

HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

Vol. 34 No. 9 Serving the U.S. Army community in Hawaii March 11, 2005

What's Inside



New OB/GYN Clinic

Conveniently located clinic cuts commute to Tripler.
A-10

Fort Shafter Library Hours

New hours are as follows:
Mon-Tue, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wed-Thu, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Fri, Sun, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Closed on Saturday.
Call 438-9521.



Spotlight on AMR

What's happening in your neck of the woods?
B-3

CIF Closure

Central Issue Facility is closed today to conduct an inventory. Normal operations will resume Monday, March 14. Emergency issues and turn-ins will be processed on a case-by-case basis. Call Kealii Kahanu at 655-2229 or 284-1457; Lowell Rose at 656-1405 or 284-2156. Also call DOL at 656-2402 for requests.



Dr. Seuss -A-Thon

Solomon Elementary hosts a reading extravaganza.
B-4

CommentaryA-2
BriefsA-4,B-2
Fair Weather Fighter A-7
Salerno DayB-1
VA Goes Worldwide .B-5
New HomesB-7

Military Hero

A Soldier's story about helping Afghanistan ensure a better future

By Journalist 1st Class (SW/AW)
Kristin Fitzsimmons,
USN Combined Joint Task Force 76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – October 2004 was a monumental time in history for Afghanistan citizens as their country held its first democratic elections. U.S. forces including Capt. Richard Joseph Ducote and his troops were on station helping make sure the Third World country voted in their first president.

At the time of the elections, Ducote was the Task Force Bronco Charlie 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. company commander. He and his Soldiers were running 24-hour operations on and off their post ranging from daily patrols to humanitarian assistance missions in the Uruzgan Province.

Within the last several days leading into the elections, Ducote and his troops encountered a handful of horrific events including one improvised explosive device attack, two ambushes and a rocket attack.

"Looking back on that time now, it was obvious that even though the Afghanistan presidential elections turned out to be successful ... there were still many (insurgents) who never wanted these elections to happen," Ducote said. "They certainly tried extremely hard to take out anyone who was aiding that process."



Courtesy photo
Capt. Richard Joseph Ducote

One mission required Ducote and several of his Soldiers to escort two village elders in a convoy to search for an insurgent's body in the area.

"The ambushes were quick. There was high-powered fire then all of a sudden there was an RPG attack and one of the RPGs struck my vehicle," Ducote said. "The explosion knocked me out for about a minute, and

After the firefight ended One lieutenant's story

By Sharee Moore
Acting Editor

An anti-tank platoon leader was on a mission to drop off Afghan electoral ballots when a rocket-propelled grenade slammed into the windshield.

The up-armored vehicle's windshield didn't break, but the added protection couldn't stop the roof from peeling away from the windshield, explained 1st Lt. Drew Sloan, formerly of 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry.

"The shockwave passed over the driver and passenger and smashed into my face," Sloan said.

A 30-minute firefight ensued between insurgents and nine other Soldiers including Capt. Richard Ducote, while Sloan faded in and out of consciousness.

The fighting grew intense as Sloan lay trapped inside the now

burning vehicle. The team was unable to call for help because they lost radio contact.

Spc. Joey Banegas, a gunner, pulled Sloan from the blistering humvee and after the small arms fire subsided, the 10 Soldiers crowded into the remaining vehicle to head for higher ground.

When the team rolled up to an Afghan militia compound, they were able to call in a medical evacuation helicopter which arrived two hours after the attack.

"The doctors were surprised I made it two hours!" Sloan said with a hint of a smile. After all, the blast broke every bone in Sloan's face except his eye sockets and nose.

He continued to lose a tremendous amount of blood, so doctors inserted a breathing tube so he wouldn't choke.

See "Lt. Sloan" Page A-11

when I came around I had shrap metal in my face."

Ducote didn't view the random pieces of metal lodged in his face as an obstacle, because he was still able to perform his duties. However, moments after he became fully aware of his surroundings Ducote realized he had a bigger problem because one of the village elders had been killed sometime during the

attack.

"In hindsight we realized that the village elder who died wasn't killed in the explosion, because he had a gunshot wound to the head," Ducote said. "This was a tough event for me to get past due to the village elder being killed on my patrol. And because village elders hold a high standing in their villages ... after that incident it was hard for the vil-

lage to want to help us again. But after a little time there was a bond of trust between the villagers and U.S. forces once again."

During the election process, Ducote and his Charlie 2-5 Company Soldiers were escorting Afghan citizens who were transporting ballots to Kandahar to be counted.

"Once again the insurgents didn't want these ballots to get back and be counted," Ducote said. "On the way back we encountered a severe ambush. The ambush was very close range with a lot of gunmen surrounding us. One of the RPGs hit the front vehicle in our convoy, which ended up severely injuring a lieutenant riding in the vehicle. We were trying to treat the lieutenant, who was slipping in and out of consciousness and fire back."

With one vehicle down, 10 Soldiers, one of which was injured, and no communications due to location piled into one vehicle in an attempt to make it to higher ground.

"We weren't still being shot at, but we all knew that the insurgents were still following us into the higher ground," Ducote said. "Once we were able to get down the road, communications came back up and we were able to request a medical evacuation for the lieutenant."

As Ducote talks about his experiences, he often compares his memories to watching a movie.

See "Military hero" Page A-11

Medics in the field

Soldiers from the 68th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) pull security at Kabul International Airport. (Read about their dangerous mission and unit award on page A-3.)



