The two spent their childhood together hunting and playing sports, they said. Most of their time was spent outside in the small, rural town with a population of about 900. Moore, the son of a retired sergeant major, said although the town is small, it produces a lot of

Service members.

Conway, assistant chief of staff, G2, 10th Mountain Division (LI), and Moore, liaison officer for the 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, said this is the second time they have crossed paths while on duty in the last 20 years Conway

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FRIENDS

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way has been in the military. Moore has served 24 years.

The first was in the summer of 1995 during an exercise called Mountain Peak at Fort Drum, N.Y.

"I was an Infantry Battalion Intelligence Officer," Conway said. "My battalion was the opposing force and Moore was an Air Cavalry Troop commander at the time."

"We were up at Fort Drum for our annual training period doing reconnaissance rehearsal missions," Moore added. "I got in touch with Jake and found out his guys were the opposing force."

"I put him to work for us," Conway added, "Moore reconned for the opposing force."

"He was getting intelligence feeds and no one could figure out how," Moore added, both sharing a laugh at the memory.

"We have known each other our entire lives. We grew up together about 20 yards apart," said Conway. "Our parents, still to this day, live in those same houses."

"We went to the same grade school, high school, college and we went through the same ROTC program," Moore added.

"Moore is four years older than me and I have always looked up to him as a mentor," said Conway. "He had a lot of influence in my decision to join the Army."

"I saw him get an Army Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship through Penn State University and become a commissioned officer," Conway added. "I knew in high school I wanted to be an Army officer, so I followed after him in that I received an Army ROTC scholarship through PSU."

While Conway was still a cadet, Moore graduated, received his commission, went on active duty and took a duty assignment in Germany.

At the end of his tour in Germany, he joined the Pennsylvania National Guard.

"The timing was such that I was in Pennsylvania when Jake was coming up for his commissioning," Moore said,

"He asked me if I could commission him, so I did."

Moore, a captain at the time, pinned the rank of second lieutenant on the collar of the newly commissioned Army officer on May 12, 1989. Moore also swore Conway in to the United States Army.

"I have been on active duty since then," Conway said, "going on 20 years now."

"And I have continued to serve in the National Guard," Moore added.

"We never thought we would have the opportunity to serve together because of our two different career paths," Conway said. "Ironically, here in Iraq, we both work together in the same division headquarters."

Moore said there have only been a few times in the past the two have seen each other. They have kept in touch through e-mail and other ways of corresponding though.

"Our last adventure together was when Moore flew up to Alaska to accompany me while I was undergoing a permanent change of station from Alaska to Fort Huachuca, Ariz.," said Conway.

Moore flew up to meet Conway at Fort Richardson, Alaska, in March of 1993 and the two drove all the way down the Alaska-Canadian Highway, thru the U.S. to Pennsylvania before the move to Arizona, Conway recalled.

"It was a 10 day road trip," Moore added, both of them laughing together at the memory they shared. "That was our last 'mission' together."

The two arrived in Basra within days of each other. Conway is finishing his tour and will be heading back home to Fort Drum in the near future.

Moore is just beginning his tour in Iraq and is expecting to be here until January, 2010. He said he is looking forward to his mission and being able to support the 10th Mtn. Div. for the remainder of their tour and 34th Infantry Division when it takes over.

Reflecting on the mission of the 10th Mtn. Div., Conway said, "We did an outstanding job and we truly made a difference to the overall mission here in Iraq, and most importantly to the people of Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces."

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SCHEDULE A HOMETOWN INTERVIEW

THE Mountain View

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Task Force 449



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Families join together to get the job done

Pfc. JASMINE N. WALTHALL
TF 449



CAMP STRIKER- Two cousins, with the help of their fellow Soldiers and Airmen, pitched in to build a multimillion dollar Command and Control Center, Forward Arming and Refueling Points and an Aviation Maintenance Facility for aviation operations in Iraq recently.

Army Lt. Col. Michael Fields, Task Force 449 Deputy Commander, and his cousin, Air Force Master Sgt. Reid E. Fussell III, 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE Squadron Operations Superintendent, are long-lost cousins, from Rose Hill, N.C., who reunited in Iraq.

“We had no idea that we would be in Iraq at the same time,” said Fields, a Guardsman since 1984.

“We happened to be talking about a project that our units were involved in and realized we were talking about the same project and his unit would be building the work area for our unit.”

