



THE ARROWHEAD

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Sustaining the Force through Force Health Protection



Col. Gina D. Seiler
Division Surgeon
36th Inf. Div., USD-S

What is force health protection? It is the medical component of Force Protection which includes: all measures taken by commanders, leaders, individual Soldiers, and the Military Health System to Promote, Improve, Conserve, or Restore the mental and physical well-being of Soldiers across the range of military activities and operations. Here is a list of 10 things you can do to take care of yourself physically and mentally:

1 Get rest! Being sleep deprived and or being awake for 17-19 hours straight is like being legally drunk! So establish a work rest cycle, share it with your first line supervisor, and follow it. If you still are having sleep problems, contact the Combat Stress Company.

2 Wash your hands, wash your hands!!

3 Inspect your bottle water prior to consuming by checking if the seal is broken, smelling it for odors, take a test drink, and when in doubt, throw it out!

4 Get your refill medications. Medication refills-Did you sign up for the Tricare Mail Order Pharmacy while at Joint Base Lewis-McCord? If you are on prescription maintenance medication(s) for conditions such as high blood pressure, high

cholesterol, thyroid replacement, etc...you are approaching the refill time. If you have signed up with TMOP you will receive an email reminder. However, for those of you who somehow just forgot to register with TMOP, here is what you need to do: visit the TMOP web site, http://www.tricare.mil/pharmacy/tmop_contact.cfm, follow the directions and register. If you have received a new maintenance medication since being in Iraq, you also can go to the TMOP web site listed above. Don't run out.

5 Prevent the summer heat from getting the better of you. Heat illness represents a critical medical threat to Soldiers and civilians in the IJOA during the upcoming summer months. Three essential variables interact to increase risk of heat illness: climate, intensity and duration of physical exertion and individual risk factors such as lack of acclimatization, salt depletion, poor hydration, poor physical fitness, excessive body weight, skin disorders, illnesses, age greater than 40, and a history of previous heat injury. So to prevent a heat illness, eat, drink (remember General Order #1), and workout!

6 Don't play with the animals if you don't want to foam at the mouth! 25 percent of all captured animals in the IJOA test

positive for rabies.

7 Get your immunizations on time. To see if you are due for any immunization, check your MEDPROS on AKO or see our local 36 Inf. Div. Battalion Aide Station medic.

8 Prevent sexually transmitted infections. Sexually transmitted infections are preventable- read and heed General Order #1 and always practice safe sex measures!

9 Wear your personal protective equipment. Protect your vision and your life by wearing your designer USG issued eye protection and reflector belts.

10 Attend Comprehensive Soldier Fitness classes. So, what is CSF? It is a structured, long term assessment and development program to build the resilience and enhance the performance of every Soldier, Family member and DA civilian. The vision of CSH is an Army of balanced, healthy, self-confident Soldiers, families and Army civilians whose resilience and total fitness enables them to thrive in an era of high operational tempo and persistent conflict. For more information, go to <http://csf.army.mil/>.



San Antonio's

162ND ASMC

Story and photos by Sgt. Jeremy Spires
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

BASRAH, Iraq—The San Antonio-based 162nd Area Support Medical Company, Texas Army National Guard, is the first unit of its kind to provide various types of medical care to U.S. service members stationed around the Basrah Province.

“An area support medical company is the minimal medical element that you would bring into a theater to start doing patient treatment,” said 1st Sgt. Jose Pena, the company first sergeant for the 162nd ASMC. “The fact that we have the 911th Forward Surgical Team makes us a Level II+ treatment facility. So we are like a smaller medical treatment facility

because of the surgical team and our capabilities to provide emergency medical care.”

The 162nd has a number of treatment options that the standard area support medical company does not: a forward surgical team, women’s health clinic, pharmacy, and even emergency medical services, all of which makes this Texas-based unit an invaluable asset to the men and women stationed at COB Basra.

“We pretty much run the emergency medical services like you would find in the civilian world,” said Sgt. Kyle Bloodworth, an evacuation non-commissioned officer with the medical company. “Anybody that calls in and needs to come to the

hospital for any reason, we go out and bring him or her in. We also assist in the fixed-wing or rotary-aircraft evacuations if there is a patient that needs to go out using those vehicles.”

The 77 Soldiers of the 162nd started their training in early 2010 with numerous field-training exercises, rotations at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, and finally a certification period at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

This training set the Soldiers up for success when they assumed some of the medical missions left by their predecessors.

“When we first arrived in theater, the 162nd had to send detachments out to Bucca, Al Assad, and even...

Kirkuk,” said Pena. “So we have been basically operating throughout the Iraq theater since we got here last year.”

When asked what was the most challenging aspect of their mission in Iraq Pena answered, “It was beyond a doubt the level of command and control involved with the number of Soldiers spread out through the different areas of operation in Iraq.”

“We have done battlefield circulations as much as possible with the Soldiers who are at other locations,” said the first sergeant. “We would visit our Soldiers and try to keep them integrated in our company, even though they are away from the main body, so they still feel like they are part of us.”

A medic from the 162nd Area Support Medical Company gives a fellow Soldier an IV at the troop medical clinic on Contingency Operating Base Basra. The patient is playing the part of a wounded service member during a weekly training exercise that is designed to hone important medical skills that may be necessary in an emergency.





Sgt. 1st Class Rhonda Carmichael and Spc. Michelle Crossan discuss the results of an electrocardiogram during an internal training event hosted by the 162nd Area Support Medical Company on Contingency Operating Base Basra. This San Antonio-based unit has spent the past 10 months in Iraq supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn, and will be preparing to redeploy home in the coming weeks.

With the reduction of U.S. Forces in Iraq, Maj. Scott Valley, the 162nd ASMC commander, has a different view on the challenges of this deployment.

“The biggest challenge for me was the draw down,” said Valley. “Just working with all the issues from the draw down like cutting the facilities staff to transitioning to the Department of State. Not to mention making sure the Soldiers stay focused on the mission that is still there, even if they are not seeing a lot of patients.”

One way to combat the complacency that comes with a slower mission tempo is training. Many units across the Iraq theater conduct training as often as they can, from basic Soldier

skills to more specific job-related tasks.

“We do a lot of training, almost weekly,” said Valley. “We are still seeing about 800 Soldiers a month for sick call, and then the labs and pharmacy sections are seeing about 1200. So everybody is staying pretty busy.”

Looking back on the more than 10 months the 162nd has spent in Iraq, the commander says that their mission was very successful and the fact that they will be able to bring everybody home safely is something that nobody should forget, especially since the unit is relatively new to the Texas Army National Guard.

“We will be able to say that we took a unit, rebuilt it, and successfully completed a deployment all within the first two and half years of being a unit,” said Valley.

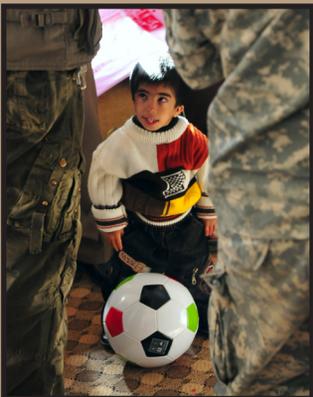
“I think it shows primarily that there isn’t a type of force that we are not able to deploy out of the Texas Army National Guard,” remarked Valley. “Realistically, I think the key thing to take away (from this deployment) is that there is nothing the Department of the Army cannot assign to the Texas National Guard that we cannot successfully accomplish.” 