Spc. Harold Fields

Army Emergency Relief Campaign begins today

\$240,000

For more information about AER contact the campaign staff 1st Lt. Walter, Sgt Fowler or Sgt. Asetline at 655-2383 or e-mail aer-campaign@schofield.army.mil

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

The annual Army Emergency Relief Campaign opens today with a kick-off rally for commanders, project officers, and key leaders at the Nehelani Convention Center, Schofield Barracks.

The campaign has several purposes according to AER campaign coordinator, 1st Lt. Josh Walter. Although raising funds is the main priority, educating Soldiers about AER and its programs is equally important, he said.

"The AER campaign is very important to AER's ability to accomplish its

mission," stressed Walter.

"With no campaign, there would be no funds, and no AER."

This year's goal is \$240,000 up from last year's goal of \$100,000. Even with last year's lower goal and large numbers of deployed troops, contributions exceeded the goal by more than 100 percent. Walter is optimistic that this campaign, which ends April 14, will meet and exceed its goal as well.

So, what is AER? AER is a private, non-profit, non-government funded organization that exists solely to provide emergency financial assistance to Soldiers and their families. Since 1942, the organization has provided

more than \$905 million of assistance to 2.9 million Soldiers and their families.

AER is unique because it is a program funded by and for Soldiers. "Helping the Army take care of its own," AER's theme, means exactly that. Funds donated by active and retired Soldiers directly benefit Soldiers requesting assistance.

"With other organizations, you might never see a direct benefit; but with AER ... the Soldiers that fund it, are the Soldiers that use it," remarked Walter.

AER assistance is not exclusively

See "AER" Page A-11

The Hawaii Army Weekly welcomes letters and commentaries from readers. To submit call the editor at 655-4816 or e-mail editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.

The deadline for articles is the Friday prior to the week of publication. Send all articles in Microsoft Word or text format.

OPINION & COMMENTARY

The significance of our cause

Commentary

Lt. Col. Bobby Mundell
CTF Thunder, Deputy Commanding Officer

CTF THUNDER, Afghanistan - A few days before to my deployment to Afghanistan, I had an in-depth and insightful discussion with my 8-year-old son Jonathan pertaining to the mission here in Afghanistan and my participation in that cause. Our conversation was varied and included topics ranging from how long I would be gone, to where I would stay, what I would eat and what dangers I would face.

Just as many of you probably can attest to, some of my responses to his inquiries were relatively easy, while others required more contemplation to ensure effective communication. At the conclusion of our conversation, my son paused, looked me in the eyes and said, "I'm glad you are going, so we can be safe, but I'll miss you." His comments that day still provide inspiration and purpose for the execution of my duties here, but more importantly they place emphasis on the significance of our service and cause.

During this deployment I have had the opportunity to analyze the number of factors associated with the purpose of our cause not only here in Afghanistan, but throughout the world as we face the enemies of freedom in what I, and many others, have become comfortable in describing as a war of ideas.

One idea is founded on the thought that all humans are free to choose, and freedom provides hope for a better life. The other idea is founded on the idea of compliance through oppression, fear, intimidation, ignorance and deception. The latter uses religion in an attempt to legitimize it and garner support. The results of the freedom-based idea are evident in the courage displayed by both the Afghan and Iraqi populations during the recent successful elections that occurred in those nations.

When given the opportunity to choose, these citizens took that opportunity as opposed to being threatened and coerced into complying with those that seek to oppress hope and freedom. I have personally observed and witnessed the results of the alternative idea. These results are evident in the hopeless plight and oppression that up



Lt. Col. Bobby Mundell

to now have characterized the provinces and districts of regional command east.

But hope, is changing all of this. Fueled by the idea of freedom, oppression and hopelessness are being replaced with opportunities for economic prosperity, education, and basic sustenance. The conditions that are materializing here do not support the idea of oppression and without those conditions terrorism cannot flourish.

Through my analysis, personal experiences and association with the results of both ideas, the purpose of our cause here has become clearer. More importantly I have come to understand just what we, American servicemen and women, represent to the people of Afghanistan. We represent hope, we represent what our country was found

ed on, freedom. However, that is only half of the story.

On 9/11, the enemies of freedom inflicted great harm on the citizens of our nation. In doing so, however, they grossly miscalculated the will and strength of our nation. The horror of that day united us as a nation and provided us with the cause we serve.

While united in the horror and sorrow of that day, and basic need for security that remains a necessity still today, our nation is divided on a number of issues associated with the overall strategy we pursue. These issues range from budgetary concerns, to intelligence oversight, exit strategies and force structure. These issues divide us along political lines, age, socio-economic classes, and the list goes on.

Through all of this division, one driving factor that unites our country has been the trust and confidence our nation has displayed in us, the United States military. This trust, belief and confidence is evident in the crowds of well-wishers that greet us when we return from deployment, and those that bid us farewell as we depart for duty. It manifests itself in the numerous care packages sent to us by total strangers, and in the endless prayers submitted on our behalf to God on Sunday afternoons throughout America.

Many scholars and students of strategic planning define the strategic center of gravity associated with our cause as the will of the population and their continued support of the war on terrorism. This theory highlights the significance of our cause and service as decisive and a critical requirement that enables the center of gravity to maintain energy and effectiveness. In this we can find purpose, and our obligation, duty and cause becomes overwhelmingly significant. May our actions, character and service always positively represent our nation.

Soon, many of us will complete our tour of duty here. We will reunite with loved ones, friends and reintegrate ourselves into the society we serve. I encourage all of us to reflect on the thoughts conveyed in this article, and more importantly reflect on our participation in this cause. For those whose service here continues, my hope is that these thoughts provide you with purpose to continue your service. Above all, may we always remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in pursuit of our cause.