In January, RED HORSE Airmen led the planning and constructing of a new aviation maintenance facility and went on to complete the Southwest Asia hut project, which ensured that Task Force 449, and aviation brigades that followed, are mission capable.

“Our relationship helped the entire process along,” said Fussell, who has been in the Air Force for 19 years. “Since we already knew each other and worked well together, we were able to complete the mission efficiently and earlier than planned.”

Fussell and Field’s families, who still live in Rose Hill, N.C. also benefit from knowing the cousins are deployed together.

“It helped our families deal better with knowing that we would be there looking out for each other,” said Fields, who works at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem, N.C.

The cousins have already made plans to take some trips

together now that they have re-established their relationship.

“We haven’t had much contact since joining the military,” said Fussell. “So we were able to do a lot of catching up, we’re glad we got to work together.”



Photo by Pfc. Jasmine N. Walthall
Army Lt. Col. Michael L. Fields (right) and his cousin Air Force Master Sgt. Reid E. Fussell III stand in front of their joint project, a Command and Control Center for aviation operations in Iraq. Fussell and Fields are natives of Rose Hill, N.C.

An advertisement for 'The Red Bull Report'. The background is a cityscape at dusk or dawn, with buildings and a body of water. The text 'COMING SOON' is written in large, bold, black letters at the top. At the bottom, 'THE RED BULL REPORT' is written in large, bold, red letters. A large, stylized red bull logo is visible on the right side of the image.

Headline Round-up

World News:

There's one less great adventure left for somebody to conquer, thanks to two hardy Midwesterners who have become the first Americans to complete an unsupported trek to the North Pole. Just nine days after completing their historic 54-day journey, John Huston of Chicago and Tyler Fish of Ely, Minn., came to New York to tell TODAY's Kathie Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb how they did it. The bottom line: It wasn't easy, even for these two. Huston, 32, has completed a trek to the South Pole and a 1,400-mile dogsled journey in Greenland, and Tyler, 34, is an Outward Bound camp coordinator, elite cross-country skier and wilderness survival expert. Yet their 475-mile unassisted trek to the top of the world stretched them to their limits. "I don't know if we would do this trip again — it was that hard," Huston said.

Sports News:

TAMPA, Fla. - New York Yankees star Alex Rodriguez homered twice and played seven innings in the field for the second straight day in an extended spring training game on May 5. Sidelined since undergoing right hip surgery on March 9, the third baseman could rejoin the Yankees for the May 8 game at Baltimore. A-Rod said a return date has not been finalized. Rodriguez went 3 for 6 with two homers to center — including one that cleared a 40-foot high batter's eye — and also lined a single. He had two plays at third, fielding a grounder and making a spin move to throw out Philadelphia minor leaguer Nerio Rios at first.

Odd News:

NEW ORLEANS - A man is suing the New Orleans Police Department, claiming he was harassed by an officer who threatened to arrest him for wearing a black pin-striped skirt to municipal court. Jeremy Don Kerr is asking for \$1 in damages, a ruling that his rights were violated, and an order against barring access to public facilities because of gender stereotyping. The department hasn't been served with the lawsuit and hasn't answered the claim in court. Kerr filed the civil-rights lawsuit last month. He said he finds skirts more comfortable than pants, and wears them with button-down Oxfords or T-shirts. He said women love it.

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For the answer to today's puzzle, go to:



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AROUND THE COMMUNITY

DFAC 1 Worship
 Sunday
 Roman Catholic Mass, UK led @ 9:30 a.m.
 General Protestant @ 11 a.m.
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saint @ 2 p.m.
 General Protestant @ 6:30 p.m.

DFAC 3 Worship
 Sunday
 Gospel Worship @ 2 p.m.

DFAC 4 Worship
 Monday - Saturday
 Daily Mass @ 8 p.m.
 Sunday
 Protestant Contemporary Worship @ 10 a.m.
 Holy communion, Protestant (UK) @ 11:30 a.m.
 Roman Catholic Mass, UK led @ 8:30 p.m.

MWR Stage
 May 16
 Basra Idol @ 6 p.m. To audition contact CW2 Meeks at 858-4526 or email robert.l.meeks@iraq.centcom.mil

The Norris Roundhouse

They were going to release a Chuck Norris edition of Clue, but the answer always turns out to be "Chuck Norris. In The Library. With a Roundhouse Kick."