IRAQIS HELPING IRAQIS

A humanitarian aid mission





Iraqi civilian doctors hosted a humanitarian event at the Basrah Operations Center where Basrah Province residents were invited to receive acute medical aid, toys, school supplies, food, water, radios, and health information. The Iraqi Security Forces provided security and opened the Basrah Operations Center for the event. (Photos by Sgt. Jeremy Spires, 36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office)

Soldier's Health

Overcoming Resistance and Building Resiliency

By Maj. Steven Keihl
Texas Military Forces Resiliency Team

It is an ever-present reality in our world that people are resistant to change, challenges, turmoil, and especially to pain. It is also equally true that much of what we do that is worthwhile, noble, and important requires effort, commitment, and energy.

In other words, very few critical things happen with ease but rather are a result of good old fashioned hard work. When asked to choose, we appear much more likely to select the fast road, the quick fix, or the easy answer rather than to passionately pursue, battle, and engage in a time consuming process requiring dedication and perseverance. Therein lies the difficulty... will we settle for mediocrity or will we demand the

amazing?

It is my take that a "highly developed person", as Einstein calls one, would be someone who would pursue the best, in spite of the potential peril or difficulty.

The one who is truly enlightened would be aware of the reality that very few things of real value are obtained in a moment but rather through a laborious and often time consuming effort.

The mature among us realize that relationships will not be solved in a 30 minute sitcom, but rather through difficult, vulnerable, honest intimacy that includes significant risk of rejection or deep pain.

The successful among us remember that obtaining contentment in a professional world does not happen by accident or inheritance...the get rich plan is really no plan at all. Rather, such success requires a careful look inward, an assessment of passions, skills, strengths, weaknesses, and shortcomings.

This success requires an ongoing and devoted effort to obtain the necessary skills and training to effectively reach for our goals and a persistent engagement and pursuit. Being highly developed requires a very real risk of deep pain, but also the potential of lasting joy, happiness, and contentment.

Pursuing such greatness will require a significant battle with virtually everything in our world. We have stubbornly accepted the

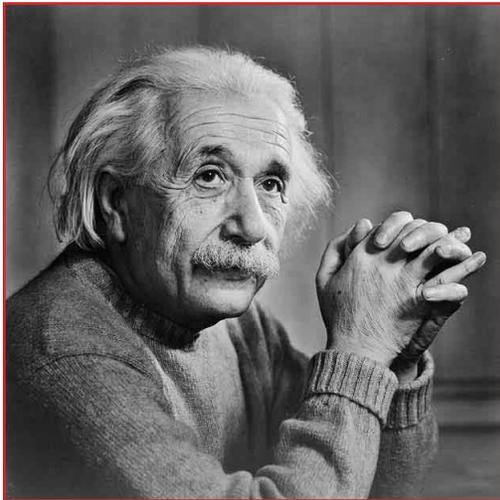
notion that speed is our real ally and that getting what we want should be without real heartache and obtained in an instant.

Our microwaves, cell phones, internet, instant movies, etc. all compel us to toss aside the real fight and learn to settle for what we can have right now. And so too many have naively accepted the idea that real value is not found in a complicated journey but rather a quick solution. We want personal depth and maturity in a one session mind meld, relational harmony in a 10 step guide, health in a pill, professional success following a 30 minute seminar and donation of \$39.99.

Guess what... the quick fix doesn't work! Not only does it fail to provide the lasting depth we desire, it contributes to a total lack of resiliency.

You see, taking our time and working through challenge helps us build our strengths and internal abilities. When we have to struggle and fight to obtain our desire, we build resiliency, we mature, we learn to successfully navigate challenges and overcome obstacles.

Don't settle for the quick fix! Don't accept the mediocre! Roll up your sleeves, fight the good fight, get into the fray and stay engaged in the battle. You might just find that the pursuit not only bears fruit but helps you develop as well. May your journey be long, difficult, full of many twists in the trails and many ascents and descents through the hills! 



"Highly developed spirits often encounter resistance from mediocre minds."

-Albert Einstein

Many of us raised in America have an independent and self-reliant streak in us. Especially as volunteer Soldiers, many of us have endured hardships from our experiences in Boot Camp, AIT, Officer Candidate School and a myriad of other schools, training events, and demands that are placed on us when we choose to become Soldiers. As we survive or even thrive in the midst of these ordeals, it tends to bolster even more our “can-do” attitude and determination to be “in control,” or “in charge.”

But what happens when we face situations that are beyond our control? What happens when we find ourselves in the middle of circumstances that seem to be unaffected by and resistant to our influence and input, no matter how hard we try or how persistent we are? Or what happens when we lose that self-confidence and self-reliance? Who or what is in control then? How do we deal with such circumstances or situations?

History and observation have shown that the key factor or common denominator is a person’s attitude or persistent positive outlook that is determined and bolstered by a core set of deeply held values or beliefs. Those with such attitudes refuse to buckle under the pressure and always look for the positive or good in every circumstance. Such people also tend to seek for either the remedy of the situation or the reason for or purpose of the situation in order to bring about a higher good.

Basically, it comes down to choice. Ultimately, it’s your attitude that determines who or what is truly in control of any situation, regardless of what appears on the surface. We must “choose” whether or not we will allow the circumstance or situation or person to control us or whether we will choose to remain in control ourselves or choose to give the control to “Someone” else.

Chaplain’s Corner



Who or What is in Control?

Some of the greatest examples of just this attitude are found in those POWs who survived their torturous and inhumane ordeals by choosing to maintain their attitudes of defiance and hope, based on their will to survive, no matter what they endured. Although the reasons for their will to survive can vary, one of the common factors is a faith in God and the hope and assurance that such a faith gives.

Our Resiliency Chaplain, CH (Capt.) Brandon Hicks, reminded me of one such example. It is Chaplain Robert Preston Taylor, who was a POW in a Japanese prison camp during WWII. You can read about his ordeal in the book, “Days of Anguish, Days of Hope.” He credits his defiant will to live, in spite of “the box” and other torture, to his faith and hope in the God Who loves Him. He states that it not only gave him the will to live, but also inspired the same hopeful defiance

in his fellow prisoners.

May God help us to do the same: “We Shall Conquer In Spite of Hell!” 

I will leave you with two key verses that support and inspire such defiant hope in the midst of trouble:

Isaiah 41:10, “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you with my righteous right hand.”

Deuteronomy 31:6, “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Maintaining Soldiers' Health

Spec. Justin Lewis, a mortar man with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, relaxes in a massage chair at the Lone Star Resiliency Campus March 24. The Resiliency Campus is one of three in U.S. Division-South's area of operations administered by the U.S. Div-South Medical team, comprised of the 36th Infantry Division; Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and 3rd AAB, 1st Cavalry Regiment.

...both Body and Mind

U.S. Division-South Medical Keeps Soldiers “In the Fight”

Story and photos by Sgt. David A. Bryant
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

BASRAH, Iraq – The list is daunting. It includes some very sensitive and private subjects: suicide, marital distress, the emotional turmoil that comes with taking another’s life – or seeing the life of a fellow Soldier violently taken away.

Other items on the list are less intimidating, to include practical things a Soldier takes for granted: the bed he sleeps in, the shower trailer she goes to, the food at the dining facility, the stacks of bottled water easily accessible all over the base, and the weights at the gym used to keep a “fighting figure.”

And all these are just the tip of the iceberg of what the members of U.S. Division-South Medical do to take care of the nearly 9,000 Soldiers and service members working in southern Iraq for Operation New Dawn.