A proclamation: Women's History Month, 2005

Commentary

George W. Bush
President of the United States of America

During Women's History Month, we celebrate the achievements of our Nation's women. For generations, American women have helped build our great Nation through their leadership as writers, teachers, artists, politicians, doctors, and scientists, and in other professions. As mothers, daughters, and sisters, women have supported and strengthened American families and communities. Women are at the forefront of entrepreneurship in America, creating millions of new jobs and helping to build our Nation's economic prosperity.

We celebrate those who have broken down barriers for women, such as Jacqueline Cochran, who was the founder and director of the Women's Air Force Service Pilots during World War II and the first woman to break the sound barrier. Gerty Theresa Radnitz Cori was the first American woman to receive a Nobel Prize in the sciences, and her research significantly advanced the treatment of diabetes. In 1926, Olympic Gold Medalist Gertrude Ederle became the first woman to swim the English Channel. Marian Anderson, a Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, opened doors in music as the first African American to perform with the New York Metropolitan Opera. Juliette Gordon Low encouraged community service and the physical, mental, and spiritual development of America's young women as founder of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. As we work to advance freedom and peace and fight the war on terror, American women in uniform are serving at posts at home and across the world.

As we commemorate Women's History Month, I encourage all Americans to celebrate the extraordinary contributions and accomplishments of American women and to continue our progress in making our society more prosperous, just, and equal.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2005 as Women's History Month. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor the history, accomplishments, and contributions of American women.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentyninth.

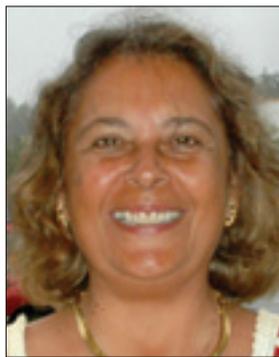
Voices of Lightning

March is Red Cross month. How has it benefited the world, the Army community or you?



"They provide for troops overseas through message services, notifications and emergencies for deployed Soldiers and their families."

Spc. Douglas Kelly
1st Bn. 25th Avn. Rgt.



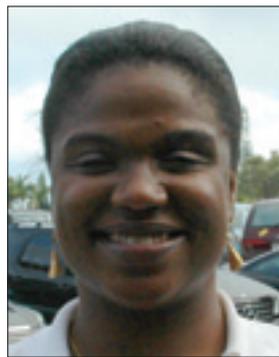
"In times of need the Red Cross is always there. When my mom was very sick, it was through the Red Cross that we had things arranged to go see her in Portugal."

Ana Despault
Family Member



"When my husband was supposed to deploy and I moved to California while I was 8 months pregnant, we called the Red Cross to notify his commander about the baby being born. He was able to come home as a result."

Alicia Johnson
Family Member



"By helping out the tsunami victims ... I read that they have contributed a lot of funds."

Sharene Davis-Hackett
Family Member



"They help during disasters like for the tsunami and stuff like that."

Staff Sgt. Aladin Villalobos
411th Eng. Combat Battalion



"Without the Red Cross we're at a loss, because they're important to all of us. They help everyone around the world."

Spc. Sinoe Orbe Danny
40th Quartermaster Co.

The Hawaii Army Weekly is an authorized newspaper and is published in the interest of the U.S. Army community in Hawaii.

All editorial content of the Hawaii Army Weekly is the responsibility of the U.S. Army, Hawaii Public Affairs Office, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii 96857. Contents of the Hawaii Army Weekly are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of the Army.

The Hawaii Army Weekly is printed by The Honolulu Advertiser, a private firm in no way connected with the U.S. Government,

HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

under exclusive written agreement with the U.S. Army, Hawaii.

The Hawaii Army Weekly is published weekly using the offset method of reproduction and has a printed circulation of 15,300.

Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital sta-

tus, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser is confirmed, the printer will refuse to print advertising from that source until the violation is corrected.

The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts and supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army, or The Honolulu Advertiser, of the firms, products or services advertised.

Commander
Col. Michael McBride
Public Affairs Officer
Capt. Kathleen Turner
Command Information Officer
Ed Aber-Song
Acting Editor
Sharee Moore
Staff Writers
Spc. Daniel Kelly
Joy Boiselle
Layout
Tony Vercelez

Editorial Office: 655-4816/8728
Fax: 655-9290

E-mail: e-mail the HAW direct at editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com or ed.aber-song@schofield.army.mil
Address: Public Affairs Office
Bldg. 580, Stop 215
Schofield Barracks, HI 96857

Web site:
http://www.25idl.army.mil/haw.asp
Advertising: 521-9111



Courtesy photo

A patient is loaded into a helicopter by 68th Med. Co. Soldiers. The unit received an award from the Army Aviation Association of America for Air/Sea Rescue of the Year for 2004.

68th Med. Co. honored for 'Rescue of the Year'

By Staff Sgt. Monica R. Garreau
17th Public Affairs Det.

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — the operations center of the 68th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) here received a mission to retrieve three Marine casualties following an attack by militants in Eastern Afghanistan in June 2004.

A wounded Marine was stranded near Forward Operating Base Asadabad, along with two killed.

Capt. John Hoffman, Chief Warrant Officer Jason Rayburn, Staff Sgt. Robert Ramirez and Staff Sgt. David Hernandez departed by helicopter immediately to evacuate the casualties.

Their actions during that mission earned the unit the Army Aviation Association of America Air/Sea Rescue of

the Year award.

They first stopped at FOB Asadabad for fuel before their mission. They picked up a Special Forces physician assistant to help their only medic, Ramirez.

