

ANACONDA TIMES

Proudly Serving Logistical Support Area Anaconda

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courtesy photo

The 818th Maintenance Company keeps wheels turning at FOB Endurance
pg. 7

Preventive medicine warns about deadly creatures in Iraq
pg. 5



Photo by Sgt. Nondice Powell

254th stays flexible in Cedar

Reservists from Pennsylvania adapt to changing missions as they serve in FOB Cedar



pg. 14

Photo by Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda

Spc. William Coffman, a laundry, textiles and shower specialist with the 254th Quartermaster Company, hands out food rations to third country national truck drivers.

Bush: U.S. still supports Soldiers

Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – President Bush used Veterans Day, a day originally designated to commemorate victory in World War I, as an opportunity to reaffirm the United States' commitment to seeing the war on terror through to victory.

"The nation has made a clear choice," the president told a gathering of servicemembers, veterans and family members at Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pa. "We will not tire or rest until the war on terror is won."

Bush condemned terrorists who attacked the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, and have continued to spread violence around the world, using what he called "a litany of excuses" to justify it.

The United States did not invite the attacks it suffered, the president said, dismissing claims that the U.S. presence in Iraq has fueled the terrorists' efforts. "We were not in Iraq on Sept. 11, 2001," the president reminded the group. "The hatred of the radicals existed before Iraq was an issue, and it will exist after Iraq is no longer an excuse. "No act of ours invited the rage of killers," he continued, "and no concession, bribe or act of appeasement would change or limit their plans for murder."

Rather, he said, terrorists will prey on any indication of weakness or loss of will among Americans and the coalition. He cited an intercepted letter from Osama bin Laden's top lieutenant, intended to reach Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al Qaeda's leader in Iraq, that referred to the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam in the 1970s as a model for a future retreat from Iraq. Toward that end and terrorists' ultimate political goals, he said, there's little doubt that they will carry out future attacks, as evidenced by deadly bombings this week in Baghdad and Amman, Jordan.

He cited success of the strategy aimed at preventing those attacks by eliminating terrorist networks and their ability to inflict violence.

"This progress has reduced the danger to free nations, but it has not removed it," he said.

Meanwhile, Bush said, another kind of attack is under way in the United States – what he called "baseless attacks" about the rationale that led to U.S. operations in Iraq. The president acknowledged the right of all Americans to voice opinions about what led to the war or how that war is being carried out. But he called it "deeply irresponsible to rewrite the history of how that war began."

"The stakes in the global war on terror are too high and the national interest is too important for politicians to throw out false charges," he said.

Political attacks send the wrong message to U.S. troops fighting the war on terror and mixed messages to enemies judging America's will to stay the course, the president said. U.S. troops deserve a clear understanding that their nation is behind them and that this support won't bow to political winds, he said.

"As our troops fight a ruthless enemy determined to destroy your way of life, they deserve to know that their elected leaders who voted to send them to war continue to stand behind them," he said. "Our troops deserve to know that this support will remain firm when the going gets tough. And our troops deserve to know that whatever our differences in Washington, our will is strong, our nation is united, and we will settle for nothing less than victory."

Bush acknowledged that the road ahead won't be easy but said the coalition strategy in Iraq is working. Iraq is showing solid progress on the political and security fronts, paving the way for the United States to ultimately bring its troops home, he said. "As Iraqis stand up, the United States will stand down," he said.

Meanwhile, Bush said, the best way the United States can honor its troops, particularly those who have died in the war, is to stay the course to achieve the goals for which they sacrificed.

"The best way to honor the sacrifice of our fallen troops is to complete the mission and to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come," he said.



Photo by Sgt. Ty Stafford

Staff Sgt. Edward Hoyum, chaplain assistant for the 620th Combat Support Battalion, folds program flyers for an Oct. 29 gospel concert at Al Taquadam, Iraq.

Chaplain's goal: improve lives

**By Sgt. Ty Stafford
Staff Writer**

Sundays across Iraq are much like Sundays in America. Soldiers rise in the morning, have a cup of coffee and read the newspaper, if available. But some attend church services like the one at Al Taquadam logistic support base.

The service is run by Maj. Hayden E.A. Goodwin, a chaplain, and his assistant Staff Sgt. Edward Hoyum, both from the 620th Combat Support Battalion from St. Louis, Mo.

Goodwin and Hoyum, embarked on a mission not only to better their lives, but to enhance the lives of the Soldiers and Marines at the base.

"We painted the chapel since we've been here and it sure has brightened things up in here," Hoyum said.

Many Soldiers volunteered their personnel time to help lay the two coats of paint in the chapel and to help build the chaplains office, Hoyum added.

The chapel, which is one of many at Al Taquadam, holds several types of religious ceremonies for servicemembers of different denominations.

Besides church services, the duo helps assist at the Black Sheep Coffee House and hold prayer meetings and bible studies.

For the Soldiers that do not attend services, the team holds prayers prior to each combat logistics patrol that leaves the gates.

"When we first started doing the prayer, half the people left. Now, everyone stays," Hoyum said. "And that is a great feeling."

The chaplain team also attended three memorial services for a fallen Soldier and two contract employees who had died during their year here.

"We also had a crisis intervention program set up for friends of the Soldier who died," Hoyum said, "which I think was a great success because they were pretty shook up about it."

The Soldier was Cpl. Kevin Jones, who recently was memorialized by the 620th CSB during the grand opening of a MWR tent dedicated in his name.

As their time in Iraq nears an end, the chaplain team held its last gospel concert Oct. 29. The concert featured four choir groups from the different chapels at Al Taquadam.

"It's been a long year and I think we are all ready to go home," Goodwin said.

The chaplain team will also be conducting redeployment briefings as the 620th prepares for the redeployment process to the U.S. The 620th, along with the chaplains, will be replaced by the 44th CSB from Fort Lewis, Wash.

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Going home? DCS has new location



Photo by Sgt. Jason Mikeworth

Pfc. Erika Cumbry, of F Detachment, 18th Personnel Services Battalion, stands next to the mural she created for the new Deployment Cycle Support center at Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

**By Sgt. Jason Mikeworth
Staff Writer**

The Soldiers of F Detachment, 18th Personnel Services Battalion, have been working hard to make redeployment and taking leave a faster, more comfortable experience.

Between working their normal duties providing Deployment Cycle Support services, escort duty and tower guard shifts, F Detachment crammed in an extra, labor-intensive mission: building a new DCS center.

"The old place was falling apart. It was too small to accommodate the people we were trying to push through," said Spc. Michael Clark, a DCS team member who helped with the construction of the new facility. "You've got battalions, brigade combat teams, and corps all trying to redeploy, it was a nightmare."

At one point, the old tent used for the DCS briefings even collapsed, Clark said.

"We just needed a harder structure, something a little more Soldier-friendly," Clark said. "We're a 24-7 mission, Soldiers have to redeploy and they have to go on leave."

After relocating to a new tent, the Soldiers of F Detachment still had to build the infrastructure to support the DCS mission. Spc. Christopher Williams helped lead the construction effort to build a new stage, podiums, a privacy area for medical screenings and a projector screen large enough for the new 500-seat briefing area.

"Sergeant Johnson would come to me with ideas and ask me if I thought we could do it," said Williams, who worked as a contractor with his father and uncle for about six years before joining the Army. "I'd tell him anything is possible and give it a try."

The project was entirely staffed by Soldiers, a fact that is a source of pride for F Detachment.

"It worked out good. We didn't have to call on anyone for help. I had a little knowledge of carpentry, so I could go to someone with a task, and if they didn't understand how to get it done, I could show them," Williams said. "It'll pay off later because now they know a little something more than they did before."

The DCS team didn't have long to accomplish the mission, and there were some who had doubts that they could finish the project on time.

"If people tell me I can't do something, it makes me

want to do it more," said Pfc. Shanna Lesar, another team member with F Detachment. "It was long hours, but I knew the faster we worked the quicker we would be done."

Staying motivated was a key to finishing the project a week before their deadline.

"I just kept telling myself I want to see the look on everybody's face," Williams said. "That will tell me how good of a job it was. A lot of people can tell you it was a good job, but the look on their face, the look in their eyes, that tells me what they're really thinking."