U.S. Div.-South medical is comprised of the 36th Infantry Division Surgeon Section (DSS), the division Special Troops Battalion Aid Station, and the subordinate surgeon cells from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and 3rd/1st Cavalry Division. This medical team is responsible for the physical, mental and emotional health of all U.S. military forces stationed in the nine southern provinces of Iraq, according to Col. Gina D. Seiler, division surgeon.

“Our main job is to keep Soldiers healthy,” said Seiler, a resident of Marion, Texas. “The Division Surgeon Section is administrative with surgical capabilities belonging to Task Force Med, an Echelon Above Division (EAD) medical asset. What we bring to the table is force health protection; we do a lot with preventive medicine, such as immunizations, quality assurance of food and water, psychiatric

consultations and, most importantly, the DSS develops the Concept of Health Service Support for U.S. Div.-South.”

Other duties of the DSS include advising the commanding general on the health status of the command, tracking medical evacuations, identifying potential medical hazards, advising the command of health effects caused by the environment, and advising on potential medical threats. The U.S. Div.-South medical team works together to provide a unity

“I identify anything that could be a threat to Soldiers and mitigate it. It could be the food, water, soil, air – in the buildings we work in, sleep in and play in.”

of effort when it comes to keeping Soldiers healthy, said Seiler. “When a vulnerability is found, we collaborate on ways to correct the problem.”

Some of the areas of medical concern to U.S. Div.-South medical include the quality of food, water and sanitation; immunizations; behavioral health; the resiliency centers; and the distribution management and documentation of Class VIII medical supplies.

When it comes to quality assurance, the division looks to its environmental science officer, Capt. Wayne A. Douet.

“I identify anything that could be a threat to Soldiers and mitigate it. It could be the food, water, soil, air –

in the buildings we work in, sleep in and play in,” said Douet, who has a master’s degree in food and agricultural science and served for four years as an enlisted Army food inspector. “I have two equivalents, one at each of the brigades, and I assist them with supplies, reinforcements, information and anything else they need. Our ultimate goal is to make sure they have whatever they need so they can do their job.”

As an ESO, Douet is responsible for ensuring U.S. Div.-South is in compliance with environmental and hazardous material regulations and inspecting the dining facilities for proper food, water and sanitation procedures. The St. Catherine, Jamaica, native also monitors possible health threats that may develop in any other building used by U.S. Div.-South personnel and assists veterinarians in controlling the feral animal population.

“Twenty-five percent of all captured animals tested positive for rabies in 2010, and you can get rabies from being scratched by a feral animal, bit, or even just coming into contact with an infected animal’s saliva,” said Douet, who now resides in Killeen, Texas. “When the veterinarians are not available to take care of captured animals, we can put together a team trained by the vets to take care of them.”

“If any Soldier thinks they may have come in contact with a wild animal, to include one just licking a cut on their hand, they need to see a medical provider for evaluation



for post-exposure treatment,” said Capt. William Callis, M.D., the division’s preventive medicine physician who is in charge of immunizations. “Rabies is almost always fatal, so it’s better to be safe than sorry and just leave the animals alone.”

Callis, who describes himself as the Army’s equivalent of a public health officer, is an active-duty doctor assigned to the division because the National Guard does not have preventive medicine physicians. The Columbia, S. C. resident, whose permanent duty station is Fort Jackson, S. C., is in charge of helping control communicable and infectious

diseases, such as malaria or influenza. He also takes care of sexually transmitted diseases and serves as a consultant to other physicians.

While most immunizations are completed prior to deployment, some, such as the anthrax series, are long-term and still need to be tracked, Callis added. He also provides counseling and preventive medicines for Soldiers going on rest and recuperation leave to countries with a high prevalence of diseases such as malaria.

The DSS also has a behavioral health team, which consists of the division psychiatrist, Maj. Michael Gummow, and the behavioral health officer, Maj. Jill Bruno. The behavioral health officer is not part of the division

modification table of organization and equipment; however, Seiler opted to utilize a plans position in order to bring Bruno on board to provide stability, as a psychiatrist typically rotates in and out every 90 days, and to provide continuity for the division Soldiers when they redeploy. The goal is to ensure that Soldiers who do have behavioral health issues are case-managed upon return and assisted in getting into the Veterans Affairs, according to Seiler.

The role of the behavioral health team is to provide consultative services and oversight to U.S. Div.-South providers. “We don’t do treatments, since that is actually done at the Combat Stress Center and is run by an EAD,” said Bruno, who holds a master’s in social work and is also a psychiatric nurse. “We ensure proper training



Staff Sgt. Luis Vegamaldonado, a medic with the 36th Infantry Division’s personal security detachment, gets a temperature reading on Sgt. Juan Arriaga, an infantryman also with the 36th Inf. Div. PSD, while Staff Sgt. George Reyna, a medic with Headquarters Support Company, 36th Division Special Troops Battalion, gets a blood-pressure reading March 24 at the Battalion Aid Station at Logistic Support Area Normandy. Vegamaldonado, a native of Santiago, Chile and resident of San Antonio, and Reyna, of Round Rock, Texas, performed the checkup on Arriaga, a native of Brownsville, Texas, to confirm Arriaga was able to return to duty after having the flu.

is conducted; make sure enough Soldiers are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), and we train Unit Behavioral Health Advocates (UBHA).”

The UBHAs are Soldiers, from all unit levels, trained to recognize behavioral health issues among their peers and to make appropriate referrals, added the Marquette, Michigan native.

“We’re here to assist. We can’t force a Soldier to get treatment, but we can help them get it,” Bruno said. “I want to encourage Soldiers to be ‘resilient.’ Maintain the five pillars.”

The five pillars mentioned by Bruno are Physical, Emotional, Family, Social and Spiritual fitness. Together they form the foundation of the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) program. The Army began the program in 2008 to assist Soldiers, Family members and Army Civilians in maximizing their potential to face the physical and psychological challenges of sustained operations. “Resiliency is a person’s ability to bounce back from adversity and stress. The stronger a Soldier is in the five pillars, the more resilient he or she is,” stated Master Sgt. Lotta Smagula, the chief medical noncommissioned officer for U.S. Div.-South.

“The Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program is just that – a fitness program, not a treatment program,” said Smagula, a resident of Austin, Texas. “This program is designed for all people to get stronger, not just those who need help.”

The U.S. Div.-South resiliency campuses demonstrate the Army’s commitment to Comprehensive Soldier Fitness and provide an integrated approach to Resilience that builds and sustains every aspect of individual strength. U.S. Div.-South currently has three resiliency campuses; the Iron Strong Resiliency Campus on Contingency Operating Base Adder, the Rifle Strong Resiliency Campus, just opened at Contingency Operating Site



Staff Sgt. Luis Vegamaldonado, a medic with the 36th Inf. Div.’s personal security detachment, listens to Sgt. Juan Arriaga’s lungs, an infantryman also with the division PSD, March 24 at the Battalion Aid Station on Logistic Support Area Normandy. Vegamaldonado, a native of Santiago, Chile and resident of San Antonio, performed the checkup on Arriaga, a native of Brownsville, Texas, to confirm Arriaga was able to return to duty after his flu.

Kalsu, and the Lone Star Resiliency Campus on COB Basra, according to Staff Sgt. Amy Richardson, noncommissioned officer in charge of the Lone Star Campus.