Soon they left FOB Asadabad on the mission but were directed back because of confusion about the casualties' location. As they approached FOB Asadabad, a rocket-propelled grenade passed over the rotor blades, cleared the front of the AH-64 Apache helicopter serving as the MEDEVAC's escort and exploded 300 meters away. The explosion was immediately followed by more rocket and RPG fire directed at the base.

The crew finally received instructions to proceed with the mission, and soon located the casualties, but could not land due to the steep mountainous slope. The aircraft's

hoist lowered the medic and the PA. They bandaged the Marine's wound, placed him on a litter and hoisted him into the Blackhawk.

The priority was getting the wounded Marine stabilized, so the Blackhawk returned to FOB Asadabad, dropped off the patient for treatment and returned to retrieve the other personnel.

Meanwhile, the medic and PA climbed down the mountain in search of a suitable pick-up zone — at night.

The location found for pickup still wasn't ideal, but with the nose of the Blackhawk pointed toward the mountain and the rotor blades just two or three feet from the slope, the medic and PA adapted and overcame by climbing aboard the aircraft via the main landing gear.

"It was very hairy, but it was the only way we were going to get our guys back,"

said Hoffman, who was attached to the 68th Med. Co. from the 159th Medical

“ Every mission that we go on as MEDEVAC, you always try to prepare yourself for the situation. Get in the frame of mind that anything could go wrong. ”

- Staff Sgt. Robert Ramirez

Company (AA), Wiesbaden, Germany. "They were very happy to get back in the aircraft."

With Ramirez and the PA

back on board, the crew flew to a more suitable hoist-extraction point and picked up the two Marines killed in action. They returned to FOB Asadabad for a third refuel, dropped off the PA and picked up the stabilized Marine. After five grueling hours, the crew was finally able to make the hour-long flight back to Bagram and get their patient to the hospital.

When they returned, the crew began discussing the evening's events. Hoffman said they were excited about what they did before collapsing into an "immediate exhaustion."

"We were on an adrenaline rush for several hours," Hoffman said.

When it was all said and done, the crew logged six flight hours, with four of them under night vision, came under enemy fire and conducted multiple hoist extrac-

tions. "Every mission that we go on as MEDEVAC, you always try to prepare yourself for the situation," said Ramirez. "Get in the frame of mind that anything could go wrong. You always plan for the worst and expect the best. And that's exactly what happened."

"It was a very tough mission, but we kept our heads," said Hernandez.

All four crewmembers were awarded Air Medals with Valor device in addition to the unit Army Aviation award.

The award was given to the 68th Med. Co. in the form of a unit award. That's a testament to the fact that regardless of who had been on the mission that day last June, it would have been just as successful, said Rayburn.

"Anybody here could have done the same thing," agreed Hoffman.

Violent contacts down in Afghanistan, commander says

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Violent contacts between coalition forces and enemy fighters in Afghanistan are declining in number, a senior commander of forces there said today.

"Over the past year, the number of areas where the Afghan central government and international organizations classify or describe the environment as insecure has gone down dramatically," said Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, commander of Combined Joint Task Force 76 and

25th Infantry Division (Light) at a news conference in Kabul. Combined Joint Task Force 76 is a subordinate unit to Combined Forces Command Afghanistan. It is the operational military headquarters in the country.

"The number of contacts we have had, combat operations that we have had, and the number of casualties, both on the side of the coalition and the side that opposes the coalition, has gone down."

Olson said the security situation in Afghanistan has reached the point at which violent contact or

troops in contact situations are rare. Afghan security forces are now operating "much more freely in some of these areas that used to be very violent," he added.

"We are starting to experience nongovernmental organizations and international organizations and aid groups much more willing to go into many areas in Afghanistan than they were willing to before," he noted.

Olson said the more secure environment has enabled reconstruction projects to move forward. He said the coalition has spent millions of

dollars over the last year on new schools and government buildings, and on other construction projects throughout the country.

Nineteen provincial reconstruction teams are spread throughout Afghanistan and are "specifically dedicated to economic development and helping Afghanistan to reconstruct," he emphasized. "The PRTs are accepted very readily by the Afghan people and work very closely with Afghan governmental officials."

Such acceptance of the coalition by the Afghan people is perhaps the greatest accomplishment by the

coalition over the past year, Olson said. A recent poll revealed the popular support for the coalition now is at an "all-time high," he reported.

"I would say that personally speaking, as I reflect back on the year that I've spent as the commanding general of CJTF-76, that my own proudest accomplishment is the close connection we have established with the Afghan people and the bonds of friendship that have been formed, plus the cooperation with the institutions and organizations of the Afghan central government."

Briefs

Found Property

The following items have been found:

1. Four tires, Yokahama brand
2. Motorola hand held radio with an orange sticker on it.

Anyone who owns this property can contact the Evidence Custodian at 655-5170 or 655-2157 with a description of the property and specific information.

DFAS Changes Web Site Address

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service public Web site has changed from (www.dfas.mil) to www.dod.mil/dfas as of March 1.

Webmasters who link to the site or pages within the site should review their links and update them accordingly. The current site at <http://www.dfas.mil> will remain available until March 31. After that date, users will be redirected to the root level of the new site and direct links to pages at the previous site will generate an error message notifying users of the move.

American Red Cross

The American Red Cross Schofield Barracks Service Center is holding a class for Standard First Aid/Adult CPR Plus Child and Infant CPR. The classes are March 21, 23 and 24 from 6-9:30 p.m. The cost is \$39 and includes the book. To register for a class call 655-4927.

