



## THE JUNGLEER

VOL. 1 ISSUE 8

41 INFANTRY BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

December 1, 2009

# Senators Wyden and Merkley visit 41st IBCT Soldiers



Oregon U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley fields questions from Soldiers of the 41st IBCT.

TF Guardian guides U.S. Senators on a night showing of MRAPs during their stop in Tallil. "Impressive!" Wyden commented.

Photo by Spc. Anita VanderMolen, TF Jungler

Oregon's U.S. Senator Ron Wyden learns about vehicles used in convoys by the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the Oregon National Guard in Tallil, Iraq on November 24, 2009. Sen. Wyden and Sen. Jeff Merley, were in Iraq to meet with senior Iraq officials and to get an idea of Iraq's future. They also took the time to visit Soldiers and hear their concerns about the future of jobs, health care and the economy upon their return home.

### Soldier's Info

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/user/theJunglerTube](http://www.youtube.com/user/theJunglerTube)

**Blog:** [www.jungler.blogspot.com](http://www.jungler.blogspot.com)

**Freedom Salute.com:** Salute someone who has supported you

**Southern Oregon University:** [sou.edu/DeployedSoldier](http://sou.edu/DeployedSoldier)

**Army Family Readiness Group:** [www.armyfrg.org](http://www.armyfrg.org)

**41st Facebook Group:** [www.facebook.com/group.php?qid=89211769848](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?qid=89211769848)

**Facebook:** <http://tinyurl.com/mq8rh9>

**Weather:** [www.weatherforyou.com](http://www.weatherforyou.com)

**Twitter:** [www.twitter.com/41stIBCT](http://www.twitter.com/41stIBCT)

**DVIDS:** [www.dvidshub.net/units/41IBCT](http://www.dvidshub.net/units/41IBCT)



## 41st hosts Gen. Petraeus and MG Rees



Photo by 1st Sgt. Gavin McIlvenna, TF Stetson

### Working out with the General

Spc. Bradley Saltenberger (upper right), from Klamath Falls, Oregon keeps pace with Gen. David Petraeus (center), the U.S. Central Command Commanding General during an after run “cool down”. Spc. Saltenberger who is a member of C/1-82 Cavalry assigned to the Joint Visitors Bureau at Camp Victory, Iraq provided security for Gen. Petraeus during an early morning run.

### Rees takes time with Soldiers

Maj. Gen. Raymond F. Rees, Oregon National Guard’s Adjutant General, visited the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldiers and the command staff in Iraq November 26-27, 2009.

Maj. Gen. Rees traveled through Iraq on a whirlwind two-day tour. He received mission updates from the commanders and met with the Soldiers. He was given a tour of the convoy security mission vehicles used by A Company 1/186IN, Task Force Guardian, at Camp Adder.



Photo by Spc. Anita VanderMolen. TF Jungler

## Soldier/ NCO of the Quarter boards held at VBC

Story by Staff Sgt. Andrew Spears, TF Volunteer

This month the company competed in the Soldier and NCO of the Quarter Boards.

The board is comprised of all the first sergeants in the battalion. They ask technical questions on a wide variety of topics.

The Soldier is judged on his appearance, technical and tactical knowledge, military bearing, and presentation.

The 1115th proudly represented 2-162 IN battalion and the state of New Mexico by competing at the brigade board held at Victory Base Camp in Baghdad, Iraq. Spc. Coriz finished a close runner up while Sgt. Jackson competed against the reigning Oregon NCO

of the Year and was victorious.

The 1115th CSC took first place in both categories with Spc. Jonathan Coriz winning Soldier of the Quarter and Sgt. Jeremy Jackson winning NCO of the Quarter.

Sgt. Jackson will now represent the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2-162 IN and the state of NM at the 13th ESC Board held in Joint Base Balad.

A Soldier representing the battalion at the brigade board is definitely a great accomplishment. It is a testament to the quality of Soldiers that come from this company to have both a Soldier and an NCO represented in such a way.



## 41st IBCT celebrates newest American citizens

Story and photo by Spc. Louie Buckles, TF Jungleer

On November 11, 157 foreign-born service members became American citizens during a ceremony in the Al-Faw palace on Victory Base, Iraq.



Sp. Leonida Dieter

They came from all over the country to participate and be sworn in by the Field Office Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services from Rome.

Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, Jr. delivered a speech honoring their achievements as uniformed service members and celebrated their journey toward becoming American citizens.

Notable, was the inclusion of many Iraqi-born Soldiers swearing their allegiance to the United States. Many worked with the U.S. in some

capacity during the past six years of conflict in Iraq prior to enlisting in the armed forces.

Many participants in the ceremony were overheard saying how excited they were to be American citizens.

As part of the ceremony, Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby, Jr. gave each participant a coin and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank A. Grippe presented each with a flag to both honor the new citizens.

The 2009 naturalization ceremony is the fifteenth such event to be held in Iraq. More than 1,300 Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, and Sailors have become American citizens while on deployment to Iraq.



Sp. Meza Pineda

## International exposure

Story by 1 Lt. Benjamin Curle, TF Guardian

A deployment in Iraq presents a unique opportunity to many Soldiers who might be taking their first trip overseas.

The United States is made up of the descendants of immigrants who came to the "Great Mixing Bowl" of society at different points in its history, for many different reasons.

A majority of Americans are now firmly part of a distinct American Culture and have little else with which to compare their way of life. After this deployment, the Soldiers of the 1055th will have enjoyed a wealth of experience and exposure to other cultures that goes well beyond the Iraqi populace.

In Tallil alone, Soldiers interact daily with Ugandan guards, contractors from Great Britain, Australia, India and Eastern Europe.

Outside of the gates of Camp Adder, Soldiers work with Turks, Jordanians, Syrians, and Pakistanis on most of the missions they run.

The regular interaction with these distinct cultures and traditions has expanded the Soldiers' understanding of how the rest of the world acts and thinks in similar situations to our own. Through this experience and common purpose each Soldier of the 1055th will grow and understand the world as we continue to drive ahead into the 21st Century.