“The campus here has rooms for each of the pillars,” said Richardson, a medic from Starbridge, Mass., who now resides in Edna, Texas. “There’s something for everyone to help relieve stress. Some people may go to the gym, others may come use the massage chairs for twenty minutes during lunch; others sit and read or they may just want to get on a computer to ‘Skype’ with their family. If a Soldier(s) feeling overwhelmed, they can just come in and use the facility.”

Multiple areas of expertise require a lot of logistical support, so the division surgeon’s medical logistics section takes responsibility for the coordination of medical maintenance and Class VIII distribution throughout U.S. Div.-South, said Staff Sgt. Rodney O. Johnson, medical logistics noncommissioned officer.

“The medical logistics officer is responsible for coordinating with higher echelon units to ensure effective Class VIII management, and he manages the authorized stocking list levels for subordinate units,” said Johnson, a San Antonio native. “He coordinates with Task Force (Medical) to cross-level theater-provided equipment in Iraq. We also manage the controlled narcotics program and process all letters of justification for non-standard Class VIII requests.”

While the list of responsibilities is long, and U.S. Div.-South Medical can seem like a daunting juggernaut, the Texas Soldiers and subordinate brigade surgeon cells are more than capable of handling any situation, said Seiler.

“I have nothing but the best working for me here,” Seiler said. “I have the utmost confidence that no matter what occurs in our area of operations, my team will be able to take care of what needs to be done for our Soldiers.”





An American Dream



One Soldier's epic journey in pursuit of happiness

Story by Sgt. Raymond T. Quintanilla
305th MPAD/USD-S Public Affairs

BASRAH, Iraq – There was no turning back for the 22-year-old native son of Havana, Cuba, as he and three others paddled across the open sea on their tiny boat. Growing up in a country where military service is mandatory, the black market is a common source for staples, and listening to a radio station from the United States is taboo, this Cuban soldier wanted no more.

“When I left Cuba, I just threw my life to whatever happens,” said Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro, now an American Soldier in the 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard. “I didn’t want to be in Cuba no more, so I just jumped in a boat and started rowing. I escaped.”

It was Aug. 19, 1994 when he decided to flee his native country and head to America. The decision to leave those he loved was not an easy one.

“In Cuba, it’s awful,” Alfaro explained. “Everything is rationed. You have a notebook (with coupons) that said what you can buy in the store. If the coupon is for underwear and soap, and you buy underwear, you can’t buy soap.”

No longer wanting to live in those conditions, Alfaro was willing to put everything on the line.

“If I had died, so what, at least I tried,” he said.

His grandmother was aware of his unhappiness and if given the chance to flee, she knew he would.

“When my grandma told me (about) my cousin’s plan to escape, I said, ‘Hey, yeah, of course I’ll leave right now,’” he said. “At that point I was ready to leave, but my grandma told me I needed to tell my parents.”

“But I didn’t want anything to hold me back. I didn’t want to get sentimental and talk to my mom, to my dad.”

Wanting to avoid too many people knowing of his plans, Alfaro decided to tell only his father, who supported his decision in the end.

“My dad and grandma knew about it, that’s it,” said Alfaro. “You cannot tell everybody because some people wanted to leave (too) and they would attack you just to get your boat.”

The money his father gave him, and the little he had saved, was added to the rest of the money collected to purchase a boat his cousin Lorenzo knew the owner was willing to sell. He and Lorenzo made the hour and a half trip by truck to a rural town where the farmer had the boat in his back yard. It

took them another two hours to get to the beach site.

Unbeknownst to Alfaro, his father drove to their departure site to bid farewell to his son one last time. By the time he arrived, they had already paddled away. It was not until 11 days later that he and the rest of his family learned by radio what had happened to Alfaro.

The boat was no larger than a dingy, and its crew of four brought only some potable water, boiled eggs, crackers, and other light items.

“You have to eat light,” said Alfaro. “Whatever you eat, or if you puke, you have to do it inside the boat so you don’t attract any wild life.”

The crew faced more than 100-mile stretch of ocean from Cuba to Key



Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro, now an American Soldier, is on his third tour in the Middle East assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, Texas Army National Guard. He is photographed here almost 12 years ago in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Alfaro spent three years in the Cuban army as a field artillery specialist and truck driver. He is now the senior management analyst for the Resource Management Office for the 36th Inf. Div. in Austin, Texas. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro)

West, Florida, with no compass or navigational aids.

“There was a factory, kind of in the Matanzas Province, like in the central part of the island,” Alfaro said. “It had a big old chimney with fire on top; you can see it for many miles. As long as I’m centered with that and the North Star, it’ll get me right on South Florida.”

On their first day at sea, the tiny crew saw some F-15s, helicopters and a few boats, but by nightfall all the movement had stopped. Then the storm hit. Cold, wet, and petrified, the crew found themselves in the middle of a moonless sea under a lashing rain. By midnight, there was no sight of land.

“It was wavy. It got to the point when you were paddling, the paddle was in the air,” said Alfaro. “The (boat) was pointing down and half the boat was full of water.”

“We just kept rowing all night. One person on the boat started to get paranoid, a little stressed out. He said ‘I want to go back, this is enough for me. I don’t want to die.’”

“I told my cousin, ‘Man, I’m not going to go back. It was a (matter of) principal. ‘I don’t want to go back and say I couldn’t make it because I was scared.’”

The storm passed the following morning. Seeing another crew of 15-to-20 people on a raft made of fiberglass and rubber tubes, the tiny crew calmed down. They continued to paddle, alternating two on and two off.

“We kept rowing nonstop,” explained Alfaro. “We don’t want to waste time because the heat will dehydrate you, the sun will tear you up.”

As darkness approached on the second day, they saw a light that appeared to be bobbing up and down due to the effects of the waves.

“Man, when I saw light, I saw heaven,” Alfaro said. “At first, I thought it was some oil (rig), something like that, or it could be the Coast Guard.”

He got excited and proposed a plan to the larger crew.

“Their boat, whatever they called that thing they had, it was big,” Alfaro continued. “It wasn’t that fast. Ours was. So we started rowing, man. We started rowing about eight-thirty or nine. As we started getting closer, we saw the light getting higher and higher above the water. Now, I thought it was a lighthouse. It would go dark, then it would light up a little bit, then go dark again.”

“We started getting closer and closer. We were probably three blocks away, it was (getting) bigger, and I started to get excited,” Alfaro said. “Moments later, the light ‘lit up like a freakin’ night club.’”

The lights Alfaro saw were those of the Coast Guard. It was near midnight and the Coast Guard monitored their every movement and, in Spanish, warned them not to come any closer until given instructions to do so.

“So they threw the big old net out,” Alfaro said. “We climbed the net. They gave us medical attention, made sure that we were okay. I mean, they treated us well.”

The travel weary crew was given a blanket and food. Exhausted, they soon fell asleep. Later, they mentioned the other crewmembers they had left behind. The Coast Guard was already



The identification card and plastic bracelet, issued to refugees during their stay at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro, now a U.S. citizen and the noncommissioned officer-in-charge for the Resource Management Office with the 36th Infantry Division, kept the bracelet as a reminder of his past life in Cuba before defecting in August 19, 1994. The identification card depicts his last name as Duran, which is his mother’s last name. (Photo courtesy by Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro)

“IT WAS WAVY. IT GOT TO THE POINT WHEN YOU WERE PADDLING, THE PADDLE WAS IN THE AIR. THE (BOAT) WAS POINTING DOWN AND HALF THE BOAT WAS FULL OF WATER.”



aware of the situation.