YMCA Babysitting Class

The Armed Services YMCA is offering a babysitter training class on March 22-23. This two-day program targets teenagers who babysit outside the home or look after siblings. It includes CPR and First Aid certification, age appropriate activities, and much more. The cost is \$40 and pre-registration is required. Please call 624-5645 for more information.

Free Square Dancing

The military is invited to free Community Square Dances on Saturdays beginning March 19 through April 2 at the Manana Community Park, Waimano Home Road, Pearl City from 7 - 9 p.m. New dancers will be introduced to the basic moves of this national folk dance. No experience is required. Singles, couples, families with teens are welcome. "Even real men can square dance." Admission is free. Casual attire suggested. Registration will be available for a new 10 week class beginning April 9. Contact Dave Lemon at 456-8465 for additional information.

Army Emergency Relief Fund Raiser

This year's campaign officially starts Friday. Voluntary contributions will be accepted from the Army community. Your contribution is important to individuals with emergency needs. AER key persons will contact Soldiers in units throughout Hawaii. Retirees will receive a request

On guard



Spc. Claudia K. Bullard

Members of a rifle squad from 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment keep watch over humanitarian supplies delivered by helicopter to a village in Zabol Province. The Afghan government is leading the effort to deliver the aid to villages cut off from food and medical assistance by heavy snows. International and Coalition forces are delivering the life-saving aid as Afghan government representatives provide information and coordination. (See more stories about 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt. on pages A-8 and A-9.)

for support by mail. Monetary donations are accepted at any time. For more information contact your unit AER Fund Campaign Project Officer or call 655-2383.

Free Tax Return Preparation

Schofield Barracks tax center, building 361 (in back of the museum), Mon - Wed, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m., Thu, 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m., and Fri, 9:30 - 4 p.m. Call 655-5144 for information.

Fort Shafter tax center, Aloha Center, building 330, Mon - Wed, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Call 438-2829. Tax preparers certified by the Internal Revenue Service.

The Hui O' Na Wahine Thrift Shop

The shop has clothes, furniture, toys, books and more. Moving or just have too much? Make some money by putting your items on consignment. Hours: Tue, Thur 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. First Sat 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Third Thur 3:30 - 7 p.m.

Consignments close at 12 p.m.

Located behind Army Community Service on Schofield Barracks. Call 624-3254 for information.

Change to Schofield Hui Luncheon

Monthly luncheon will be held at the Nehelani on Schofield Barracks March 17. Doors open at 10:30 a.m. for shopping and lunch will begin at 11 a.m. The Hui O' Na Wahine Thrift Shop will be presenting its annual Fashion Show at the luncheon. Come see models take to the catwalk wearing outfits all from the Thrift Shop! For reservations call Judi at 624-8242. Limited child care will be provided call Central Registration at 655-8313 to make a reservation. There will also be a silent auction featuring baskets donated by Schofield Barracks coffee groups. All proceeds will benefit the Hui O' Na Wahine's Scholarship and Welfare funds.

Writing Workshops

Novice and seasoned writers are welcome to attend Hawai'i Pacific University 8th Annual Ko'olau Writing Workshops on Saturday, March 12, from 8:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at HPU's windward Hawai'i Loa campus.

Albert Wendt, Pacific writer and editor and author of novels "Sons for the Return Home," "Leaves of the Banyan Tree," "Ola, Black Rainbow," and "The Mango's Kiss," will be the featured speaker. The event will feature workshop sessions in non-fiction, poetry, fiction, and scriptwriting.

Workshop facilitators include Hiyaguha Cohen and Courtney Kunimura for fiction and Tia Ballantine and Frederika Bain for poetry. The facilitators for non-fiction and scriptwriting have not yet been announced.

Participants will receive a free breakfast from 8:45 to 9:15 a.m. and free drinks during the lunch (brown bag lunch). A \$10 donation is requested, \$5 for students. Parking is free.

Donations will be accepted

at the door. HPU's windward campus is located at 45-045 Kamehameha Hwy., in Kane'ohe.

Foreign Service Officers Needed

Think you have what it takes to be a U.S. diplomat? Registration for the 2005 Foreign Service Written Exam is now open. The exam measures candidates' knowledge of the subjects necessary for performing the tasks required of foreign service officers.

The exam is free and is comprised of multiple-choice questions that cover such areas as the structure and workings of the U.S. government, psychology, American culture, management and finance. The exam includes a job knowledge section, an English usage section, a biographic inventory, and an essay exercise. Candidates must be U.S. citizens between 20 and 59 years old, and be available for worldwide assignment.

Visit www.careers.state.gov/officer/join/examinfo.html

A RADical way to find out about retirement

Army News Service

The Army has a RADical way for Soldiers, retirees and family members to get information on retirement benefits and much more. Retiree Appreciation Days, or RADs, are one or two-day gatherings held annually at major Army installations to bring retirees, Soldiers and their families, up-to-date information on the Army and on changes in retirement benefits.

RADs are put together by the installation Retirement Service Office, often with the help of the installation retiree council and other retiree volunteers. These events are a font of retirement information for retirees, Soldiers and family members, with guest speakers and displays covering topics such as health care, retired pay, Survivor Benefit Plan law changes, veterans' benefits, Social Security, military legal aid, and how retirees can continue to serve the

Army.

Many RADs include "county fairs" with health tests such as blood pressure and vision screening and representatives from numerous agencies, as well as special retiree events such as a dinner or golf tournament. The Exchange and commissary often get involved, conducting special sales and other retiree-related events.

Upcoming RAD for Schofield Barracks is April 30. Call the RSO at 655-1514 for more information.

for information on how to register and where to find the nearest testing center.