Spc. Desiri Deleon, a DCS team member, said pride was another motivating factor.

"We wanted to do the job. We wouldn't leave the project undone. Seeing it done leaves a warm feeling in your heart," she said. With the construction nearly complete, the team decided to add a little of their own creative flair to decorate the new facility. Pfc. Erika Cumbry designed a mural that is the first sight for many entering the tent for briefings.

"They had been asking me to draw a picture that meant something to all Soldiers," Cumbry said. "Something to walk away and think about."

After sketching the idea on paper, Cumbry, with help from her team, sketched and painted the mural onto the wall.

"It feels really good, like I had a part in something," Cumbry said. "When I leave, a small piece of me will still be here."

'Humble' hardly begins to describe the Soldiers of F Detachment, with each Soldier eager to cite the accomplishments of the team while shying away from individual credit.

"We're already a family," said Sgt. Roselyn Avegalio. "We were close when we started, this brought us closer."

Avegalio added that the project helped everyone learn more about each other.

"You learn about people's skills. We know our Soldiers have [certain] skills," she said, "but now we know we can build, paint and that we are very creative."

Staff Sgt. Larry Johnson, the NCOIC of the DCS team, said the Soldiers working for him were a blessing.

"People passing through are looking at the NCOIC. If your Soldiers aren't doing a good job, then you're not doing a good job," Johnson said. "I'm extremely proud of this team."

Question of the Week

Where in the world would you go on leave, and why?



1st Sgt. Natalia Deleon-Hayes
373rd Med Co.

"Spain, my family is from Puerto Rico, we may be able to trace our family tree there."



Sgt. 1st Class Marcus Culbreath
3rd COSCOM

"Right back to my family, always."



Spc. Mike Hughes
3rd ACR

"Ireland, it's a family thing."



Spc. Paul Levsonov
Co. A, 29th BCT

"I already went, Hawaii, I went to the Big Island."



Sgt. Ronald Anderson
C-205th Med Bn ASMP

"Egypt, I want to see the Great Pyramids."

Maj. Motes counts up the days

By Spc. Spencer Case
Staff Writer

Just about every Soldier counts down the days until the end of a deployment. Maj. David Motes also counts, but for him the number goes up instead of down each day. Motes has been adding up all the days after Sept. 11 that he has been deployed. When he returns home from his third deployment around January, his count will be near 900.

Over the course of the last four years, Motes has seen the good, the bad and the ugly of the war on terrorism - a fact which he deals with by keeping a positive outlook and doing what he can to help the host population. On his current deployment, Motes has helped local villagers get access to water and erect a school in the town of An Numaniyah.

"I've seen the good side of what goes on over here and I've also seen the bad side of what goes on over here. Frankly I'd prefer to try to focus my efforts towards the good side. That's why I've been trying to help people with these water projects and the schools," Motes said.

Motes was staying in the guest housing of Fort Campbell, Ky when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon. He had just returned from a yearlong deployment to Korea. Within a few months, Motes was deployed again in support of Operation Enduring Freedom with the 561st Corps Support Battalion. He returned to Fort Campbell, Aug. 2002, took command of 102nd Quartermaster Company, deployed again in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March of 2003. He was home for about a year before he was under orders to go to Iraq for another tour.

Motes is now finishing his tour with the Military Training Team (MiTT) for the 2nd Motorized Transportation Regiment of the Iraqi army. His unit is responsible for advising and assisting the Iraqis as they become increasingly functional and independent.

"The fact that I've been able to see the creation of the regiment from scratch... has been a very rewarding experience," Motes said.

Motes would later find fulfillment in helping the local population.

During visits to villages outside of Numaniyah, Motes found local nationals surviving on what little muddy water could be dug from a dry canal. By establishing water delivery missions with the 2nd MTR, he was able to



Photo by Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda

Maj. David Motes inspects a local schoolhouse that his team replaced with a new building.

help the Iraqis increase their job proficiency and win the support of the local population.

Motes also spearheaded an effort to build a new elementary school in the city of An Numaniyah.

"One of our interpreters suggested we come out and visit one of the schools," Motes said. "So we came out here, saw the schools, [and] decided there was something we could do about it."

Despite Motes' humble use of the plural, his colleagues insist that the credit belongs to him alone.

In April, Motes consulted the Army Corps of Engineers in order to get a floor plan for a new school. He sought funding for the project and eventually obtained it from the Commander's Emergency Response Program, a

pool of money the Army has set aside to help with the host nation infrastructure. Construction began Jul. 31 on publicly owned land 500 meters away from the old school. The school will be functional in a matter of days, Motes said.

"He's the real hero in all this," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Ulshafer, a U.S. advisor who works alongside Motes.

Motes said his wife, Sarah has been handling his absence well, all things considered.

"Sometimes I don't know how she manages to do it," said Motes about his wife of 12 years, who has been taking care of their 6-year-old daughter, Molly, by herself. "She's pretty remarkable, I guess."

Freedom Radio Frequencies



107.7	Baghdad
107.9	Sinjar
105.1	Mosul, Fallujah
107.3	Balad, Kirkurk, Tallil, Ar Ramadi
93.3	Q-West, Tikrit, Al Asad
107.1	Ridgeway
102.5	Camp Taji

"Always There, on the Air!"

**Don't shoot ...
call EOD.**



STAY ALIVE

Creepy critters to avoid while touring Iraq

**By Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux
Staff Writer**

As Soldiers work outdoors, in often remote and unpopulated areas of Iraq, they may not realize that they've entered the natural habitat of different kinds of poisonous animals.

However, one does not have to be off post in the bushes to come across these species. Sometimes they seek shelter in storage areas or underneath the shipping containers on military posts.

The preventive medicine team of the 261st Area Support Medical Battalion has ample information about the different poisonous species found in Iraq.

According to Staff Sgt. Victor A. Bernal, a preventive medicine specialist from the 261st, most poisonous snakes found in the theater have one of the following types of venom: hemotoxins, neurotoxins and myotoxins.

Hemotoxins destroy the blood cells and affect the circulatory system. The site of the bite is swollen, discolored and very painful.

Neurotoxins affect the nervous system. The symptoms of neurotoxins attacking the nervous system may be blurred vision, dizziness and rigid paralysis. The person bitten may not be able to move and get help. That is why the often-encouraged buddy system is so helpful.

"If there is nobody there to help you, a bite like this may be fatal," Bernal said.

Myotoxins eat away muscle tissue. Patients may experience severe pain while moving their neck, trunk and limbs. They also may experience stiffness. A few hours after being bitten, the patient's urine may turn brown to black, due to the presence of muscle protein.

"More than likely people get bitten by accident. Normally a person comes in contact with these species when they are trying to remove them from a work area, for example, and that is when they get bitten," said Sgt. Reginald A. Thompson, also a preventive medicine technician from the 261st.

The most common snake in Iraq is the desert horned viper, Bernal said. The poison of this snake is a hemotoxin. This snake has a black tip tail and small horns above the eyes, thus the name. It has a sandy-camouflage color.

The other common snake is the desert cobra. It is a very poisonous snake, warned Bernal. This snake is shiny black in color with a whitish-blue belly. The snake can get up to 1.2 meters long. The poison of this snake is a neurotoxin.

The levant viper, or mountain adder, is mostly found in the northern areas of Iraq. It is grey and its head is a distinctive triangular shape. The tail tapers abruptly. The poison of this snake is also a hemotoxin, Bernal said.

Both Bernal and Thompson warn Soldiers about the possibility of snakes or scorpions wandering into their living areas. If Soldiers keep food in their living quarters, it may attract mice. Mice are a vital part of the food chain of several different snakes, so having mice around your area may result in other unwanted visitors.

Also, with the cold weather setting in, these critters may be looking for a warmer place to stay, Thompson said.

Soldiers should also look out for scorpions. There are several different types in the region.

The *Hemiscorpius lepturus* has a very long tail. "This scorpion has a highly cytotoxic venom, which can cause serious wounds and inflammations (sometimes the wounds will look like third degree burns with necrosis and blisters). These wounds are slow and difficult to heal. The effect of the venom is very similar to the bite of



levant viper



death stalker

the Brown Recluse spider," states a fact sheet on http://www.ub.ntnu.no/scorpion-files/h_lepturus.htm.