At daybreak the larger crew was rescued.

That morning, the Coast Guard took the defectors to a Navy ship where they were met by Immigration and Naturalization Service personnel—they would be welcomed to the United States and not sent back to Cuba.

“That was glory for me,” Alfaro said with a big smile. “I was very excited. It was worth it. Now I’m here, if I can make it, I can help my family.”

The ship was heading north, but then it unexpectedly made a u-turn bound for Cuba. Alfaro arrived at Guantanamo Bay Aug. 24. It was still Cuba, but to Alfaro it was a different place, a different life.

“When we first arrived we couldn’t

go anywhere. We were locked down in our camps,” Alfaro said. “At that point, I was happy to sleep in my cot, live in a tent, until they tell me it’s time to go (to the US). I didn’t care if it took me two weeks or two years.”

While in Guantanamo Bay, Alfaro recalls meeting a fellow countryman who wanted to protest the living

“I LOOK AT (THAT BRACELET) EVERYDAY BECAUSE IT MEANS I CAME FROM NOTHING.”

conditions of the camp and asked if he would participate.

“In Cuba, you protest, you’re probably going to disappear,” he said. “There are no legal rights.”

“When you are in a place where they don’t have to accept you and they are taking you in, feeding you, giving you respect...giving you rights...listen to what you got to say, and you want to protest to them? It didn’t make any sense.”

Alfaro wanted no part of the protest. He felt the living conditions were better than what he had before coming to Guantanamo Bay.

While living there as a refugee, Alfaro, who was a swimmer at the province level and played water polo for eight years, volunteered to be a lifeguard for the camp beaches. On Jan. 30, 1996, seventeen months and twelve days from the day he defected, he was finally sent to America. He spent the next few years driving two-ton trucks for a living in Miami. He took some college courses and tried to learn English.

“I wanted to get a degree in sports because that’s what I did all my life,” Alfaro said. “But if I go to college I can’t help my parents. I drove trucks, but to make money you have to spend a lot of time on the road.”

He decided that joining the Army was his best option to gain a profession, learn English, and support his family in Cuba, to whom he had already been sending money. After serving in the Cuban army, he felt that the U.S. Army couldn’t be any worse.

“In Cuba, they catch you right away after high school. It’s mandatory,” he said. “They give whatever MOS (military occupational specialty) they want to give you... they pay you seven Cuban pesos per month. It was awful.”

“All my life growing up in Cuba, they talk so bad about the United States,” said Alfaro. “They said, ‘It’s a big monster, you don’t want to be there, you’re going to be discriminated (against), they’re going to kill you, and this and that.’”

For Alfaro, his experience as an American has been exactly the opposite. He said that what he learned growing up in Cuba was all propaganda.

“If they (the U.S.) are so bad, why do people join the Army voluntarily?” he asks. “When I decided to join the military, it was payback (in a patriotic sense) for me. Not that I have to pay...” He pauses for almost a full minute. His eyes start to glisten and he clears his throat. “In Cuba, they have to live every day to find what you’re going to eat that day... (Each) day is so rough; there is no future... no expectations. You cannot have goals.”

On Nov. 20, 1998, Alfaro enlisted in the active-duty Army as a legal alien for three years and did a tour on a peacekeeping mission in Kuwait in 1999. He transferred to the National Guard in 2001 and went on his second tour to Talil, Iraq, in 2006.

Seven and half years from the day he defected, on Feb. 21, 2002, Alfaro was naturalized a U.S. citizen, an event that



Now a U.S. citizen and a sergeant first class in the Army assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, Alfaro is escorted on to a bus by U.S. Navy personnel at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, January 1996. After living at the refugee camp for more than a year and a half, Alfaro was northbound to Miami. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro)



Alfaro spends time with his wife Jennifer; daughters; 4-year-old LeAnna and 7-month-old Lena, and his parents Luis Alfaro, and Daisy Duran, during his four-day liberty pass prior to his deployment to Basra, Iraq last fall. Alfaro brought his parents to the U.S. in 2006. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro)

he still recalls with powerful emotions.

“It was a big accomplishment... For me to become a citizen is like nothing is impossible. Just go for it. Nothing was impossible when I left Cuba. It changed me incredibly.”

Afraid of heights, but refusing to let anything become an obstacle, Alfaro attended air assault and airborne school for promotion points.

“There are no obstacles; you can go as far as you want to go.”

“I did not do everything perfect, I made mistakes,” said Alfaro. “But you don’t measure a person when they fall. It’s about how they get up and keep on walking. If something goes wrong, it cannot be any worse than what I’ve been through.”

In Guantanamo Bay, Alfaro wore a plastic bracelet that was issued to the refugees for monitoring their activities.

“I saved the bracelet because it’s my past... a part of me,” Alfaro said. “I look at it every day because it means I

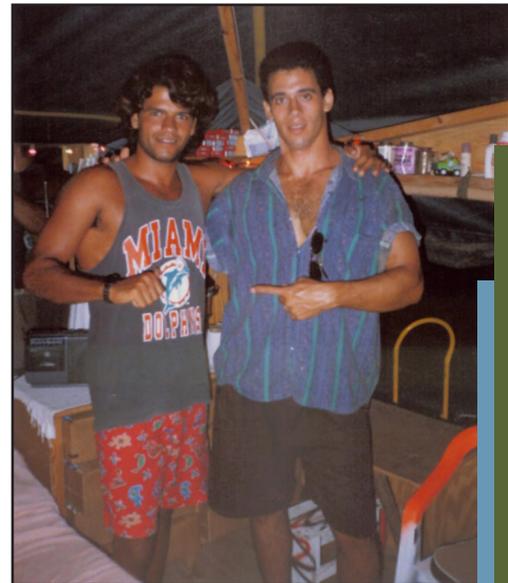
came from nothing.”

“People sometimes take what they have for granted,” he explains. “When they go eat, they get a big plate of food and don’t eat it all. There’s so many people in the world who don’t have half of what we have.”

Seven years after he arrived on U.S. soil, Alfaro’s brother Damian arrived in America on his own. It would be another 12 years before Alfaro saw his parents again, in 2006, when he brought them to live in the U.S.

“When I came to the states, I had nothing,” Alfaro said. “Now, just to open my fridge and have food, I am thankful. Hey, I got everything that I can think of.”

“I have a job. I have my own house, my family. I have a life.” 



Alfaro poses with his cousin Lorenzo D. Alfaro sometime during their stay at the refugee camp at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Luis and Lorenzo defected Aug. 19, 1994. Lorenzo continues to live in Miami and is a supervisor for an asphalt corporation. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Alfaro)



Surfing the Road and the Concrete Waves

Deployment is no obstacle for lifelong skater

Story and photos by Sgt. David A. Bryant
36th Inf. Div., USD-S Public Affairs Office

BASRAH, Iraq – “Us old guys have to have great style, because we really don’t have anything else anymore. I used to be young; then one day I woke up, had no idea who the guy in the mirror was, couldn’t find my hair and my knees were shot. So you got to have style.”

While 43 may not be what most people would call “old,” and beauty is always in the eye of the beholder, style is one thing Sgt. 1st Class John T. Armstrong is not lacking when he steps onto his skateboard.

Skating has been a lifelong passion for the 36th Infantry Division future operations noncommissioned officer, who is currently deployed to southern Iraq. He got his first board for his ninth birthday; even though he said he had originally asked for a bicycle instead.