New Fort Shafter Chapel Service

The Wave is a new chapel service on Fort Shafter. It is committed to helping you find God's purpose in your life. Join the Wave on Sundays from 10 - 11 a.m. in the Fort Shafter Dining facility in building 503 B. Enjoy free coffee or soda, casual attire (shorts and flip-flops), we don't care what you wear - as long as it's clothes. Service is non-denominational in flavor. We are using newer Christian music to appeal to a younger crowd - Soldiers and families are welcome and encouraged to attend. We want to help Soldiers and families figure out what God has planned for their life. We are the only chapel service where you can eat during the service.

The University of Oklahoma offers a Master of Arts

Masters in Managerial Economics and a Master of Public Administration. Our Non-thesis programs can be completed in about 18 months. Our one week classes are very TDY and TAD friendly. Contact OU at 449-6364 or aphickam@ou.edu for more information or visit our Web site at www.gouou.ou.edu.

Free Sears Portraits

At any Sears Portrait Studio in the United States, military families can share their smiles free of charge with family and friends anywhere in the world, including overseas military bases (www.searsportrait.com/usa/). A locator on the Web site can help families find the closest studio location.

Families can share their portrait session with anyone who has Internet access. In addition, military families will receive a 20 percent discount on all in-studio and online portrait orders, which can be combined with any additional advertised or in-store portrait offers.

Financial Assistance From Schofield and Fort Shafter Hui

The Schofield Barracks Hui O' Na Wahine welfare grant committee will be accepting requests for funds from community organizations.

Include organization name, point of contact with phone number, the amount requested, project for which the funds will be used, and how the project benefits the community.

Requests must be post-marked by April 9. Funds will be distributed in May. Send requests to Hui O Na Wahine, Attention: Welfare Committee P.O. Box 861305, Wahiawa, HI 96786. Contact Robin Orner, 624-6979, with any questions.

For the Fort Shafter area Hui O Wahine, the deadline for requests is March 18, 2005. Distribution of Funds will take place after April 7.

For more information about the Fort Shafter Hui, contact Marcella Heilig at 833-1834, mail requests to Fort Shafter Hui O Wahine, Welfare Committee, c/o Marcella Heilig, Hale Ikena: Building 710, Fort Shafter, HI 96858.

Fort Shafter hosts community National Prayer Breakfast

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
Staff Writer

Soldiers and family members gathered at Fort Shafter's Hale Ikena March 4 to eat, share fellowship, and pray for Soldiers and families during a community annual prayer breakfast.

Although National Prayer Day isn't until May 5, Soldiers here and abroad and their family members got a head start.

Pfc. Savali Sunia, a 322 Civil Affairs Brigade mail clerk, said talking to God is important to her, and the breakfast is important for Soldiers.

"I think this is another great way to get Soldiers together, especially with all the things going on; like the war, or problems at home," Sunia said. You need something that will comfort you, help you strive for more, and become stronger, she added.

During the breakfast, participants joined in prayer for the United States, the military, families, rear detachments, as well as all those supporting the Global War on Terrorism.

Hawaii Lt. Gov. James R. Aiona, Jr. was the guest speaker at the event, and spoke about the importance of prayer and the accomplishments of Soldiers.

"I don't know about you, but I think prayer is awesome," Aiona said.

Aiona encouraged breakfast attendees by speaking about the power of hope in God through prayer.

"If you can hold your head up and smile ... you are unique to all those in doubt and despair," Aiona said. "For every minute you are angry, you lose 60 seconds of happiness."

Aiona called upon God to bless Soldiers, and thanked them for spreading freedom.

"We want to thank you for sparking the hope of



Soldiers bow their heads in prayer during the Fort Shafter Community National Prayer Breakfast March 4.

Spc. Daniel P. Kelly

freedom and the powers of liberty around the world," he said. "Over the last four years, over 50 million people have joined the ranks of the free ... (due to) your efforts and your sacrifices, and those of your fellow Soldiers."

In 1775 the first Continental Congress called for a National Day of Prayer, as did President Abraham Lincoln in 1863. Congress established an annual National Day of Prayer in 1952 through a joint resolution. President Harry S. Truman signed this resolution into law. President Ronald Reagan amended the law in 1988 and designated the NDP as the first Thursday in May.

Today, Soldiers across the United States celebrate this day through the National Prayer Breakfast.

Incidentally, Schofield Barracks held its National Prayer Breakfast at the Nehelani on Feb. 24. Aiona was the guest speaker at that event, as well.

Spc. Daniel P. Kelly

Volunteers serve up a buffet-style breakfast at the National Prayer Breakfast at the Hale Ikena on Fort Shafter March 4.



CTF Thunder ready for enemy fair weather fighters

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
CTF Thunder Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan – As the temperatures gradually begin to rise and the snow starts melting here, militants are expected to resume attacks.

Historically, fighters take respite during Afghanistan's harsh winters and reemerge in the spring with a brief increase in attacks.

In the last few weeks, several people claiming to be Taliban spokesmen have called media outlets to let them know they will launch their "spring offensive" when the weather gets better.

However, these fair-weather fighters shouldn't expect to catch the coalition on their heels this year, said Maj. Duke Davis, operations officer for Combined Task Force Thunder at Forward Operating Base Salerno in Khost province.

"We've already experienced the attacks, and anything that they launch at us, we'll be ready to address," Davis said.

Compared to near zero level of activity during the winter, Davis said any event or attack is going to seem like an increase, but he certainly doesn't expect an overwhelming offensive.

Instead, he expects a small increase in low-level attacks, but thinks the enemy is banking on a historical trend and perhaps even a bit of hope that their forces are going to come out and conduct major attacks when the warm weather comes.