There is no antivenom for the poison of this scorpion. "Your body has to counteract," Bernal said. Unfortunately the bite can be fatal.

Soldiers may run into another variety of scorpion called the fat tail scorpion. Most people call them black scorpions, since they are predominantly black or dark in color. The most distinguishing characteristic about them is that their tail is fat, which also means that they carry a lot of neurotoxins. This species is aggressive. It may attack if it feels threatened or cornered.

The name of the last scorpion Bernal mentioned speaks for itself - the Death Stalker. This venom of this species is a neurotoxin, affecting the nervous system. It has a slender tail, almost as long as the body of the scorpion itself.

The center of the body has a dark brownish color. They like to hang out underneath the storage containers and the floorboards of the tents.

Soldiers are often fascinated by camel spiders. Some call them sun scorpions. Despite their rough, hairy and scary look, they are not poisonous.

"Camel spiders are primarily nocturnal. When they



fat tail scorpion



horned viper

bite, they do not cause any type of infection, they do cause pain. They are not deadly and not poisonous," Thompson said.

Most combat support hospitals carry the antivenom for the snake bites.

"If you get bitten, seek medical help. If it is a snake, you need to catch it or at least be able to describe it," Bernal said. It helps determine what type of antivenom the patient needs when they get to the hospital.

Bernal and Thompson also suggest to remain calm and not to panic. The more nervous a patient is and the more he or she moves around, the faster the heart beats and the faster the poison is distributed throughout the body. Bernal urges to seek medical help as soon as possible.

"Time is of the essence," he said.

Stay away from these animals if you see them, and if they are on a post, contact the preventive medicine team, Directorate of Public Works or the vets and they will take care of the situation, Bernal said.

For more information:

http://www.curator.org/LegacyVMNH/Whatsnew/venomous_snakes_of_iraq.htm

Maintenance shop keeps trucks on road

By Sgt. Ty Stafford
Staff Writer

Lack of proper maintenance procedures can lead to serious issues which may cause military vehicles to be deadlined.

The 109th Quartermaster Company at Al Asad base camp ensures all Soldiers, and most importantly its maintenance section, know how to properly maintain their vehicles before they hit the roads.

Based out of Fort Lee, Va., the petroleum supply unit is assigned to the 64th Corps Support Command.

The maintenance section performs preventive maintenance checks and services for their M915 tractor-trailer trucks and M1062 7,500 gallon tankers.

On the unit level, operations range from troubleshooting mechanical problems to replacing engine parts.

When the unit replaced the 416th Transportation Co. in September, the unit had many problems with the vehicles because of the harsh conditions they were put through over a year on the roads.

“We are doing pretty well considering the conditions the vehicles were in when we arrived here,” said Spc. Edgar Gutierrez, a mechanic in the maintenance section.

For the most part, the unit focused on fixing deadline issues which kept the vehicles off the road. But some more in-depth projects were required, added mechanic Sgt. Alford Reed.

A large project the group took on was rebuilding and replacing the whole front end of a M915 truck which had been



Photo by Pfc. Fabian Ortega

A Soldier from the 109th Transportation Company at Al Asad, Iraq conducts preventive maintenance on a recently returned vehicle.

wrecked, Reed said.

“We basically started from the steering wheel and worked our way forward,” he said.

For Gutierrez along with a few other mechanics, this was their first time working on the heavier trucks.

“We are all mechanics and an engine is an engine,” he said.

Also, with a shortage of mechanics to fix equipment, the unit added supplemental support to the maintenance techs with Soldiers from the unit. Operations are a lot smoother now because of the added stress on proper maintenance and the work the section has done, said Sgt. Greg Parker, a 109th squad leader.

“There is a big improvement on

maintenance. Trucks are not going down as much as before,” Parker said. “We have passed the transition phase and I think we are well into the maintaining phase.”

The unit continues to improve and will keep enhancing their skills to keep the tankers running daily so other units may continue their missions.

Sick Call Hours of Operations

1065th Troop Medical Clinic
829-3035/829-3029
Bldg. 4145
Monday-Sunday
24 hours

Air Force Medical Clinic
443-7322
Bldg. 4013
Sick Call Hours:
Monday-Saturday
0700-1800
Sunday
0800-1200

Main Dental Clinic
Bldg. 4003
Mon-Sat
0800-1100



Task Force War fighter Medical Clinic
829-2164
Bldg. 4016
Mon/Wed/Fri
0800-1000
Mon/Wed
1400-1600

Tuesday/Thursday
0800-1100
Saturday
0900-1100
Sunday
Urgent Issues Only

Lava Clinic
829-1774
Bldg. 4149
Monday-Sunday
0900-1200 and 1400-1700 except for Sundays

LSA ANACONDA Dining Facility

Hours of Operation

DFAC 1

Breakfast	6 a.m. to 9 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Dinner	5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Late Night	2 a.m. to 5 a.m.

DFACs 2 & 3

Breakfast	6 a.m. to 9 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Dinner	5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Late Night	11:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

DFAC 4

Breakfast	5:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.
Lunch	11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Dinner	5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Late Night	11:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

The DFAC hours for all locations are seven days a week. All patrons must be in the proper uniform and be able to present appropriate identification.

Distant cousins meet in distant land

By Sgt. Ty Stafford
Staff Writer

Three different people with different faces, personalities and from different states meet in one place: Al Asad, Iraq.

However, these three different people had no idea when they deployed with the 109th Transportation Company that their lives would intertwine as much as they did.

For Sgt. Chris Hilario, Sgt. Marlon Anicete and Spc. Raymond Topino, this deployment would bring a special surprise to the maintenance section of the 109th.

"We (Hilario and Anicete) were sitting around and talking and we found out we knew some of the same people and then we realized that down the line we were cousins," Topino said.

The cousins are only distant cousins, sharing uncles and aunts in the family tree.

"You never know who you're going to meet," Hilario said.

Topino is from Hawaii, Hilario from Virginia and Anicete is from Indiana.

"It's funny because when we first got together in the

maintenance shop Soldiers started mixing us up and calling us by the other one's name," Hilario said because all three are of Filipino decent.

At the maintenance shop, the cousins ensure all Soldiers know how to properly maintain their vehicles before they leave the base.

Topino, was recently recognized for his hard work at the shop.

"I come to work to work," he said. "We have a lot of jobs to do so we can keep these trucks on the road."

Topino, who just reached his 10-year mark in the Army, credits his hard work ethic to keeping the other Soldiers in the company rested and prepared for missions.

"There is a mission to do. These guys go out on a convoy, come back, rest and then go back out. It's the least I can do," he said.

And now that the cousins are united they are pushing each other to excel at their jobs.

"It also makes the deployment easier now because you have real family here along with your family back home," Anicete said.

The cousins said they will continue to stay in contact when they return to the states, but for now, knowing they have each other makes their lives easier while serving their country in Iraq.



Photo by Sgt. Ty Stafford

From left to right cousins Sgt. Chris Hilario, Spc. Raymond Topino and Sgt. Marlon Anicete, all from the 109th Transportation Company are stationed at Al Asad, Iraq.

818th fixes everything from radios to humvees

By Sgt. Mitch Armbruster
Staff Writer

Soldiers from the 818th Maintenance Company, located at Forward Operating Base Endurance, work diligently to repair equipment that troops use to do their jobs in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The 818th fixes a wide range of equipment such as generators, weapons, radios, global positioning systems, night vision goggles and vehicles.

"We are a 24-hour chop shop," said Sgt. Robert Sylvestre, an assistant shop foreman with vehicle repair for the company. "Everything falls back on you."

Spc. David Aquino, a mechanic with the 818th and one of Sylvestre's troops in the shop, came to Iraq with little knowledge on the wiring of a humvee but is now one of the company's experts in that area.

"We are doing all of the big jobs," Aquino said. "And we are doing a good job."

Aquino explained that Soldiers come back to the shop to thank them for their work. The Soldiers of the 818th are proud to know that their efforts are appreciated.