## 41st IBCT celebrates youngest American citizens

- |                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. 1LT MICHAEL AND LIZ JONES         | (ANGELINA)  |
| 2. SPC ISAIAH AND JACKIE SANCHEZ     | (ISAIAH JR) |
| 3. SPC GARCIA AND CHARLENE RODRIGUEZ | (KATELYNN)  |
| 4. SPC VICENTE AND AMANDA QUINTANA   | (KALAN)     |
| 5. SGT GENARO AND SANDRA TAFOYA      | (AVA)       |
| 6. SGT RYAN AND RAQUEL SWITZER       | (RYAN JR)   |



# Babylon: a humbling experience

Story by Staff Sgt. Shawn Gates, TF Volunteer and photo by Maj. Chris Reese, TF Jungler

On November 18, 2009, I was given the opportunity to visit the ancient city of Babylon.

The famous city of Babylon started out as a small village during the time of King Hammurabi around 2350 B.C. According to archeologists, King Nebuchadnezzar turned the small village into the great city of Babylon around 600 B.C. A lot of the history of Babylon may never be known due to the defiling of the ancient site and archeologists not wanting to remove the remaining 13 meters of earth still preserving the rest of the ancient city.

Alpha Company 2-162 Infantry lead a small convoy of Soldiers from CSC Scania to the ancient city of Babylon. The trip was an uneventful drive North of Scania.

Upon reaching the site we linked up with the curator of the ancient city. The curator was very knowledgeable on the history and current information on the city of Babylon.

We started at the Gate of Ishtar. The original gate was removed by the German Expedition prior to World War I and moved to its present location in Berlin. Saddam Hussein rebuilt the grand entrance, making his own adaptations in his image. Archeologists fought this action, but it was a futile attempt since the land was owned and ruled by the dictatorship government.

The tour leads us through the Gates of Ishtar and around the original Street of Processions. The street still contains original stonework and is off limits to walk on in order to be preserved for the future.

We continued moving in and out of ancient buildings.

We saw King Nebuchadnezzar's summer and winter palace, several religious buildings, and other every day buildings used for storage and market purposes. Much of the stonework is still original. Several of the bricks contain the ancient King Nebuchadnezzar seal or signature. Throughout the layers, the masons would lay bricks that were made with the King's special signature.

There were also very unique decorations on the walls and icons of the gods. There was one in particular that sticks out in my mind. It was the shape of

a dragon that had the semblance of a snake, lion and eagle. It was to resemble the god Ishtar.

After wandering around the old buildings we made our way to the Lion of Babylon. This ancient statue was very well kept. It contained all original basalt stone except for the base. The Lion is a symbol for the goddess Ishtar. Some people believe the imprint on the lions back was meant for a saddle for the goddess to use. It is roughly about 15 feet long and at least 10 feet tall. It is quite an amazing sight.

Next we made our way over to a modern day building, one of Saddam Hussein's palaces.

The palace was built in the mid 1980's. It sits atop a man made mountain on the banks of the Euphrates River. To complete the mountain, a big part of the river was filled in.

There are amazing wall decorations and other woodwork in the palace. The inside is made of marble. One grand room contains a huge piece of woodwork, about 20 feet around, resembling a blossoming flower.

The palace looks out over the river and upon the majestic ancient city of Babylon. It is a very spectacular sight.

When standing on the palace balcony one can look across and see where the estimated location of the Tower of Babylon. The tower was said to of been 91 meters by 91 meters and 91 meters tall. The curator told us the majority of this information is from archeological evidence and ancient writings.

We were able to bring along with us several Iraqi Soldiers. This was their first chance to view the ancient city which contained so much of their history.

I did notice graffiti on a lot of the buildings and bricks. It saddens me to think that people can desecrate such an ancient and historical area. Few have the chance to see the ancient city. It was a great honor to be able to attend.

Visiting one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World is one of the most exciting experiences of my life. The thought that all the history and events recorded in the Bible happened in this one ancient city was a very humbling experience.

I strongly recommend viewing this site if ever the chance arises.



## Got elbow grease? B Co, 2/162 maintenance does

Story by 1Lt. Timothy Aldal, TF Volunteer

Recently we had a command directed maintenance stand down day.

A maintenance stand down day is completely dedicated to the care of our vehicles and equipment. This was the first time that our company has had a chance to do one. That is not to say that every operator and leader has not ensured that their assigned equipment and vehicles were being maintained, this just allowed for everyone to come together on one page and reassure everyone that nothing is getting missed.

Safety is the main concern as we go about our toil for the day. So much of our mission here in southern Iraq depends on the specially developed mine resistant vehicles.

Unfortunately, for many of our Soldiers and mechanics, this is the first time we were able to see these unique engineering marvels was once we got on the ground here.

Most of our Soldiers had never conducted maintenance on anything bigger than a humvee. This created a bit of a learning curve for most of us who started in

a traditionally light unit.

Regardless, our Soldiers have come along very well. They have taken to the task like everyone knew they would.

They have all dedicated themselves to this convoy security mission and the huge responsibility of the mission essential well oiled maintenance program that comes with it.

With just six mechanics, this company is responsible for keeping over 40 convoy protection vehicles operational. It is not an easy job. The realities of our mission, as well as the climate of the area, make it extraordinarily difficult to accomplish.

The day was full, but it was necessary for the safety and well being of our Soldiers.

There were many crew-level projects finished as well as some much needed preventative and required maintenance done by our company maintenance program.

The time and elbow grease made a very long but productive day.

## Life in Iraq: do your part

Story by 1Lt. Midhael Jones, TF Volunter

Everyone has their good days and bad days. Iraq tends to magnify the effects of success and failure. One hour you'll struggle to figure out the next step, the next deadline, and whether you'll have time to yourself and so on. Or, you'll get a brief respite and wonder at how much you've accomplished in such a short time. You'll curse yourself for missing that important e-mail, the morning meeting, and sometimes lunch. Then others will tell you how proud of you they are and that you're doing a good job.