“My father and I were working on a fishing boat, and bicycles were kind of impractical,” said Armstrong, who grew up in Suisun, Calif. “But that’s what I wanted – a BMX bike – but my dad kind of ‘cheaped-out’ and got me a skateboard, so that’s how I started.”

More than thirty years later, the resident of Cedar Park, Texas is still skating; and doing it well enough to be sponsored by a skateboard manufacturer.

“I was already in the military when I picked up a sponsor; it was around 2006,” said Armstrong. “A friend got me hooked up. He worked for this company as a distributor and he said, ‘Hey, they’re coming on tour out here in Texas, do you want to try out for the team?’”

The company, Gravity Skateboards, sent him a box with some boards in it, came out, met him and he skated a demo with them, Armstrong said. “On the last night of their tour I was inducted to the team. I’m pretty much an old workhorse now. I couldn’t get sponsored at this stage; I think they just send me boards now out of sympathy,” he added with a laugh.

Armstrong has now been in the military for 20 years; he started out in the National Guard, served a four-year tour in the active-duty Army, then back to the Guard. Operation New Dawn is his first deployment, and so far the impact on his skating has been to knock down how often he skates to once a week, he said.

“I tell you what – the military didn’t hamper my skating at all. I’d skate just about every day,” Armstrong said. “I’d do it on my lunch hour, for (physical training) and I’d find some time after work. Here, I don’t have quite that amount of time.”

There is no difference in being a skater in the military than being a skater and, say, an accountant, he added. “The only thing I would say is that sometimes in the military, if you do something a bit unusual, people tend to raise their eyebrows just a little bit higher. But other than that, I get nothing but love and support for it.”

The tall, lean Californian is a sponsored amateur skateboarder. “I’m more of a sub-culture guy; all the contests I go to are pretty much for skaters, by skaters – where guys get together and barbecue, hand out various prizes, that sort of thing.”

The difference between what people see on TV with the X-Games and the real grass roots of the sport, he said, is that events such as the X-Games are primarily for television audience consumption and the average skater event is not.

“If you went to a typical contest – like ninety-nine percent of the skateboard contests anywhere in the world – you’d be like, ‘Wow, this doesn’t look like that big of a deal,’” added Armstrong. “Because you’re expecting the ‘Tony Hawk 900,’ the big, spectacular tricks and stuff; skateboarding is really a lot subtler. More for skateboarder consumption – you can look at an individual guy’s style and go, ‘Wow, that guys’ got great style.’ He may not even be doing any tricks, but you think to yourself, ‘this guy’s a great skater; he’s an artist.’”

“The best thing about skateboarding is it is a great expression of freedom; here is a sport that was invented by children,” Armstrong said. “There is no governing body, no rule book. No right way of doing it and no wrong way of doing it; just however you are doing it, that’s the way it’s done.”

“In fact there’s an old adage in skateboarding that says ‘the best skater is the one having the most fun,’” he added.

Skateboarding gives a person a great deal of physical confidence because there’s a certain degree of pain skaters go through to learn it, said Armstrong. Concrete is very unforgiving, and a skater definitely gets beat up during the learning process.

“By the time I got in the Army and

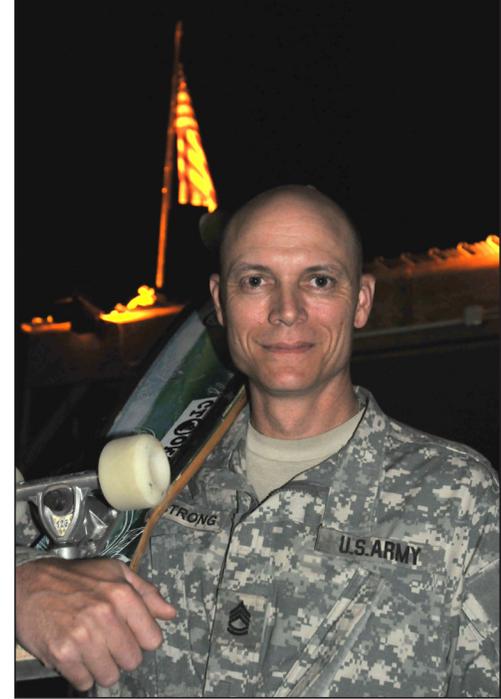
I was told, ‘Private, go over that confidence course,’ there was no problem,” he said. “I’ve fallen from higher than that many times, so it makes you very aware of what you are physically capable of. And there is some mental confidence, as well, in knowing that you can accomplish those things.”

That kind of self-confidence, not to mention the pain of unforgiving concrete, comes from the “two-second accomplishments” skaters spend so much time practicing for, Armstrong said.

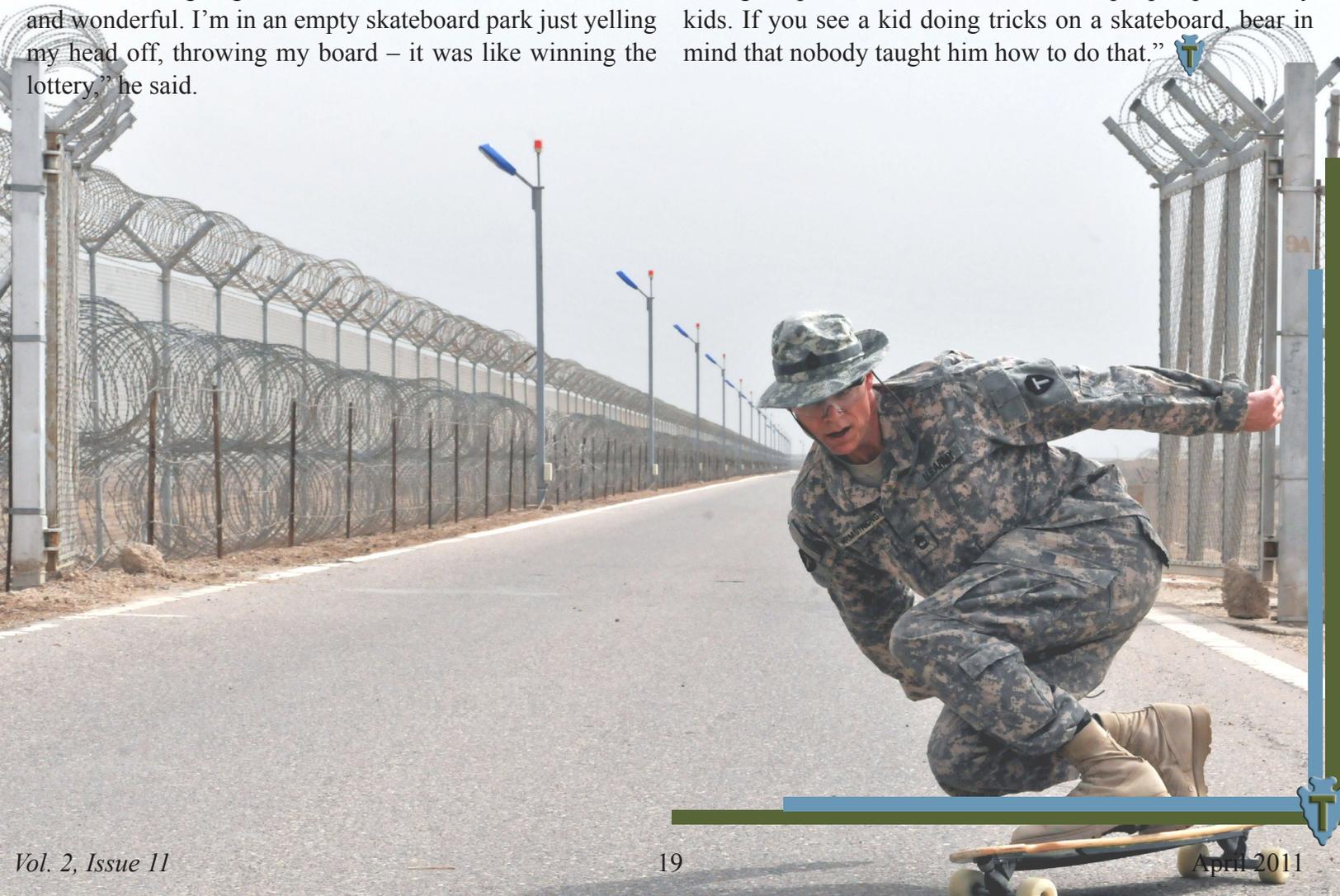
“You can work for weeks and weeks on a trick, and in that split second, you do it,” he added. “A trick called an invert, for example. Inverts are when you ride into a sort of one-handed handstand on the lip or edge of a ramp or bowl. They have always been sort of one of those defining tricks in skating; either you did inverts or you didn’t. I was never one of those skaters who did inverts until I was in my late 30s. To meet the guys and gals who could do them seemed elite.”