The hard work the Soldiers of the 818th accomplish takes clear planning and direction. Master Sgt. Ronald Powers is the maintenance control NCOIC and behind his desk hangs work orders for over 20 different units located at FOB Endurance. The shop orders parts and prioritizes the work that needs to be done.

"We had inexperienced Soldiers, but for a lot of them this has been a real learning experience," Powers said.

Powers, an Army Reserve Soldier,



Photo by Sgt. Nondice Powell

Sgt. Joshua Strang of the 818th Maintenance Company asks for the final approval before putting a fixed engine back into a humvee at Forward Operating Base Endurance.

works in heavy equipment repair as a civilian for the Department of the Army. He has seen a great improvement in the Soldiers while training and working with them.

"In the last 10 months everyone has come a long way," Powers said. "We play a vital role to keep the Army moving. We are doing a good job with a 95 percent success rate."

With all of their hard work the Soldiers of the 818th get their share of stress explains Staff Sgt. Emorey Bates, a motor sergeant for the 818th and civilian supervising mechanic at Fort George G. Meade, Md.

"Maintaining unit level vehicles is stressful. It's a good job and a good

stress," Bates said.

Bates believes that the company is successful with the work that they have been doing in Iraq because of proper mental preparation. Bates said that many of his Soldiers are young, but have grown during their time in Iraq.

"Our mission is very important. I'm glad that I had the opportunity to mold these Soldiers," Bates said.

The men and women of the 818th fix equipment for the units on FOB Endurance so they can perform their missions to the best of their ability. Through hard work and diligent training the 818th's mission has been a successful one.

Rice: Zarqawi fears democracy

Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - It's evident what Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, al-Qaeda's leader in Iraq, fears most, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Nov. 11 in Baghdad, Iraq.

"He fears the democratic process and the democratization of Iraq," Rice told Fox News during her surprise Veterans Day visit.

That's why Zarqawi and his followers have continued to threaten Iraqis whenever they have gone to the polls to advance the political process, she said. But despite those threats, Iraqis have defied them and taken their country's fate into their hands, Rice said. Some 8.5 million voted in January and 10 million in October, she noted.

Rice predicted similar success during the upcoming December 15 national elections. She urged all sects of Iraqi society to put their differences aside and come together to vote for their nation's future.

"I think you're going to have the first permanent government now," she said.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan also made a surprise visit to Baghdad, urging reconciliation ahead of the upcoming elections.

Annan was scheduled to meet with Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Deputy Prime Minister Rowsh Shaways, former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and other political and community leaders.

The secretary-general said the United Nations supports all efforts to bring peace to the country.

Rice acknowledged Nov. 11 that terrorists continue to stymie that effort.



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons

Spc. Ernesto Vargas welds plates that will be used in an Iraqi up-armor kit. The kits are used to protect soldiers in the new Iraqi army from roadside blasts and small arms fire. Vargas is a welder with the Dallas-based Army Reserve 223rd Maintenance Company.

223rd armors the Iraqi army

Sgt. Joshua Salmons
4th Sustainment Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Spots of blinding light flickered shadows on the walls of the dark garage. Showers of sparks hit and skipped across the ground as welders from the 223rd Maintenance Company continued their work.

The Soldiers from the Dallas-based Army Reserve unit were completing two more armored gun boxes for the Iraqi 1st Motorized Transportation Regiment here on Camp Taji, Iraq.

The gun boxes are a part of the 223rd’s mission to provide up-armored protection to the vehicles used by the Iraqi army unit.

“The boxes are placed in the back of some of the old [Army] 5-ton trucks we’ve given them,” said Lt. Col. William Schiek, Special Troops Battalion commander, 4th Sustainment Brigade and U.S. Army advisor to the Iraqi unit. “It protects personnel while riding in the back.”

While the gun boxes are just one element of the up-armoring process, the 223rd also fabricates plates to fit over the cabs of the civilian Mercedes trucks used by the Iraqis.

“It takes four days to make a box and three days for the plates,” explained Staff Sgt. Robert Gray, a welder with the 223rd. “That’s with two or three [Soldiers] on each one. It goes pretty fast.”

“We’ve put out about 50 up-armored kits so far,” said Chief Warrant Officer Clark Keeler, the 223rd Allied Trades



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons

Spc. Alejandro Guevara welds plates that will be used in an Iraqi up-armor kit. Guevara is a welder with the Dallas-based Army Reserve 223rd Maintenance Company.

Technician.

While the number may seem low since the unit began the mission in January, Keeler explains that the 223rd still supports over 20 other units on Taji with custom fabrications and vehicle repairs.

With only eight people in the shop, things can get pretty busy, he said.

Still, the work supporting the Iraqi army helps the entire war effort.

“We’re enabling them to take on the mission that our people are currently doing,” said Maj. Alfredo Garcia, 223rd commander. “The more trucks we put out, the more missions they run and the less we have to do.”

“I think it’s a great thing to contribute to the Iraqi army,” said Keeler. “The endgame is to get them up and running. Anyway to protect them is a good thing.”



Medal of Honor recipients visit LSA Anaconda

By Sgt. Mitch Armbruster
Staff Writer

Servicemembers deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, found inspiration in the messages of Medal of Honor recipients who sacrificed their time to visit Soldiers

Retired Marine Capt. John J. McGinty III and retired Sgt. 1st Class Gary L. Littrell, visited Logistical Support Area Anaconda to speak to Soldiers and airmen about their experiences.

Both men addressed a crowd of Servicemembers at the east side Morale, Recreation and Welfare building. They discussed their experiences on the battlefield along with issues that face all servicemembers during their enlistments or after their commitments are completed.

Take full advantage of your benefits, McGinty suggested. He advised servicemembers to look into getting the most out of their benefits when they return home.

These men reflected on how their experiences visiting servicemembers made them feel.

“It makes us feel good and I’m doing everything that I can to be a part of it, to come out here and be with the men and women that are putting their lives on the line for us,” McGinty said.

“You can retire from the military but you will never get the military out of your blood. Whatever opportunity that I get to visit our servicemembers, regardless of the branch or location, especially in country here and in Afghanistan, it makes me feel younger and it makes me feel good to see the men and women with a smile on their faces when we show up,” Littrell said.

see Medal of Honor on pg. 15



Photo by Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda

Pfc. Dominique McKinsley, a security guard with the 254th Quartermaster Company, shops the jewelry counter at a bazaar that the 119th Corps Support Battalion hosted in November at Camp Cedar II, southern Iraq. The event aimed at contributing to the local economy while allowing Soldiers to safely shop for local memorabilia.

Camp Cedar Soldiers able to buy souvenirs from local vendors

By Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda
Staff Writer

CAMP CEDAR, Iraq – The 119th Corps Support Battalion held a bazaar here Nov. 5 and 6 where servicemembers and civilians working on post had the opportunity to shop from local vendors at low prices.

In what appeared to be an open market, Soldiers had the opportunity to buy rugs, jewelry, ceramics, antiques, lighters, knives, swords, blankets and a laundry list of local and regional items from vendors.

“Probably just about anyone who can come down here, comes,” said Sgt. 1st Class James Prus, a base support non-commissioned officer with the 119th who helped organize the event. “They don’t miss this because the prices are as low as they can go. [The vendors] have no overhead,” he said, noting that because the bazaar is held in the open, the vendors don’t have to worry about the cost of renting space.

Twelve local vendors were recruited and screened through a rigorous security



Photo by Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda

Sgt. Tiffinie Schweder, a supply NCO with the 1438th Transportation Company out of Indianapolis, Ind., shops the jewelry counter at the Bazaar

process before being allowed to attend the bazaar at Cedar. Sgt. Frank Anaya, one of the event organizers with the 119th, said that most of the vendors were local families who usually set up shops along the roads between Cedar and Camp Adder. Soldiers are prohibited from shopping at such sites because of security reasons, but are nevertheless attracted to the prices of the goods available.

“These are guys who are out there seven days a week, feeding their family,”

Anaya said of the vendors. “They like coming because usually they do more in one day here than in three days out there.”