You think to yourself, "At my best, I could run circles around myself; there is no task I can't accomplish."

But, the true measure of your abilities is not conducted while you're at your best; it's when you're tired, hungry, nervous, and even scared. When you think you're done and there is no more to give, that's when you smile at the challenge at hand. You look at your mistakes; figure out what went wrong, decide

your new course of action and, "Drive on!"

It's that individual initiative that drives us to move forward. It is what wins wars, improves economies, and makes the United States of America the greatest country the world has ever seen. No one dictates what we do and how we do it. We can be as rich, or as poor, as our individual talents and drive allow us to become. We make individual choices every day that come with positive consequences, negative consequences and sometimes both.

So today, I'm cordially reminding you that you are an American Soldier.

Use the guidance put out by the boss and make it better than they expected. When there is little to no guidance, use your best judgment and say, "What could I do today that will make this place, mission, day better?" Now do it. When it's all said and done, they called, we answered, we made it happen, we've done our part.



## Rocking or rolling with 41 STB Engineers

Story and photo by 1Lt. Christopher Shull, TF Stetson

At home in Oregon we live in a playground of rock and glaciers. Perhaps the hardest part of recreation in the Cascades is simply trying to pick something to do among the myriad of options!

Naturally, when the Clackamas-based engineers of A Company, 41 Special Troops Battalion, Task Force Stetson arrived in Baghdad, they quickly began looking for ways to replicate their home-style recreation.

Under the vision of Company Executive Officer 1Lt. Spencer Cookson, the engineers constructed a multi-faceted bouldering gym just outside their company operations center.

The Engineers named their climbing gym “Red Air Wall,” as in “this is how we spend our time when our missions get cancelled due to red air (bad air quality).”

They also name each individual route on the wall, using popular names like “Route Irish,” “COMSEC Changeover,” and “Sensitive Item.”

The project took several weeks of regular work to assemble. The Soldiers also received a significant discount from Bend, Oregon based Metolious Climbing for bolt-on climbing holds.

Affixed to the side of the company communications shed, and featuring an overhanging roof and two overhanging slabs, the bouldering wall is a significant



challenge even to the most experienced climbers in the company.

1Lt. Cookson, the mastermind of the project, explained that with regular climbing workouts at the bouldering wall he can go home in great shape, ready to climb as well as possible after a long departure from climbing on real rock.

“This is something I would do at home, so for just a little while it makes me feel normal,” Cookson added.

Bouldering is something of a sub-sport of rock climbing.

Where traditional rock climbing usually involves climbing elevations high enough to cause lethal injury in the event of an unprotected fall, bouldering involves the same challenges over a shorter distance.

The Red Air Wall, for example, tops out at about twelve feet off the ground. A climber begins at the very bottom. He sits on the ground and links together a series of moves between holds identified with various colors of tape. Upon reaching the top of the wall he simply drops back down to the ground at the bottom. By linking several bouldering problems together in sequence a serious muscle burn is obtained in the climbers arms without needing a taller structure to climb on.

With some music from an I-Pod, perhaps a near-beer or a cigar, and these Soldiers can spend hours blowing off steam and having fun while working out and improving their technique.





## All for the children, helping them smile

Story by 1Lt. Tony Garcia, TF Jungleer, photo by A Co. TF Volunteer

Skipping away, a schoolgirl smiles ear-to-ear clutching a bag of much needed school supplies.

A Co. 2-162 visited Al-Risoul Al-Athem in Ash Shumali on Veteran's Day. The visit produced much needed supplies in a community where schools lack fundamental items, such as pencils and paper. The 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team civil military operation represents a piece of the Army's overall goal in Iraq: maintaining peace and stability. The mayor of Ash Shumali, as well as the director and a pediatrician from Ash Shumali hospital, were also on hand for the donations.

Together with the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army, Alpha Company convoyed out to Ash Shumali. Crowds of local villagers were mesmerized by the sight of military vehicles and gathered around to interact with Soldiers. Sgt. Julie Cavinee became a celebrity amongst the adults and schoolchildren alike. As the only female on the mission, many were enthralled with Cavinee.

"At a school with 17 teachers, all of whom were women, my presence made a better connection for the teachers to relate to the rest of the Soldiers," Sgt. Cavinee said. "The connection was strong and many had tears in their eyes as I talked about my kids and

they talked about their families."

The Soldiers also delivered medical supplies donated by Medical Assistance Program International.

Working with friends and family, I joined the mission with over 500 pieces of clothing, toys and school supplies. Many of those items came from T. Mimi

Luong, an employee of the professional services firm Alvarez & Marsal.

For information on how to donate for CMO missions similar to this please contact 1Lt. Robert Gruber at [robert.gruber3@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:robert.gruber3@iraq.centcom.mil) or 1Lt. Tony Garcia at [tony.n.garcia@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:tony.n.garcia@iraq.centcom.mil)



## Mail from home is quite the concept

Story by 1 Lt. Lars Olaen, TF Volunteer

For the most part I have always used email to communicate with friends and relatives. It's really fast, easy. I don't have to actually get up and walk to the mailbox. With 'Snail Mail' I would need all those hard to get supplies, like paper, envelopes, stamps, and don't forget a pen or pencil. Then there's the waiting period for it to get to the destination. It takes time for the recipient to write back depending how willing, or lazy, they may be. There's really no comparison between email and snail mail if you think about it.

When we left Ft. Stewart, I told my family to just use email so we can keep up to date easily. I never really put any thought into getting letters or packages in the mail. I was more concerned about making our communication easier and less stressful.

When I got my first package about a few weeks ago,

I was a little surprised since I didn't even know that it was coming. There wasn't anything too exciting in the box, just some cookies and jerky. However, there was a hand written note called a letter.