"But I'm not so sure their message and their threats are associated with any distinct capabilities that they've shown," Davis said.



Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment patrol through Wurjana, Afghanistan, in northeast Paktika Province in January after more than a foot of snow fell on the region.

"They're making those statements perhaps in hope, and based on trends, that their insurgent fighters are actually going to come out and do that. I certainly would not give credit to an overarching operational or strategically coordinated action."

Task Force Thunder is still conducting its own "winter offensive,"

Operation Thunder Freedom, which was developed to exploit the success of last year's presidential election. The operation's intent was to stay active throughout the winter against the enemy, and continue training the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police so they are more able to address enemy attacks themselves in the spring.

"There's a lot of emphasis on what the enemy is going to be able to do, but I will tell you that the ANA and ANP, in conjunction with U.S. forces, are set and our capabilities are greater than they've ever been," Davis said. "This enemy is going to do what they typically do, which is increase attacks in the spring, but they're going to run into an ANA and an

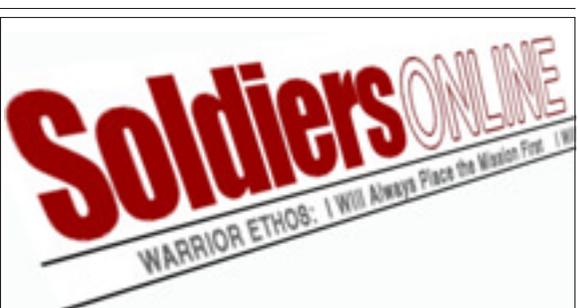
ANP force that is much more capable of addressing those threats on their own feet, let alone with assistance from the U.S."

Unlike the enemy, U.S. and coalition service members continued operations throughout the winter, no matter the weather.

Between their fear of the cold and their tactics, Sgt. Orlando Arocho, a squad

leader with Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, said he doubts the fortitude of the enemy fighters.

Even if the enemy does reemerge from its hibernation and attack, their abilities are questionable. After all, staying indoors for several months probably hasn't helped their war fighting skills.



Soldiers Online debuts this week

An enhanced information source featuring news, features, career links and more

By Eric W. Cramer
Army News Service

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Soldiers Online will become available Thursday after its debut at the World Wide Public Affairs Seminar this week in Tyson's Corner, Va.

The new Web site's on-line address is: www.army.mil/soldiers.

Gil High, editor-in-chief for "Soldiers Magazine," said the on-line version will augment the popular print version of the magazine.

"It will be the non-stop source for Soldiers information – news, features, what they need to do for their career, their family and anything else they need to know," High said.

He said the online Soldiers can be accessed through Army Knowledge Online as well as through most Army-related Web sites.

"You should be able to click on an icon that looks like the cover of the magazine and be taken to the on-line version," High said.

He said the on-line Soldiers will be different from the print publication, although the print version and its archives will be available on line.

"On-line, we'll have daily updates, a new feature each day, from commands throughout the Army, from Moral, Welfare and Recreation, Army News Service and other organizations," High said.

"It will also link to items of career interest. Our goal is to have it link to things of interest to Soldiers."

He said the archives will also contain "Hot Topics" and other specialty publications printed under the Soldiers aegis.

With all this data, one could ask why the printed version will be retained. "The printed product is something people still enjoy," High said. "Not only that, but not all readers will have access to the Internet."



Courtesy photo

A coalition Chinook helicopter touches down so coalition forces can offload pallets of food to Afghan citizens in the Zabul Province. Coalition forces and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development have worked closely with organizations like the U.S. Agency for International Development, the World Food Program and the Red Crescent to deliver thousands of tons of food to Afghan citizens in Zabul.

Cacti Battalion leads humanitarian effort

Capt. Todd A. Schmidt
Combined Task Force Bronco

QALAT, Afghanistan – In the heart of Southern Afghanistan, in the last remaining bastions of Taliban insurgents, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry (Cacti) is making an ever increasing impact in winning the trust and confidence of the Afghan people.

Winter conditions are extreme in the higher altitudes of Zabul Province. Snowfall is at record highs, with accumulation in some areas as high as twenty feet. The result is a growing humanitarian crisis.

“We have seen more snow and rain in the past three weeks than we have seen in seven years,” stated the Provincial Governor, Muhammad Husseini, “The water is good, but it threatens the safety of the people.”

Stranded travelers, nomadic tribal groups, and displaced civilians are facing

harsh winter conditions that they did not anticipate. Villages are stranded, roads are closed, and communication is a challenge. With the help of the Cacti Battalion however, the Afghan people see rays of hope.

In a combined effort with the Afghan National Army, Capt. James Moyes, Bravo Company Commander, ensured that several hundred stranded civilian received food, fuel, blankets, medical supplies and shelter tents along Highway 1, commonly referred to as “Ring Road.”

Charlie Company, led by Capt. Michael Berdy, helped facilitate the delivery of over 53 tons of humanitarian assistance supplies to more remote districts and villages cut-off from the Provincial capital.

“Through direct support from agencies such as the central government, United States Agency for International Development, the World Food Program, and

many others, our Soldiers are able to provide the necessary food and medical supplies needed,” said Maj. Joseph Walsh, executive officer for the battalion.

On Feb. 13, the governor toured several districts by helicopter with battalion commander, Lt. Col. Scott McBride. In two severely affected districts, Mizan and Shajoy, more than 80 tons of humanitarian supplies were delivered to district leadership officials for distribution to villages throughout each district.