Actually, vendors reported that what they made in the two days at the bazaar was equivalent to a month of sales out on the street. For example, rugs and artifacts vendor Katan Adnan said that on the first day of the sale he sold approximately 40 items. He didn’t sell half that many the previous month out on the street. The

bazaar is a huge necessary boost to his income, given that he supports an extended household of 10 people, including his parents, wife, and four children, he said.

The event was a win-win situation because Soldiers also get a deal.

“The best deals are probably the carpets, which run from \$30 to \$150,” said Prus, while eyeing an elaborate rug for his own purchase.

The 119th held two bazaars during its deployment and as it prepares to leave Iraq, the unit encouraged other organizations to do the same.

“That bazaar is a very good thing,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Howard Wright of the 119th and the command sergeant major of the post. “We put them through some pretty stiff security.”

He said that all vehicles were checked and cleared and that the vendors went through extensive background checks. “That’s what we are here for – to try and help them out,” Wright said. “We are helping them and Soldiers get to buy local goods. Everybody is happy.”

A new command will decide whether to continue the program.

American Indian Heritage Month

American Indian servicemembers provided secure communications

Secure and rapid communications are essential to effective operations on the battlefield, and military forces are working constantly to develop communications systems, methods and techniques which will insure that an enemy does not gain access to friendly intentions.

While, cryptography is one of the standard means of maintaining security, it takes time—a critical element in military operations—to encode and decode messages from prearranged codes, and codes are subject to being broken. The most desirable method is direct and open on-the-spot transmission by voice over telephone or radio, and such a procedure must recognize that the enemy is always listening in.

To confound the enemy, American forces in both World Wars used American Indian personnel and their unique languages to ensure secure communications. In World War I in France, the 142nd Infantry Regiment had a company of Indians who spoke 26 different languages or dialects, only four or five of which had been reduced to writing.

Two American Indian officers were selected to supervise a communications system staffed by Choctaw American Indians. They were used in the regiment's operations in October 1918, in the Chufilly-Chardeny zone, transmitting in their native tongue a variety of open-voice



U.S. Army courtesy photo

Comanche code talkers of the 4th Signal Brigade at Fort Gordon.

messages, relating to unit movements, which the enemy, who was completely surprised in the action, obviously could not break.

In World War II in both major theaters of war, the U. S. Army used Indians in its signal communications operations. A group of 24 Navajos was assembled to handle telephone communications, using voice codes in their native tongue, between the Air Commander in the Solomon Islands and various airfields in the region. The U. S. Marine Corps also used Navajo code talkers extensively in the Pacific Theater. And in Europe, the 4th Signal Company of the Army's 4th Infantry Division was assigned 16 Comanches for employment as voice radio operators to transmit and receive messages in their own unwritten language.

The Armed Services ran special training courses both in the United States and in the operational theaters to instruct Indians in the basic communications techniques and to develop standard military phraseology and common military terms for the languages and dialects where such words may never have existed.

The success of the experiment in using American Indian code talkers is attested to in the reports of military units and commanders in the several services.

For further reading: *Indians in the War*. U. S. Department of the Interior. Office of Indian Affairs, Chicago, November 1945.

[Extracted from OCMH Study 57, *Military-Connected Contributions of American Indians to the Culture Heritage of the Nation*, Prepared by William Gardner Bell]

Going on Emergency Leave?

Don't forget,



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clothes to
be able to
fly out!**

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have a copy of your
orders on you at all
times, even when
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**News Reel
Anaconda**

Real Soldiers, Real News

Airing daily at the Sustainer Reel Time Theater

Soldiers armor American and Iraqi vehicles

**By Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux
Staff Writer**

Russian cargo trucks, Mitsubishi sport utility vehicles, Chevrolet pickup trucks and other vehicles wait patiently in line in one of the workshops of the 872nd Maintenance Company. They are all here for an 'appointment' with the up-armor section.

The shop is taking Iraqi army, Iraqi police and some other vehicles and adding armor or enhancing existing armor, said Chief Warrant Officer Tom P. Johnson, the section chief of the armor shop.

"Hopefully it [the armor] provides more protection, and helps to save a few more lives, or protects them from being injured," Johnson said.

The section works with a total of 12 people, most of whom are Soldiers. All of them are welders and machinists.

"We have been here since the middle of August, and I would say we have done at least three [vehicles] a day," Johnson said.

The shop uses a type of sheet metal called 'Hardox' to fabricate the armor. A four feet by eight feet sheet weighs approximately 500 pounds. It is very difficult to cut, because of the density of the metal, he said. They have to use a plasma cutter which employs hot ionized air to cut the metal.

The work is customer driven. Wherever the customers need extra protection on the vehicle, the armor shop installs it for them. The shop often designs the armor, presents the plan to the customers, and the customer can suggest modifications or ask for additional armor in certain places, Johnson said.

The small team works on several different types of vehicles. For some, they already have the exact measurements and patterns. On others, they have to start from scratch, measuring every area where armor will be installed.

The shop receives brand new Mitsubishi sports utility vehicles destined for the Iraqi military, 'guts them out,' and installs armor inside and outside the vehicles. Because of the added thickness of the armor on the inside of the doors for example, the mechanics are unable to put back on the original padding and covers, said Sgt. Alan D. Mendenhall, a welder and metal worker from Riverton, Utah.

"We armor for different types of vehicles for the Iraqi army and police only," Mendenhall said.

There was an increase in the number of Iraqi vehicles submitted to the shop lately, in preparation of the