After reading the letter, I realized it was totally different from an email. There was nothing profound or insightful written to me. It was just that someone actually cared enough to take the time to write and send me a little taste of home.

I thought that an email could carry the same meaning as a regular old letter. Really, they're both just a person communicating their thoughts to another in words. The human aspect of a letter, what an email just can't carry, is what meant the most to me. It's that little extra something that a letter brings that makes me excited for my next one.



# Helping those to help themselves

Story by Spc. Tania Sanuy, TF Volunteer

This is my second tour of duty overseas. Previously, I was stationed in Kandahar, Afghanistan. The biggest differences that I see in these deployments are the level of interaction we have with the local populations.

In Afghanistan, I was thrilled to take part in humanitarian aid missions where we were able to provide satellite medical clinics, as well as donating a seemingly endless supply of toys, soccer balls and candy to the kids while giving the appearance that the Afghan army was in control of the operations.

But here in Iraq my experiences have been a little different.

Until my visit to a Jordanian Hospital, my interaction with the Iraqi population has been limited to the few local nationals who work in the shops here on post or with our interpreter. Most of us have more contact with the Ugandans who pull security on our FOB at Al Asad, than we do with any of the local nationals.

When I found out we were going to provide security for a couple of fuel tankers going to the hospital on a humanitarian aid mission, I was very excited to be a part of it. I had anticipated going to a secure hospital somewhere around Baghdad International Airport where we would meet the local nationals and get the experience of being treated like rock stars. I was wrong.

Arriving at the hospital, reality set in. The hospital entrance was a one-lane alley that was also the exit. Dilapidated buildings were on either side of the road with several men in civilian clothes loitering around the entrance. To the right was the emergency room entrance with several workers dressed in blue scrubs watching our arrival. After getting clearance to enter, the jerry-rigged gate arm was raised to its full height.

I watched the gunner from the MRAP in front of

us stand on top of his vehicle and manually push the overhead wires up and over the antennas from his rig just to get clearance. I was in an M1151 Humvee and didn't have the height issues that the other rigs in our convoy had.



We continued down the narrow lane and came to an area insufficient to handle the massive number of vehicles that we were bringing in. Fortunately, there was a clearing off to the left large enough to accommodate the remainder of the convoy.

After dismounting, it seemed like the whole hospital came out to watch us. The Jordanians milling about were just as curious about us as we were about them. We exchanged pleasantries and were offered hot tea and cold sandwiches. A few of them spoke decent enough English that we were able to talk about their families, their lives and our mission.

One man, Habib, explained that the hospital, seeing nearly 500 walk-in patients daily, didn't have the resources, like fuel, available to keep the hospital running 24 hours a day. Generators require fuel to

provide electricity to oxygen machines, medical equipment and buildings. Without it, the very people needing medical aid the most would suffer.

With this knowledge and my experiences, I have come to believe we are doing great things overall for the people of Iraq. If I could change one thing about my time spent in country, it would be

more humanitarian assistance missions and interacting with the local population with each Soldier making a difference.

I still feel like a rock star every time I get to help the people of Iraq, no matter what the mission is.





# National American Indian Heritage Month celebrated

Story by 720th CSC, TF Guardian

On November 13, 2009 COB Adder Equal Opportunity Committee recognized this month with Traditional Native American Songs, Traditional Dance & displays of distinguished Native Americans of the past. Understanding Native American Heritage Now & Then was the theme. The Soldiers from the New Mexico Army National Guard the 1115<sup>th</sup>CSC and 720<sup>th</sup> CSC provided the entertainment for this great event. The ceremony began with the reading of the proclamation from President Barack Obama.

"The indigenous peoples of North America -- the First Americans -- have woven rich and diverse threads into the tapestry of our Nation's heritage. Throughout their long history on this great land, they have faced moments of profound triumph and tragedy alike. During National Native American Heritage Month, we recognize their many accomplishments, contributions, and sacrifices, and we pay tribute to their participation in all aspects of American society."

The proclamation goes on to mention the involvement in government, social, economic and educational issues for improving the lives of Native Americans.

The proclamation continues:

"NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States do hereby proclaim No-

vember 2009 as National Native American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to commemorate this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to celebrate November 27, 2009, as Native American Heritage Day.

The Master of Ceremony was Sgt. Ervin Garcia, with the 1115<sup>th</sup> Convoy Security Company, of New Mexico. He is also employed with the Navajo Nation Police Department and serves as a Military Police with the 126<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company out of Grants, New Mexico.

Sgt. Garcia is from the Dine Tribe. The tribe is spread throughout New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. It is the largest Indian Tribe in North America. Sgt. Garcia spoke his native language throughout the ceremony & also interpreted the ceremony into English.

The Dine Language is well known for the Navajo Code Talkers during World War II. When America's best military cryptographers were failing to transmit sensitive information, the Dine warriors were called upon by the U.S. Marines to use a code in the Dine language. These Dine Marines became well known in military history. They created the most ingenious and successful code that was unbreakable. The code was pivotal to hastening the end of World War II and saved countless American lives.

During the ceremony Native American Indian songs were performed by Spc. William Estavan and Spc. Rodney Harrison, from the 1115<sup>th</sup> CSC (NM). Spc. Estavan is from the Pueblo of Acoma in northern New Mexico. Spc. Harrison is also a member of the Dine Tribe out of northern New Mexico. The songs they sang were in honor of the veterans throughout the U.S. Military.



Sgt. Bullhead-Chavez with the 720<sup>th</sup> CSC also performed a Traditional Northern Dance. She is from the Dine (Southwest) and Oglala Lakota tribe (South Dakota).



# Take it easy while on leave

Story by 1Lt. Jonah Liddel, TF Stetson

As we reach the half-way point of the deployment and beyond, many Soldiers are preparing to go on Rest and Recuperation Leave. Leave can be a joyous occasion, a time away from the stress and strain of the deployment in a combat zone; it can be time with family and friends. Although leave has a lot of positives, it also brings with it some inherent concerns.