“I thought; by God, I’m gonna learn inverts. And I spent weeks trying to figure out how to do one. I put on every pad I could find – even hockey gear – trying to learn this dang trick, and I’d go out there and just beat myself up. I got to the point where I could go up and put my hand on the coping and look like I was doing an invert, and that was a big accomplishment. Then one day, in just a split second, I decided I was going back in – I did and it was all smooth and wonderful. I’m in an empty skateboard park just yelling my head off, throwing my board – it was like winning the lottery,” he said.

Sgt. 1st Class John T. Armstrong, 36th Infantry Division future operations noncommissioned officer, has been skating since he was 9 years old. The 43-year-old Army National Guardsman has served in both the National Guard and the active-duty Army in his 20-year career, although Operation New Dawn is his first deployment. The Cedar Park, Texas resident was raised in Suisun, Calif., and was sponsored for his skating by a skateboard manufacturer in 2006.



“That’s kind of the summation of skateboarding,” Armstrong added. “You don’t have a coach; you don’t have anybody teaching you how to do this stuff. You just kind of figure it out on your own, so those accomplishments are that much more meaningful. You don’t get a coach patting you on the back saying ‘good job, son, you did what I told you.’ It’s a great personal evolution for a lot of people, particularly kids. If you see a kid doing tricks on a skateboard, bear in mind that nobody taught him how to do that.”



One World

Cuneiform Script

Stories and photos courtesy of David
36th Inf. Div. Interpreter, USD-S Public Affairs Office

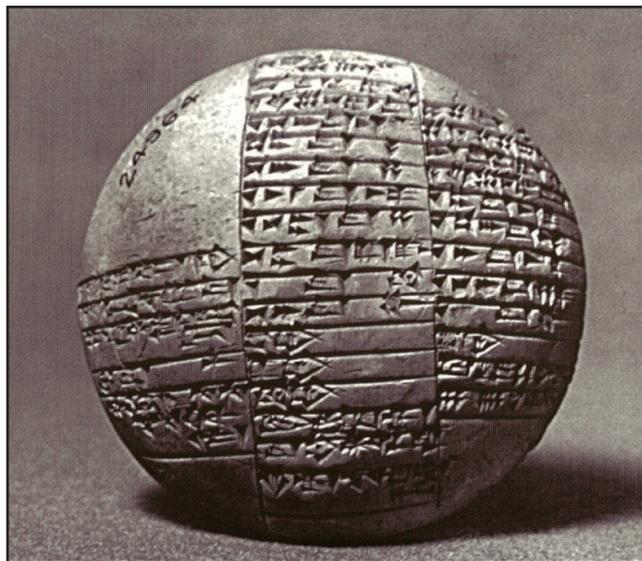
The Cuneiform script is one of the earliest known forms of written expression. Created by the Sumerians (who inhabited the land of today's south of Iraq) in the late 4th millennium BC, cuneiform writing (meaning "wedge-shaped" writing) began as a system of pictographs. Over time, the pictorial representations became simplified and more abstract. The word "cuneiform" is derived from two Latin words: *cuneus*, which means "wedge," and *forma*, which means, "shape."

As Cuneiform symbols gained acceptance throughout the Middle East, all ethnic groups could understand them even though the groups spoke different languages and dialects. The Sumerians of southern Mesopotamia, today's southern Iraq, were the first to write documents in cuneiform and assign their own sounds to the symbols.

Later, the Akkadians adopted the symbols but pronounced them as corresponding Akkadian words. Cuneiform thus passed successively from one people to another until they were succeeded by the Babylonians and later by the Assyrians.

The use of Aramaic became widespread under the Assyrian Empire and the Aramaean alphabet gradually replaced cuneiform. The last known cuneiform inscription, an astronomical text, was written in 75 AD.

Cuneiform owes its disappearance largely to the fact that it was a non-alphabetic way of writing. It could not compete successfully with the alphabetic systems being developed by



the Phoenicians, Israelites, Greeks, and other peoples of the Mediterranean.

The Sumerian cuneiform script had of 1,000 unique signs (or about 1,500 if variants are included). This number was reduced to about 600 by the 24th century B.C. and the beginning of Akkadian records.

Cuneiforms were written on clay tablets, on which symbols were drawn with a blunt reed called a 'stylus'. The impressions left by the stylus were wedge shaped, thus giving rise to the name 'cuneiform' or 'wedge-writing'. It was widely used in Mesopotamia for about 3,000 years. The earliest text in the Cuneiform has antedated the use of alphabets by some 1,500 years. The prime motivation was of an economic nature; the desire to administer economic and trade transactions. Around 3,000 B.C., Cuneiform was at the forefront of communications technology, with the first alphabet and the first typeface. That form of writing gave the ancient world a way of telling their history.

	MEANING	OUTLINE CHARACTER, B. C. 3500	ARCHAIC CUNEIFORM, B. C. 2500	ASSYRIAN, B. C. 700	LATE BABYLONIAN, B. C. 500
1.	The sun				
2.	God, heaven				
3.	Mountain				
4.	Man				
5.	Ox				
6.	Fish				

Sawa Lake

Stories and photos courtesy of David
36th Inf. Div. Interpreter, USD-S Public Affairs Office



Sawa Lake is an inland saline lake, located in Al Muthannah Desert about 25 km (15 mi) west of Samawah City. The lake has no obvious source, neither river nor ancient link, to a sea.

The water is extremely salty due to heavy evaporation in the searing heat of Iraq and supports no marine life, with one very odd exception. Only one type of fish lives in Sawa Lake; they are blind (without eyes), transparent, so the skeleton can be seen through the skin and their length does not exceed ten centimeters.

This kind of fish is fatty and can quickly melt in the hand when exposed to sunlight. It is a puzzle that this fish exists since the lake supports no marine life. What does that fish use as a nutrition source?

Another unique feature of the lake is that the water is above ground level and surrounded by natural levees (lime wall). Due to the high levels of salt in the lake, the levees heal themselves.

If an artificial break were made in the levee, the lime in the water quickly solidifies, thus stopping the water from flowing down to ground level. The salt levels also improve buoyancy, and many migratory birds walk on the lake, recalling the biblical tale of Jesus!