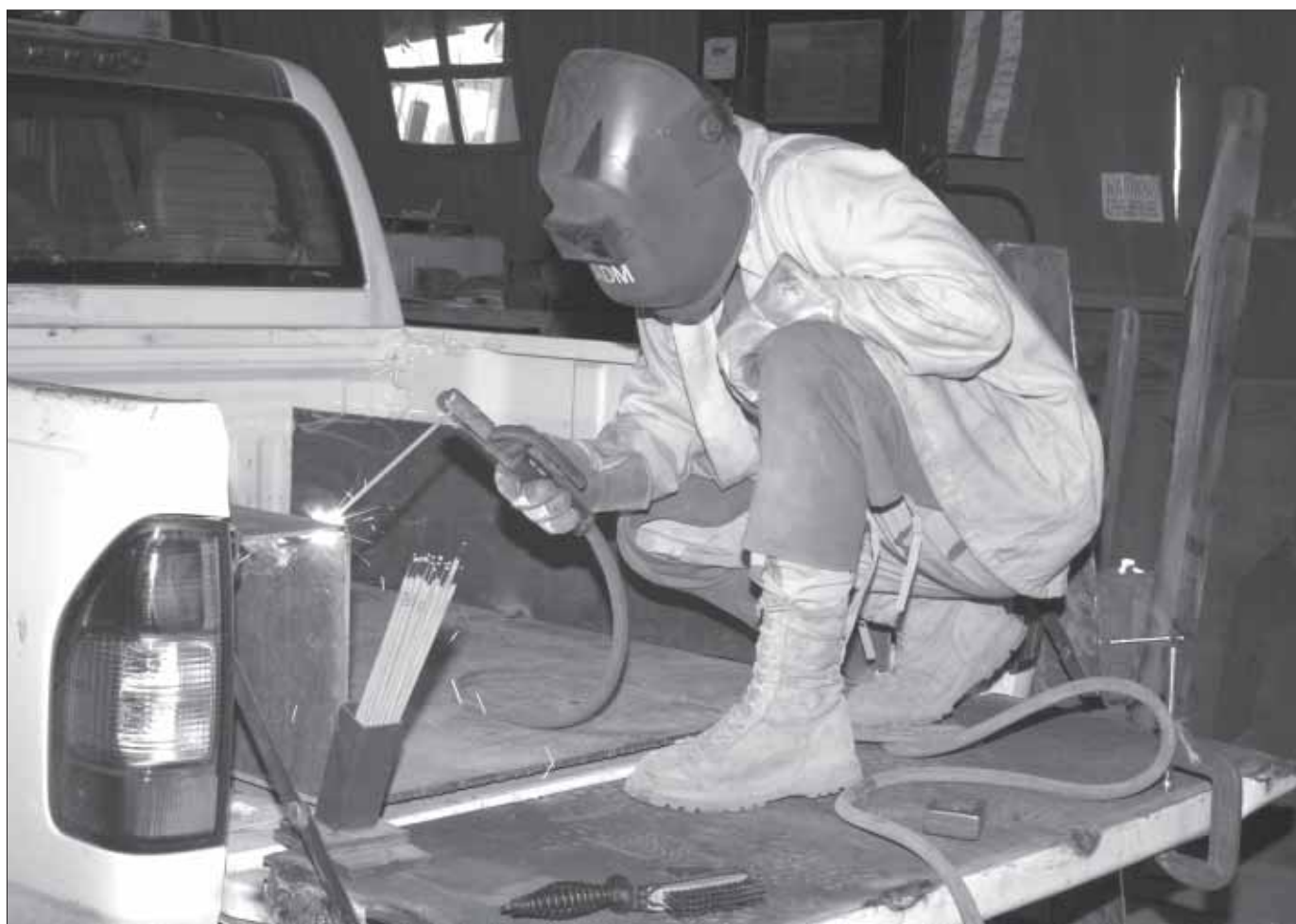


Photo by Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux

Sgt. Alan D. Mendenhall from the 872nd Maintenance Company welds armor on an Iraqi police vehicle. The shop experienced an increased amount of Iraqi vehicles, in preparation for the constitutional referendum in October.

upcoming elections in Iraq, Johnson said.

"I think helping them is great. That is what we are here to do. They are the ones who will replace us one day," said Spc. Eric W. Smith, a metalworker from Clinton, Utah, who has only been in the military for 18 months.

Welding is not always as simple as it seems.

"Sometimes you have to weld armor onto the civilian vehicles, and welding armor on the thin sheet metal is not easy," Smith said. When welding on a thinner sheet of metal, the welding torch may actually burn a hole on the metal instead of attaching the thicker sheet of armor.

The section leader says properly managing the process may be challenging. "The biggest difficulty is scheduling and staging everything, so we can move things through the shop efficiently," Johnson said.

"Teamwork is what it is all about," said Smith. "We

always have to work together. You can't lift the armor up; you can't do anything here by yourself. It is always with someone else."

Johnson said the company has not been on the ground long enough to run into any raw material problems, however, they ran into some issues with having enough of the right tools on hand. They are working very hard on fixing the problem, Johnson said with determination.

"We are glad to be here to help," he continued. "All of my troops are really into this, they like what they are doing. They especially enjoy the custom work they get to do."

Soldiers in his section agree.

"I love my job... The job never ends. There is always something else that needs to get done," Smith said. "Everybody needs armor, everybody needs protection, and everyone comes to us."

Soldiers take advantage of education center

**By Sgt. Jason Mikeworth
Staff Writer**

The task of holding down a full-time job while trying to earn a college degree is daunting for anyone, even more so for Soldiers serving in a combat zone. The Blackjack Education Center at Logistical Support Area Anaconda is helping to change that.

Along with assisting Soldiers looking to further their civilian education, the Blackjack Education Center offers a variety of military education options.

"One of the people who works here has already completed 700 hours worth of

correspondence courses," Maj. Christopher Jackson, the OIC for the center, said.

The military educational opportunities available include the Defense Language Aptitude Battery (DLAB), the Alternate Flight Aptitude Selection Test (AFAST) and General Technical (GT) score improvement courses.

"The GT score, once you get it above 110 you can do anything you want if you want to re-enlist or re-class," Jackson said. Civilian education options are plentiful at the Blackjack Education Center. Soldiers are able to find help to select schools that will apply their military training towards college credit.

"We'll answer any questions they

have, and if we can't answer it, we can send them the proper way," Jackson said.

Soldiers earn college credits quickly using the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) testing available at the center. Volunteer instructors teach CLEP review courses that last eight weeks.

"The college part, heck it's free credits. The classes don't cost anything and the tests don't cost anything," Jackson said.

Navigating the tuition assistance program can be difficult for some Soldiers. The current system is expected to change next year, but help is available now through the Blackjack Education

Center.

"Until March 1, Soldiers have to work back through their mobilization site for tuition assistance, but we have all the forms and contacts for that," Jackson said.

The Blackjack Education Center is also home to the Sgt. Matt Maupin Computer Lab. The lab is a result of the donation of 35 computers from the Maupin family, the only Soldier still listed as 'Missing/Captured' in Iraq.

"The computer lab is the best part," said Sgt. David Davis, the administration NCO for the center.

see education center on pg. 15

West MWR Schedule

Army vs. Air Force Thanksgiving Day Basketball Game

Come support your team,
both women's and men's, at
the Main Gym, Thanksgiving
Day at 7:30 p.m.

TEXAS HOLD'EM

at the
Panther Pavilion
Mondays at
2 p.m. and 8 p.m.



Darts Tournament

A darts tournament
will be held Sundays
at 8 p.m.

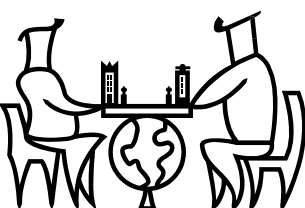


8-Ball Tournament Tuesdays at 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.



Game Night

Game night
will be every
Friday at 8 p.m.
Games featured
will include Risk,
Battleship and
Dominoes.



**LSA Anaconda Soldier's
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DSN 829-1947

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Divorce and Family Law Issues
Guardianships
Tax Services
Servicemember's Civil Relief Act Issues
FLIPL and Reprimand Rebuttals
Personnel Claims and Wills

LSA Anaconda Fitness Center

Pilates

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center
offers Pilates classes at 5:45 a.m. Mon-
day, Wednesday and Friday.

Aerobics

There will be an aerobics class Mon-
day, Wednesday and Friday at 6 p.m.
Freestyle aerobics is Saturday at 9
a.m., and today at 1 p.m.

Karate

Karate classes will be Sunday,
Monday, Wednesday and Friday at
7:15 p.m.

Tae Bo

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center
offers Tae Bo classes Tuesday, Thurs-
day and Saturday at 5:30 a.m.

Kobushi Sessen Jutsu

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center
offers classes in the feudal warrior
combat art Tuesday, Thursday and
Saturday at 8:30 p.m.

Capoeira

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center
offers capoeira classes Sunday at 6
p.m and Monday, Wednesday and
Friday at 8:30 p.m.

Nihon Goshen Aikido

The LSA Anaconda Fitness Center
offers Nihon Goshen Aikido classes at
5:30 p.m. every Tuesday, Thursday
and Saturday in the Sprung Gym.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Combatives

Classes will be
Sundays at 8:30 p.m. and Wednes-
days and Fridays at 8:30 p.m.

East MWR Schedule

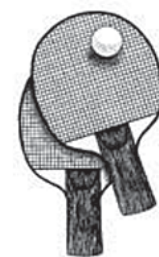


Karaoke Night

Open-mike nights will
be every Saturday at 8 p.m.

Table-Tennis Tournament

A Table-tennis tour-
nament will be every
Sunday at 3 and 8 p.m.



8-Ball Tournament

An 8-ball tourna-
ment will be held
every Monday at 3
and 8 p.m.



Redeployment Briefings

Briefing will be held in a new
location. For location call
Staff Sgt. Litrena Gordon at
829-1815

Going Home?

A Naval Customs will be holding
briefings for returning units. The
Briefings will cover MILVAN
inspection and restricted items.