For families at home, life continued on since their Soldiers left. Since the departure of the Soldier, children and spouses were forced to develop a routine and a method for coping with the stress of having a member of the family absent for an extended period of time.

When the Soldier comes home temporarily there is an overwhelming feeling of joy to have that person back, even for a little while. With that joy comes a feeling of dread in knowing the Soldier will again be leaving soon, to return back to that combat zone.

The Soldier also needs to walk a fine line of limited authority at home. On the deployment, the Soldier may be accustomed to giving orders to other Soldiers or contracted employees. Barking orders to the ones you love is never well received. To the families – please be patient with us. To the Soldiers – take a deep breath, forget your responsibilities for a couple of weeks and relax.

## Flu -vs- common cold

Flu season is upon us! TF Guardian, TF Volunteer and TF Jungler have already been vaccinated for influenza for this season, and are awaiting reception of the H1N1 vaccine at the Brigade Aid Station. But ‘tis the season for sniffles and coughs and the common cold can be mistaken for the flu. Influenza can be serious and even require hospitalization; however, many symptoms are typically something less severe. Here are the symptoms to watch out for:

### Symptoms:

Fever

### Cold

Sometimes, usually mild

### Flu

Usual; high (100-102 F; occasionally higher, especially in young children); lasts 3 to 4 days

Headache

Occasionally

Common

General Aches, Pains

Slight

Usual; often severe

Fatigue, Weakness

Sometimes

Usual; can last 2 to 3 weeks

Extreme Exhaustion

Never

Usual; at the beginning of the illness

Stuffy Nose

Common

Sometimes

Sneezing

Usual

Sometimes

Sore Throat

Common

Sometimes

Chest Discomfort, Cough

Mild to moderate; hacking cough

Common; can become severe

\*Nausea/vomiting can occur with the swine flu.



Flu symptoms can persist from days to weeks. Both the cold and the flu cannot be treated with antibiotics. They are viruses! Increase your fluid intake, get plenty of rest, make sure you eat and WASH YOUR HANDS! If you have any questions about your symptoms, ask your medic.

~SGT Parkinson

Information provided by the CDC and WebMD

Make sure you dress appropriately for the weather.



## R & R activities to do around Oregon

Oregon offers a wide variety of activities throughout the year. Below are a few activities happening in the month of December.

### **Bend area:**

*Daily Snowshoe tours and desert cave tours:* Wanderlust Tours's professional naturalist guides bring the area alive for you with vibrant interpretation along the way and snow play for all ages. 541-389-8359

*Old Mill District Urban GPS Eco-Challenge Tours:* This transformed land which offers terrific glimpses into the natural world's past has been integrated into Wanderlust Tours' Urban GPS Eco-Challenge course! 541-389-8359

### **The Dalles area:**

*Dance Night at Cherry Park Grange:* Dance night at Cherry Park Grange; Line and partner dance lessons at 7pm every Friday followed by open dancing until 10pm. open to singles and couples of all ages. Family-friendly entertainment. 541-993-3540

### **Eastern Oregon:**

*Sumpter Valley Railroad Christmas Train Tour:* Enjoy a ride in the passenger car with the pot belly stove keeping you warm or open air in the freight car. The round trip ride will last about 3 hours bringing back to your car at the McEwen Station. 541-523-5855

*Horse-drawn Elk Viewing tours:* T & T Wildlife Tours. They provide Oregon's only horse-drawn elk viewing tours and have a fully handicap-accessible wagon. There will also be special holiday tours available everyday from December 26 through January 3, 2010. Trips depart every half hour. \$7.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children 12 and under. 541-856-3356

*For more activities: go to [OregonBeat.com](http://OregonBeat.com)*

### **Portland area:**

*OMSI presents SCREAM!* Why do our hearts race, our knees shake, and our bodies sweat when we are scared? Do crawling cockroaches give you the creeps? Are you brave enough to put your head in a guillotine, pet a tarantula, or take a free fall? Get your heart pumping and your palms sweaty as you examine the physiological, neurobiological, and sociological aspects of fear. 503.797.4000

### **Brookings Area:**

*Nature's Coastal Holiday Light Show:* Azalea Park turns into a holiday wonderland, filled with over 300,000 lights. Adults \$1.00; Children under 12 Free. Also, free hot cider and cookies.

### **Salem Area:**

*Oregon State Capitol Tours: Special Tours:* Tours of the Capitol are available Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM - 4 PM and leave on the hour (Memorial Day thru Labor Day); other times available by appointment. Also, self-guided walking tours of the Capitol grounds. Admission is FREE 503-986-1388

*Holiday Festival at Silver Falls:* Make a wreath, gingerbread house, cards & ornaments, storytelling, music and Santa Claus. \$3 per vehicle day use fee, some crafts may have a material fee. 503-873-8735

### **Eugene area:**

*Eugene Generals Hockey:* Admission: \$8, \$5 students/seniors, children under 5 free.

*Live Glass Blowing:* Experience the exciting world of hot glass in motion, in addition to a multitude of contemporary art works. Demonstrations can be viewed directly from the main gallery floor. Free 541-683-9378





## No Soldier left behind

Story and photo by 1Lt. Janyce Prine, TF Atlas

While on a deployment, Soldiers are supplied with nearly every single thing they might need. Their life is set out for them, no ifs, ands, or buts about it. The question of the year is what, after being so busy, so stressed sup-

plied with so much, does one do with their self after returning home?

I remember returning home after six months of Army training and not knowing what to do with myself.

I was not sure how to go about finding a job anymore and unaware

of any of the Army benefits. I wasn't sure where to go from there. I just sat around at home wondering, "what do I do with myself now?"

This question has been asked by more than a few Soldiers. The answer comes from the collaboration of captains and noncommissioned officers from Task Force Atlas, 141 CSB. The goal is to help each Soldier during the first 180 days home in order to reintegrate easier.

Their aim is to set the Soldiers up for success, prevent potential suicides and help with readjustments on their return home.