Sawa Lake has a maximum depth of 5.5 m and no superficial influx or outflow. It is thought that the lake is fed by groundwater from the Euphrates River and some aquifers. Others think it is fed by underground seepage from as far north as Ar-Razazah Lake.

The distances between Sawa Lake and the nearest brackish-coastal location are over 800 km to the Caspian Sea and over 900 km to the Mediterranean.

The lake also has healing properties. Because of its sulfur-saturated water chemistry, its ambient temperature and high salinity, it is useful in the treatment of certain skin diseases.

Sawa Lake is considered one of the most important characteristics of Iraq due to its unique constitution and the natural phenomena associated with it.

Sawa Lake has the potential of being a great tourism site. Between of its unusual chemical content, mysterious water source, rocky calcification, location in the desert, high level of salinity and odd marine life, it is a matter of interest to both researchers and people of all walks of life. 🇮🇶

One People



Courage Under Fire

CPL. VAL PRZYGOCKI RESCUES A WOUNDED SOLDIER UNDER HEAVY ENEMY FIRE



The following is a personal account of a battlefield experience about Corporal Val Przygocki taken from a newspaper article. He was a medic during WWII with the 111th Medical Battalion. The 111th supported the 36th Infantry Division throughout the Italian Campaign.

With the 36th "Texas" Division- "The phone in the Medical Battalion Aid station rang sharply. Everything and everyone was interrupted by the harsh buzz of reality. The men in the room cleared their eyes of drowsiness. The coldness of the room was momentarily forgotten. Someone picked up the receiver and the buzzing stopped. It was "A" Company of the 141st Infantry Regiment. They wanted medics, immediately!

"Corporal Val Przygocki of Bay City, and eight others made their way up to Company "A's" CP, but they found no routine litter haul waiting for them. They were taken to the third platoon and there an infantry officer explained the situation.

"From their position on top the wooded hill, the lieutenant pointed to a dark lump in the valley of white snow before them. That was their patient. He had been left there when the third platoon was forced to withdraw. The distance was about 150 yards. The area was naked of any cover. In fact the last 50 yards was without growth. "That was why the platoon couldn't stay there," explained the officer. "And neither can I ask any of you to go down there and expose yourself." He looked at the medics carefully, and slowly continued, "If you want to volunteer, you can, but I'm not withdrawing this platoon until that man is gotten out of there".

"Sergeant John C. McIntosh, of New Castle, Pennsylvania, felt the responsibility rest heavy on him. He had seen it all from Salerno to the present. He had lost too many buddies. He couldn't and wouldn't influence any of the men either way by his example. He saw the strained faces of his fellow medics. "Who's going with me?" The words came out of Val's mouth without him realizing it.

"Private Harold R. Sorrel, Wellstone, Ohio, a

new man with the medics, was the first to answer. "OK, count me in," he said matter-of-factly. Private first Class Melvin Johnson, Morea Colliery, Penn., looked at the others and said very unconvincingly, "I'll be damned if I go." And then he walked over and joined the first two volunteers. Sergeant McIntosh completed the squad.

"With Val in the lead, the four medics took off crawling on their stomachs through the foot thick snow. From the hill, the infantry watched with growing excitement and mounting fear as the quartet made their way forward with painful slowness. The platoon sergeant cursed softly to himself as he watched, "They've got too much guts for their own good," he said to no one in particular. The litter squad was now some 50 yards from their objective. There had been no fire. They had not been spotted. But from here on there would be no more concealment. Val called back to the others. "Can anyone see the guy?" They raised up slightly for a better view. They couldn't see him with their limited field vision. Val rose up still higher. He saw the wounded man. Suddenly before the others realized what had happened, he was running fully erect with his hands in the air, to show he was unarmed. The Red Cross on his helmet caught the sun. Quickly he was at the side of the wounded man. He grabbed him by the collar and started pulling him towards the others. That's when the German's opened up. The bullets were hitting all around Val. The snow seemed to come to life. It jumped up in a hundred different spots, leaving little black holes in the white carpet.

"I was sure Val would get it," said Johnson. "I still can't see how they missed. Standing up against that snow he was like a bull's-eye on a target." But Val didn't let go. He crouched now, keeping a firm grip on his patient. He kept going.

"Meanwhile, the third platoon had opened up. "It seemed like every rifle and machinegun in the army had turned on (the enemy)," said McIntosh. "That's what probably saved us," he continued. "After those first shots at Val, they didn't get a chance to get in a good shot. They stayed pinned down deep in their holes". The litter bearers completed their mission; they got the wounded man back to the aid station.

(WWIICombatMedicPersonalAccounts.htm)





36th Inf. Div. Hall of Heroes



For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty on 27 August 1944, in the vicinity of Montelimar, France.

2ND LT. STEPHEN R. GREGG

COMPANY L., 143RD INFANTRY, 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION

As his platoon advanced upon the enemy positions, the leading scout was fired upon and 2nd Lt. Gregg (then a Tech. Sgt.) immediately put his machine guns into action to cover the advance of the riflemen.

The Germans, who were at close range, threw handgrenades at the riflemen, killing some and wounding seven. Each time a medical aid man attempted to reach the wounded, the Germans fired at him.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation, 2nd Lt. Gregg took one of the light .30 caliber machine guns, and firing from the hip, started boldly up the hill with the medical aid man following him. Although the enemy was throwing hand grenades at him, 2nd Lt. Gregg remained and fired into the enemy positions while the medical aid man removed the seven wounded men to safety.

When 2nd Lt. Gregg had expended all his ammunition, he was covered by 4 Germans who ordered him to surrender. Since the attention of most of the Germans had been diverted by watching this action, friendly riflemen were able to maneuver into firing positions.

One, seeing 2nd Lt. Gregg's situation, opened fire on his captors. The four Germans hit the ground and thereupon 2nd Lt. Gregg recovered a machine pistol from one of the Germans and managed to escape to his other machine gun positions. He manned a gun, firing at his captors, killed one of them and wounded the other. This action so discouraged



the Germans that the platoon was able to continue its advance up the hill to achieve its objective.

The following morning, just prior to daybreak, the Germans launched a strong attack, supported by tanks, in an attempt to drive Company L from the hill. As these tanks moved along the valley and their foot troops advanced up the hill, 2nd Lt. Gregg immediately ordered his mortars into action.

During the day, by careful observation, he was able to direct effective fire on the enemy, inflicting heavy casualties.

By late afternoon he had directed 600 rounds when his communication to the mortars was knocked out.

Without hesitation he started checking his wires, although the area was under heavy enemy small-arms and artillery fire.

When he was within 100 yards of his mortar position, one of his men informed him that the section had been captured and the Germans were using the mortars to fire on the company. 2nd Lt. Gregg with this man and another nearby rifleman started for the gun position where he could see five Germans firing his mortars. He ordered the two men to cover him, crawled up, threw a hand grenade into the position, and then charged it. The hand grenade killed one, injured two; 2nd Lt. Gregg took the other two prisoners, and put his mortars back into action. 

An Iraqi instructor with the 10th Iraqi Army shows Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson L. Early, the command sergeant major of the 36th Infantry Division, how to properly fire off a 120 mm mortar round during a live-fire exercise conducted outside of Tikrit, Iraq, March 23. (Photo by Sgt. David A. Bryant, 36th Infantry Division, U.S. Division-South Public Affairs)