The brief will cover container and
MILVAN inspections, prohibited items,
and tips on how to make the process go
well. Customs inspectors will be there to
answer questions

For questions and reservations call
MT1 McCreary:
829-1824

Movie Schedule

Sustainer Reel Time Theater

(schedule is subject to change)

November 20

3 p.m. Chicken Little
6 p.m. The Man
9 p.m. Red Eye

November 21

6 p.m. The Cave
6 p.m. Chicken Little
9 p.m. Tranporter 2

November 22

3 p.m. The Man
6 p.m. Tranporter 2
9 p.m. Chicken Little

November 23

3 p.m. Red Eye
6 p.m. Chicken Little
9 p.m. The Man

November 24

3 p.m. Chicken Little
6 p.m. The Man
9 p.m. Tranporter 2

November 25

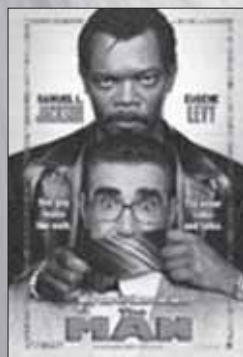
3 p.m. Cry Wolf
6 p.m. Roll Bounce
9 p.m. Get Rich or Die Trying
12 a.m. Get Rich or Die Trying

November 26

3 p.m. Tranporter 2
6 p.m. Get Rich or Die Trying
9 p.m. The Man

November 27

3 p.m. Get Rich or Die Trying
6 p.m. Just Like Heaven
9 p.m. Roll Bounce



Religious Schedule

Roman Catholic Mass

Saturday 5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Sunday 8:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Sunday 11 a.m. Provider Chapel
Sunday 8 p.m. Provider Chapel Annex
Mon.-Fri. 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Sacrament of Reconciliation
(30 minutes prior to each mass)

Church of Christ

Sunday 2 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Islamic Prayer

Friday 12:30 p.m. Provider Chapel

Samoan Congregational Service

Sunday 4 p.m. Provider Chapel

Latter Day Saints

Sunday 1 p.m. Provider Chapel
Sunday 3 p.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel
FHE Provider Chapel Annex 7 p.m.

Jewish Prayer

Friday 6:30 p.m. Provider Chapel Annex

Protestant-Gospel

Sunday 11 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 11:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 7 p.m. Provider Chapel

Protestant Praise and Worship

Sunday 9 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 11 a.m. Eden Chapel (Bldg. 4148)
Sunday 6:30 p.m. MWR Tent 29th Spt. Bn.
Sunday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel
Wednesday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Protestant-Contemporary

Sunday 11 a.m. Town Hall

Protestant-Traditional

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel
Sunday 10 a.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Protestant-Liturgical Service

Sunday 7:30 a.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

Religious schedule subject to change

Movie Synopsis for Nov. 20 - Nov. 27

Red Eye

PG-13, suspense, 85
Rachel McAdams, Cillian Murphy

Lisa hates to fly, but the terror that awaits her on the night flight to Miami has nothing to do with a fear of flying. Moments after takeoff, Lisa's seatmate, Jackson menacingly reveals the real reason he's on board: He is an operative in a plot to kill a rich and powerful businessman, and Lisa is the key to its success. If she refuses to cooperate, an assassin awaiting a call from Jackson will kill her father. Trapped within the confines of a jet at 30,000 feet, Lisa has nowhere to run and no way to summon help without endangering her father, her fellow passengers and her own life.

The 40 Year Old Virgin

R, comedy, 116 min
Steve Carell, Catherine Keener

40-year-old Andy has done quite a few things in his life. He's got a nice apartment with a proud collection of action figures and comic books, good friends, and a nice attitude. But there's just one little thing he hasn't quite gotten around to doing yet — something most people have done by his age. Andy's never, ever, ever had sex. His friends at the store consider it their duty to help, but nothing proves effective enough until he meets Trish, a 40-year-old mother of three. Andy's friends are psyched by the possibility that "it" may finally happen...until they hear that Andy and Trish have begun their relationship based on a mutual no-sex policy.

March of the Penguins

G, documentary, 84 min
Morgan Freeman

Emperor penguins overcome daunting obstacles in order to return to their breeding grounds for mating season. This tells the story of one year in the life of a flock — focusing on one couple in particular — as they trek across the Antarctic on an annual journey that invokes just about every major life experience: from birth to death, from dating to mating, from comedy to tragedy, and from love to fighting for survival.

The Weather Man

R, comedy/drama, 102 min
Charlize Theron, Francis McDormand

Popular Chicago weatherman, Dave Spritz, has a shot at the big time when a national morning television show calls him for an audition. Professionally, Dave is on the top of the world, but his personal life is in complete disarray. Dave's painful divorce, his dad's illness and trouble with his kids have him poised on the knife's edge between stability and disaster. The harder he tries to control events, the more he finds life, like the weather, is completely unpredictable.

The Cave

PG-13, action, 97 min
Morris Chestnut, Eddie Cibrian

A rescue team is sent down into the world's largest cave system to try to find the spelunkers. But they are hunted by monstrous creatures.

Soldiers adapt to changing missions

**By Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda
Staff Writer**

CAMP CEDAR II, Iraq – For members of Pennsylvania's 254th Quartermaster Company, "flexibility" has become a watchword.

They were flexible when their deployment was canceled in the spring of 2003 after they had done two months of pre-deployment training. They were flexible when they arrived in Iraq earlier this year only to find that their mission in theater had little to do with their specific military skills. And they were flexible when half way through their deployment two of their teams were moved to the forefront of the war in Iraq, having to build two bases from scratch. Though it has been a bumpy road, the Reservists said they had to adapt and overcome.

"When we deployed we thought we were going to be a gun truck unit, and when we got here, bang, it was just a quick change," said the 254th's 1st Sgt. David A. Ritter.

The 254th is a textile, shower and clothing repair unit, consisting of six teams capable of providing independent base support for satellite camps. Like many elements deployed to Iraq, the Soldiers expected to do a mission slightly different than their original job. During the first few months of their deployment, the Reservists provided security details at a third country national truck stop, running round-the-clock guard towers at a facility that hosts between 350 and 1,250 truck drivers daily.

"This is the lifeline for everything for

theater operations. Everything going north comes through Cedar," Ritter said.

Cedar is located between the Iraq border with Kuwait and Baghdad. Most deliveries for the coalition arrive through Kuwait so the camp filters virtually all the supplies for the war effort.

The Soldiers also staffed a water pump mission that supplies water for Cedar and Camp Adder, one of the largest coalition installations in southern Iraq. The 254th shared, with a sister unit, the responsibility of patrolling and fueling the water pumps, which filter water from the Euphrates River and surrounding canals for the two bases.

While these missions provided the 254th the opportunity to contribute greatly to the war effort, they were outside the primary skills that the unit had been trained for. Thus, when a wave of Soldiers required patches to be sewn onto their uniforms, the unit volunteered to run a sewing center. Since opening early this year, the Reservists have sewn over 5,300 items including combat patches, ranks, flags, and even small laundry bags, said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Pluck, a platoon sergeant with the 254th.

Moreover, the Reservists welcomed two arduous but essential missions. In the summer, two teams were tasked to support operations near Tal Afar and Rawah, both military hot spots from which coalition troops are battling insurgents coming into Iraq.

By early fall, both teams had set up shower and laundry facilities worthy of recognition. The Soldiers had washed over 146,000 pounds of laundry, sewn at least 6,100 renovations, and provided



Photo by Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda

Sgt. Julius Bajit, a section chief with the 254th Quartermaster Company, refuels a water pump near Camp Cedar II in southern Iraq. Bajit is a Reservist from San Jose, Calif.

showers to at least 12,200 servicemembers.

The success that the unit has had as a whole is a credit to a strong noncommissioned officer corps that was already in place when he took command of the unit about two years ago, said the unit's commander Capt. Michael "Mic" Drulis. He said that although 70 percent of the unit is cross leveled from other organizations, key players were originally in the 254th and have brought unity to the company.

Though successful, the unit has had its share of challenges. Ritter noted that nearly 65 percent of the Soldiers are between 18 and 21 years of age and have no prior military experience, besides initial training. Moreover, the unit's diversity has challenged the Soldiers to work with different personalities.

"We had so many people from so many different areas and so many different backgrounds," said Sgt. Maria Rodriguez,

a renovations NCOIC who runs a youth program in Lancaster, Pa. "You had to learn how to get along with them. You had to learn to be patient."

Additionally, the Soldiers faced significant security threats. Both Tal Afar and Rawah are often attacked by mortars and even Cedar, which is relatively calm by Iraqi standards, has recently seen increased activity. In early November, for example, one Soldier of the 254th received minor injuries from an attack.

Still, the unit has been able to do every mission thrown its way and has done so safely.

"Overall I think the Soldiers did exceptionally well, we've had no serious injuries, no loss of life," Ritter said.