Soldiers seem to have the hardest time adjusting back to regular civilian life in the States during the first six months of being home. They're often not sure how to approach going back to the norm. They are not sure how to start their life again with whatever issues that have arisen due deployment.

A questionnaire was developed by Lt. Col James and senior leaders to determine what

types of support should be available to Soldiers.

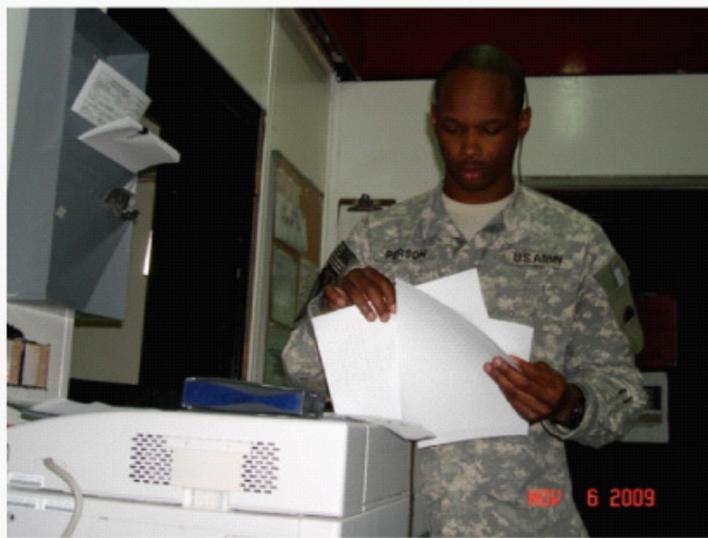
A diverse group of Soldiers were brought in and interviewed. They were asked what they plan to do with their life after they get home, if they need any help with schooling or finding a job, and most importantly, if there are any issues they have that were not addressed in the interview.

The next step is for the leadership to review the results and evaluate the information before dispersing the finished product to Soldiers. The program is Soldier-specific. Most of the issues a Soldier could have after Iraq are already being answered.

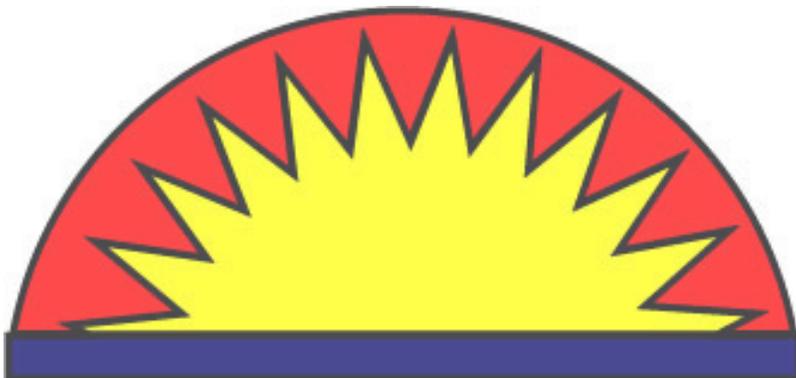
There are many areas addressed thus far, spanning from healthcare insurance, veteran services, child care, job-placement assistance, even animal care service.

Thanks to the 180-day plan, Soldiers will be assisted with almost every issue they could possibly encounter.

With their needs met, Soldiers will all be able to start their lives fresh and worry-free after returning home. And most importantly, no one has to resort to lounging on the couch with a bag of potato chips thinking, "What do I do now?"



*SSG Jerome Person, TF Atlas, organizing questionnaire packets for Soldiers.*





## Tactical gear for the Soldier

Story by 2 Lt. Mark Timmons, TF Guardian

When it comes to tactical gear there are many options to choose from. Keep in mind that one of the best things you can do as a U.S. Soldier is purchase gear that is made in the USA. This small act goes a long way to ensure that we continue our industrial innovation and edge for your military power.

I wanted to share some of my knowledge and experience as five-year salesperson of tactical gear to every branch in our armed service. These few ideas I share will be useful to anyone who takes their career and gear seriously.

If you have not heard about the SHOT SHOW then this event should be something you add to your calendar. Information can be found on the web at [www.shotshow.org](http://www.shotshow.org). This event is the world's largest show for outdoor equipment, hunting and tactical gear. Every current tactical gear manufacturer is there as well as the up and coming new kids on the block. The show is held alternately in Las Vegas, Nev. and in Tampa, Fla. in January.

The manufacturers at the SHOT SHOW want to hear from Soldiers. The new companies want you to try their products and want to sell them to you at discounted prices. This event is sure to get you some free stuff and some great contacts. Las Vegas is so close to Oregon and well worth a Soldier's time to attend the show. It is also a chance to spend a few fun days in Vegas.

The following companies, from my perspective, have shown me they care about you as a Soldier through their products and customer service.

*Tactical Tailor* (our Northwest favorite) has great gear and when you order online they offer all military a 5% discount on checkout with the coupon code: WETSU.

*SPEC OPS* brand is another nylon tactical gear manufacture out of Georgia that does a great job. You

will find many of their products already in the PX.

Another company out of California is *Tactical Assault Gear* (TAG). Their products are solid and they will go the distance to make sure you are satisfied with their performance.

When it comes to protective eyewear, don't let looks fool you. The ANSI Z87 is standard is for protection. Don't go outside the wire without anything less. *ESS Eyewear* is the best for the price. Their quality and care for the Soldier is unparalleled. On a side note, ESS is owned by *Oakley Eyewear* so they are one in the same except the ESS is more pocket book friendly.

The *TurboFan Goggles* are incredible for keeping the moisture from building up on lenses. Most of their products have NSNs (national stocking numbers) so supply sergeants can order them.

One flashlight that probably incorporates all the best features for a Soldier is the *Streamlight Sidewinder Flashlight*. This light is the all around best personal and combat light. It clips to any MOLLE platform and can mount to your combat helmet. The U.S. Marine Corps recently adopted this flashlight for all Marines. It comes with four LED lights (white, red, blue, and IR). The light head rotates 185 degrees and all lights have a strobe feature. When mounted to a helmet it outperforms the *Surefire* helmet light hands down. This light can be purchased at most PXs too.