Drulis added that his Soldiers should be proud of "their flexibility to perform the mission, whatever it is. They adapted and overcame, and I'm proud of them for that." The unit expects to return home early next year.

Comics help Soldiers relieve stress in Iraq

**By Spc. Spencer Case
Staff Writer**

Over 300 multi-national servicemembers at Tallil escaped the rigors of military life during a two-hour show at the Air Force Big Top that featured five "headliner" comedians.

From 8 p.m. to 10 p.m., comedians Jeff Capri, Tom Simmons, Keith Alberstadt, Matt Iseman, and David Mishevitz received riotous laughter from Air Force, Army, and British troops for jokes on such various topics as marriage, fantasy football, phone companies and, of course, military life. After the show, the performers took the time to shake hands, sign autographs and pose for pictures with troops.

"I didn't think they'd send me here for Comics on Duty," opined Simmons. "I just joined for the college money."

Simmons, the only family man of the group, joked, "People ask me 'why ... are you going to Iraq when you have a 9-month-old child?' I say 'so I can finally get a good night's sleep!'"

Before the show, troops were looking for an escape.

"I just want to forget where we are for a little bit," said Spc. John Brack, a medic of the 48th BCT, who attended the show.

By the end of the performance, servicemembers had found what they were looking for. Most took the opportunity to meet the entertainers.

"I loved it," said Spc. Tricia Frankewhich, an intelligence analyst for the Headquarters, Headquarters Co. of the 48th Brigade. "They were all hilarious. I'd definitely come see these guys again."

The entertainers were just as happy to meet the troops.

"I love making people laugh," said Capri, who has visited over a dozen countries as a performer for Comics on Duty. He added that servicemembers "seem to be the most important ones to make laugh."

He also said, "The level of appreciation is higher [with the troops] than any other show. That's gratifying."

The Tallil performance was part of "Live in Kuwait and Iraq – supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom" which lasted from Oct. 31 to Nov. 7. During the tour, the comics also entertained British troops in Basrah proceeded north to Forward Operation Base Victory and surrounding FOBs.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Engels Tejeda

Comedian Keith Alberstadt performs at Camp Adder in southern Iraq as part of the comics on Duty World Tour Nov. 3.

"It's a blast," said Alberstadt about being a part of the tour. "It's a lot of travel, but it's worth every bit of it."

He added, "I feel great being over here, but I feel bad that I have to leave in a few days. I hope everybody stays safe and gets home."

Medal of Honor recipients visit LSA Anaconda



Photo by Sgt. Mitch Armbruster

Capt. Frank C. Bauman reads the awards to the crowd before presenting them to the Medal of Honor guests at the eastside MWR during their visit to LSA Anaconda.

continued from pg. 8

"Soldiers say, 'Thank you for taking the time to visit us' and our response is 'thank you for allowing me to come over.' Any time that we can come over and say thank you for a job well done means so much to us," Littrell said.

"I hope there is an impact when we talk to the soldiers," McGinty said.

Littrell was born on Oct. 26, 1944 in Henderson, Ky. He earned his citation while serving as a light weapons infantry advisor with the 23rd Battalion, 2nd Ranger Group, Republic of Vietnam Army. Littrell and the battalion came under heavy mortar fire and the battle lasted four days. Littrell directed artillery and air support by day and marked the unit's location by night, despite heavy concentrated enemy fire. He moved to points around their position that were seriously threatened by enemy fire to redistribute ammunition, strengthen faltering defenses, cared for the wounded and shouted encouragement to the Vietnamese soldiers he was working with in their own language. Littrell's actions over the course of those four days showed his desire to accomplish the mission and keep his fellow Soldiers alive.

McGinty was born on Jan. 21, 1940 in Boston, Mass. His platoon came under heavy small arms, automatic weapons

and mortar fire from an enemy regiment. McGinty's 32-man platoon fought off waves of attacking enemy soldiers. Two squads became separated during the fight and McGinty charged through intense automatic weapons and mortar fire to reach their position finding 20 men wounded and the medical corpsman killed. He reloaded magazines and weapons with ammunition for the wounded men and directed their fire on the enemy. Although he was wounded, he cared for his disabled men. The enemy tried to outflank his position but McGinty was able to kill five of them with his pistol. He was able to adjust artillery and air strikes to end the enemy siege, which left an estimated 500 enemy bodies on the battlefield. McGinty's heroism and leadership inspired his men to resist the repeated attacks of the enemy. He said that fear is something that affects you during these types of situations.

"It's absolutely terrifying. The trick is to never show fear. It was the hardest thing to do, to keep cool," McGinty said. "You folks have a tougher war to fight. The enemy is more elusive than the ones that we had to fight."

Littrell and McGinty illustrated their experiences, but most of all they inspired servicemembers to remember that the work being done in Iraq and Afghanistan is not in vain.

Blackjack Ed Center

continued from pg. 11

"It was designed so you could do your homework, talk to your loved ones or just relax. There's no time limit."

Davis said he feels the education services available at the center are a great benefit for the Soldiers of LSA Anaconda.

"It gives them a place to go not only to study to accomplish their degree, but it's a place to relax," Davis said. "You've got a whole year out here. You might as well find a way to educate and keep your mind busy. You got to do everything you can to help yourself out."

Sgt. Benjamin English, an equipment operator with the 659th Engineer Company, is one of many Soldiers who have been taking advantage of the opportunity to advance their civilian educations.

"I think it's definitely a great opportunity to have this while we're over here. I did do one online course for Utah Valley State College while I was over here, an American Civilization class," English said.

English has also used the assistance offered to plan for his education once he returns stateside, he said.

"I've been making sure I was all registered for the spring semester, making sure I've got my tuition assistance set up," English said.

Jackson said he enjoys helping Soldiers like English advance their education. Jackson, a Reservist with the 35th Area Support Group, works as a high school principal at St. James High School in St. James, Mo.

"I get to keep doing what I do back home," Jackson said. "I get to work in education and help out Soldiers who need it." Jackson also stressed the importance of pursuing higher educational goals while deployed.

"They've got to take advantage of this while they can," he said.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Mikeworth

Spc. Jeremi Barber of the 659th Engineer Company takes a break from the day to use the Sgt. Matt Maupin Computer Lab located at the Blackjack Education Center.

Coalition questions reports of Duri's death

Armed Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 13, 2005 – Coalition forces continue the hunt for Izzat Ibrihim al-Duri, long-time Saddam Hussein associate, in spite of the latest Baath party announcement of his death, Multinational Force Iraq officials in Baghdad, Iraq, said today.

Coalition officials question the validity of the Baath party claim, officials said, and a reward of up to \$10 million remains for information leading to his capture or gravesite.

Conflicting reports have arisen regarding al-Duri. On Nov. 12, a Baathist Web site reported his death, but the site's author has made false claims in the past, officials noted.

Another Web site, also claiming to be associated with the former Baath Party, apologized for the false reporting of al-Duri's death and claimed that he is still alive.

Al-Duri remains the senior ranking fugitive among Saddam's former regime associates. Numerous reports indicate he is suspected to be in poor health and running out of hiding places and supporters willing to help him in northern Iraq, officials said.

Strong evidence exists that al-Duri's influence within the fragmented underground Iraqi Baath party leadership has rapidly diminished, officials said. They note that al-Duri is unable to maintain the visibility and contacts required to uphold loyalty among what little remains of his network and supporters.

Officials believe that al-Duri still has access to funds that he personally transferred to Syria, officials said. This money was looted from Iraq during the Saddam reign and now is being used to recruit and finance numerous insurgent attacks in Iraq, they said.

AROUND 3rd COSCOM



Photo by Spc. Spencer Case

And cut, and stretch, and breathe

A Latvian soldier works on a vehicle gun box at Camp Charlie, Nov. 10.



Photo by Spc. Spencer Case

Sexy XO

A Soldier from B-21st Infantry has an interesting nick name.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Monika Comeaux

Welding a new Iraq

Sgt. Alan D. Mendenhall from the 872nd Maintenance Company welds armor on an Iraqi police vehicle on 30 Sept., 2005.