I hope some of this information is helpful to Soldiers as they pursue their career. Companies want to hear from you as a Soldier. They want to see pictures of you using their gear and hear your opinion. They want to hear stories about how their gear helped out in the mission. When you share your experience with the gear they may reciprocate with free gear. But, it is good to just help patriotic Americans do a better job helping Soldiers.

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS 2009



# Veterans’s Day remembrance

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Hilkemann, TF Stetson

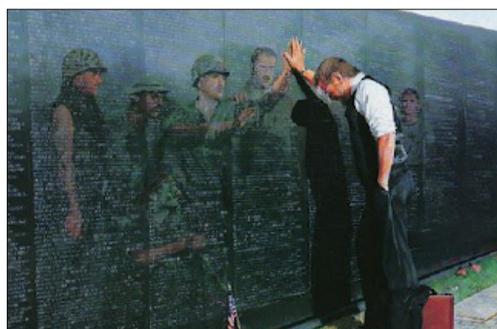
Staff Sgt. Ryan Jeffries, 1195th TC (Neb.), TF Stetson, wrote this article for our hometown newspaper, the Kearney Daily Hub. It is a piece about veterans and their sacrifice and I would like to share it with the rest of our Brigade. Something to remember: everyone in this brigade will be a veteran at the end of the mission.

## Veteran’s Day

As Veteran’s Day draws near, I am reminded of a painting by Lee Teter, titled “Reflections.” It is displayed prominently in my parents’ home. The painting is of a lone Vietnam Veteran standing at the Vietnam War Memorial. He is touching the wall with his right hand, his head hung with tears in his eyes. On the wall, you see reflections of his lost brothers-in-arms touching the hand of the veteran, as if to comfort him.

I have always been very fond of that painting and the powerful message it conveys. I was around 13 years old when my step-father, a Vietnam Veteran, purchased the print.

I was too young to understand combat and loss, but through the painting’s power, I was able to glimpse of what my father, step-father, grandfathers, and a long line of fine Americans before them had sacrificed in defense of this great nation.



George Orwell once wrote “People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf”.

Throughout our nation’s history scores of men and women have been proud to bear the burden of national defense.

Those who live in freedom and peace owe a debt of gratitude that can never be repaid, especially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

As a combat veteran myself I have come to understand the real heroes are the ones who are those who never came home so that this country could remain free.

I remember those who have gone before me: the Marines who landed at Iwo

Jima, the Soldiers and Sailors who were the heroes of D-Day, the brave Airmen that ensured air superiority in the Persian Gulf. It is because of these brave souls that I am able to live the life I do today. It is with solemn reverence for their sacrifices and achievements that I proudly serve this country, standing shoulder to shoulder with my fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines.

We have an amazing responsibility as a nation to remember, recognize, care for, and thank our veterans.

Veterans, in general, do not believe they are entitled to more than the average citizen. They do not think of themselves as heroes, rather they will say that they served in the company of heroes. Most are just proud to have answered when their nation called.

We now have veterans from five wars, covering almost 70 years, living amongst us. On Veteran’s Day, please just remember the men and women who have served and continue to serve the greatest country in the world.

In closing I would like to ask a favor...if you were able to read this article, thank a teacher. If you were able to read this article in English,

**THANK A VETERAN!**





## Soldiers going above and beyond

**Spc. Brady Stanton**, from St. Helens, Ore. enlisted in the National Guard the summer of 2004. Stanton first joined D 1-162 as an infantryman and later volunteered as a replacement with A 2-162 to deploy to Iraq.

In 2005-06 Stanton was involved in dismounted foot patrols, quick reaction force and presence patrols through the streets of downtown Baghdad. In the later phase of the operation, he conducted hotel security at Sheridan Baghdad. He returned to his home unit at age of 22, a combat veteran.

Later, Spc. Stanton rejoined his unit for the Hurricane Katrina deployment. That summer, Stanton moved to Illinois with his wife, Mary. After moving back to St. Helens, he prepared for this deployment with 1/B 1-186.

Stanton began this mission as a combat escort team driver, and is now a tactical operation center radio transmission operator for the evening shift. Spc. Stanton, like all good infantrymen, remains hopeful of a change in mission enabling him to use his talents for his "intended" purpose.



**Sgt. Lee V. Gallman** is responsible for the ordering and tracking of vehicle parts that keep the vehicles of the 1055th running. Through his hard work and commitment to excellence, the 1055th leads the way in vehicle reliability and parts supply. Sgt. Gallman has truly come to represent what an NCO and a Leader should look like.

Sgt. Gallman has a proud family history of military service that covers several different branches in the United States Military.

He obtained his Legal Assistant certification in 2001 and joined the U.S. Army later that year.

Sgt. Gallman attended South Carolina State where he became a leader in several different student groups. Sgt. Gallman was selected to be President of the Eta Alpha chapter of the Pji Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.. As a civilian, he works as a Law Library Assistant with the McNair Law Firm, P.A.

Sgt. Gallman's plans include completing his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and obtaining a commission as a Second Lieutenant from the Palmetto Military Academy.



**Spc. David Strickland** has distinguished himself as a knowledgeable and resourceful mechanic that has allowed the 1055th TC to operate at a greater than 95% mechanical reliability rate throughout this deployment.

Spc. Strickland is regularly found helping the truck crews that go on the road get their vehicles ready to roll on mission. If there is a system that benefits the Soldiers on the road, Spc. Strickland quickly and professionally works with the crews to make the trucks as good as they can possibly be. The experience and technical knowledge held by Spc. Strickland is second to none and it shows through solid vehicle performance.

Following in the tradition of his father and grandfather, Spc. Strickland joined the South Carolina Army National Guard in March of 2000 to become the third generation of enlisted Soldiers in his family. SPC Strickland holds the MOS of 63B or Light Wheeled Vehicle mechanic. He has gathered a wealth of experience while serving with brigade headquarters of the 218th Infantry, to Bravo Battery, 178th Field Artillery, and finally to the maintenance section of the 1055th Transportation Company.

From here, Spc. Strickland intends to return to technician status and continue to work towards retiring with the South Carolina National Guard. He plans to work and be a productive member of the United States Army.





## Excuses still....what can you say now?

Story by Spc. Frank Ritchey, Education Rep, TF Atlas

I have heard many reasons for not going to school while deployed as Angry Co's educational representative. I've nodded understandingly as the troops in the trucks explained that they really wanted to take classes, but just didn't have the time.

Since then, I have started school myself. Since I am usually in the office, I was sure that it must be easier for me to attend than my counterparts in the platoons.

My first class was scheduled to start on September 28. I thought I could do my regular duties and still have time to log into my college's website, write a couple blogs, and complete a paper.

Just before it was time to start the class I was told I would be needed as a gunner for a five-day run. The timing was bad but I expected to be home with enough time to write the paper and turn it in. I only needed to submit a couple blog posts while on the convoy. I was going with 1st Platoon. They were known to have good luck on missions.

Unfortunately their luck was about to change. For various reasons we were two days late leaving on the convoy. I submitted my first post before we began.

It seemed every leg of the trip had issues: red air (bad visibility), a truck shearing off all its lug nuts and an IED.

We were diverted to another base and had to stay for several days before continuing our trip. I still had to stay on top of my classes.

I did my work in bits. I made a post here, some textbook reading there, and one long night I typed out a paper between convoy legs. My homework was done. I got the rest I needed for the road, stayed on top of my studies, and even had time for a few games of ping pong.

I understand it takes a bit of determination and forward planning to make it all happen. You might have to do without a bit of sleep or a hand or two of cards, but it is possible to go to school while being part of a CSC here in Iraq.

I speak as someone who has "been there and done that." I've been on the convoys, felt the exhaustion, and still managed to maintain 100% average on my grades.

It is up to you to decide if you are going to succeed to better yourself. Until you realize it's not about having time but making time, you will never succeed.

We find ways of getting what we really want. If having a better and brighter future is on your list, you know what you have to do: stop making excuses and act.

## Holidays abroad, reminders much appreciated

Story by 1Lt. Mathew Lawson, TF Stetson

At home, loved ones are beginning the holidays without their Soldiers. Children trick-or-treat, families gather for Thanksgiving, and spouses put up Christmas trees and lights. Despite the absence of Soldiers from these celebrations, families are trying to remind their Soldiers they are dearly loved by sending them holiday cards, holiday decorations and parcels filled with sugary snacks.

As Soldiers work in their section offices, holiday decorations occupy locations between maps, monitors or status charts. During Halloween, Soldiers



placed bats, webbing, lighted plastic pumpkins

and a candy filled piñata around the Liberty ADOC (Area Defense Operations Center). Candy was put out for visitors in the S1 shop, and also in the SAS (Squadron Aid Station.) The S2 section burrowed candy in drawers for late nights and placed a jack-o-lantern basket filled with candy for visitors waiting to be debriefed.

Now, turkeys and Santa Clauses are replacing what spiders and witches once occupied.

The holidays are an emotion-filled time and made difficult by the stresses of deployment for Soldiers and their families. The effort of those putting effort into easing this time is greatly appreciated.



# A Halloween World Premier at TF Atlas

Story by Spc. Frank Ritchey, TF Atlas

The stars were all in attendance at the Angry Halloween Spectacular, the swankiest soiree' in Al Asad, Iraq.

Company members, a handful of tourists, and one combat-photojournalist had the privilege of dining with a couple of Arabic men from the shethead tribe in northern Shetheadistan and an “emo” boy with slit wrists. A KGB operative (though admittedly not a very good one since he didn't fool anyone); a few undead girls, a KBR worker or two; and Davey Jones from the Disney musical “Pirates On Ice” were also there to rock the night away. The hottest

thing in a skirt that night was Sgt. Brian McGinley who brought along her overprotective boyfriend. Invitees met for time of feasting, fun, and friends. There was a five course spread of chicken and ribs prepared by the hippest restaurant on the strip, “DEFAC III.”

Honored guests included Lt. Col. Brian James, most noted for his Oscar nominated role as TF Atlas Commander in the hit movie “OIF 09-10,” Capt. Jessica Dunn, the critically acclaimed director of “Angry: The A Co Story,” the political satirist 1st Sgt. David Cook, and a few Ugandan guards who somehow crashed the party.

The red carpet couldn't seem to contain the stars. Walking in was 2Lt. Kristen Sellon who looked smashing in her outfit from the “ACU” line of eveningwear from the design studios of LOWESTBIDDER.

Entertainment included putt-putt golf, darts, pool, ping-pong, and watching Sgt. McGinley in drag chase 1st Sgt. Cook around the party. The movie, Tim Burton's “Corpse Bride,” played in the background.

A ritual animal sacrifice was made. The executioner was none other than the world famous Pvt. John

O'Donnell. A single blow was all it took to decapitate and disembowel the sacrificial lamb, Johnny Llama the Piñata. (everyone knows there is nothing more in the spirit of Halloween than a Llama-shaped piñata). Candy fell to the awaiting masses as Johnny gave his all.

Finally, no Al Asad party would be complete without a show from 2Lt. Peter Radke “The Magnificent” doing his awe inspiring tricks with a deck of cards and an over-ripe orange.

Some guests received gifts including the battalion commander's coin for excellence or gift boxes which had luxurious items as toothpaste, candy, stationary, and a squirt gun. (Thanks again for the boxes Aunt Cheryl.)

No multi-million dollar event can be carried off without a crack squad of behind the scenes staff and neither could this event. A special debt of thanks goes to all those who helped to make this event a success.