“Hundreds of tons of supplies are coming in daily and will be delivered regardless of how long it takes,” McBride said.

Winning Afghan trust and confidence is crucial Walsh said, “Fighting this war takes on many forms. We defeat the enemy with more than just guns and bullets. Today, we are defeating insurgents with our humanitarian assistance efforts.”



Citizens of the Khaki Afghan village in Zabul carry away sacks of food from a humanitarian assistance food drop. Soldiers with the “Cacti” Battalion – 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. – and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development have played a major role in identifying villages and provinces most in need of relief through the worst Afghanistan winter in decades.

Courtesy photo



Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl

Spc. Jorge Cuevas of 2nd Bn. 35th Inf. Rgt. and an Afghan man carry a bag of beans to distribute to the citizens of Southern Afghanistan's Khak Afghan. The extreme winter has left many of the villagers with little or no food.

Humanitarian assistance coordinated through work of many forward assets

By Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl
17th Public Affairs Det.

FIREBASE LAGMAN, Afghanistan - in February, the "Cacti" Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment, distributed tons of food to the citizens of Southern Afghanistan, helping them survive one of the country's worst winters in recent history.

While Operation Bear's Paw might have seemed simple to the casual observer, many Soldiers spent as many as 16 hours a day ensuring the mission went off without a hitch.

"There are so many different moving parts to this operation," said Maj. Eric Barker, 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt., civil affairs officer. "The entire task force is really working toward getting the Afghans food."

The operation began in early February, when the Soldiers started noticing traffic jams - one lasting three days, said Barker.

Soon, reports came in about problems throughout the region. Many Afghans were snowed in, unable to get the food they needed to survive.

"The weather has been really bad," said Barker. "This is the most precipitation this region has had in seven years."

As a result, vehicles were unable to pass in or out of certain areas to deliver food.

One "vehicle" able to get to many of the stranded vehicles, however, is the CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

Nearly every day, teams of Soldiers at Kandahar Airfield and Firebase Lagman loaded pallets of food - rice, beans, flour and peanut oil - into the

back of helicopters and distributed them to Afghans in need.

This required coordination for receiving the food, coordination for the aircraft and coordination with the village elders.

"Every day one of us is meeting trucks at the gate," said Spc. Kyle C. Clanton, a civil affairs Soldier with 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. Rgt. "Then, myself and a team of Soldiers download the food from the truck into a conex."

The trucks carried food that was either purchased in Kandahar or donated by World Food Program, a non-profit organization that helps people in need.

The next step was for the Soldiers to build the pallets. About 10 pallets were built each day. Each pallet contained enough food to feed several families of 10 for 30 days - enough to get them through the worst of the winter conditions.

The pallets were loaded onto the helicopters with a forklift. Four pallets fit on one helicopter, enabling the pilots to make multiple rounds. As the helicopter emptied, they continued to pick up full pallets and the infantrymen who distributed them.

"The line Soldiers are the ones who actually help download the pallets at the villages and distribute the supplies," said Clanton.

The teams visited about six villages each day. With the day's deliveries complete, they returned to either Kandahar or Firebase Lagman, where the process began again. It will continue until the weather has improved enough for the Afghans to reach their own food sources.

Convenient care closer to home for women with uncomplicated pregnancies

By Kirsten Tacker
Contributing Writer

Situated inside newly renovated building 680 on Schofield Barracks is the new Tripler Army Medical Center Obstetrics/Gynecology and Pediatric Clinic.

Opened as of Feb. 2, services are currently available for patients with uncomplicated pregnancies until week 40. Eventually, the clinic will expand its services.

"The purpose of the clinic is to provide care to the families that are enrolled at Tripler, but to bring the care closer to home," stated Lt. Col. Patricia A. Wilhelm, officer in charge and head nurse of the clinic.

The clinic's hours of operation are from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The whole idea behind the new facility is the hope that people will no longer go to outside providers other than the military.

"We want to bring them back into the military and in order to do that we need to beef up facilities where they are [located]. We are bringing it closer to home. It is a convenience factor," stated Wilhelm.

The intent is to transition patients from driving all the way down to TAMC to see a pediatrician.

More importantly stated Wilhelm, "To me the biggest kicker has to be patient satisfaction and the convenience factor."

The convenience is not only in the location but also the features the clinic provides. Equipped with lactating rooms, immunizations, ultrasound machine, waiting rooms, conference room, monitor rooms and more.

"We are like a satellite clinic for TAMC pediatric clinic," Wilhelm said.

Child birth classes and various other classes will be held in the conference room in the future.



Kirsten Tacker

Susan Glass, family nurse practitioner, gives Jayme Lively an exam during her appointment at the new OB/GYN and Pediatric clinic on Schofield Barracks March 8. The clinic is located in building 680 and is available for women with uncomplicated pregnancies up to 40 weeks gestation.

A program through the school system, called Augmentation of Special Needs Services and Information to Students and Teachers (ASSIST) will evaluate

students here to identify their special needs.

Another program accessible to people enrolled in TAMC, will be a program to assist families with

deployment issues.

As their population of patients increase the staff will increase accordingly.

The clinic easily located to the

right of the Schofield Barracks Troop Medical Clinic saves mothers a long drive.

To make an appointment, call 433-6697, ext. 1.

Military discharges due to homosexual policy continue to drop

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Military discharges based on the Pentagon's homosexual conduct policy have dropped to their lowest rate since 1996 and make up a small fraction of unprogrammed separations, according to Department of Defense officials.

David S.C. Chu, undersecretary of defense for manpower and personnel, released the statistics in response to a Government Accountability Office report charging the DoD policy strips the military of troops trained in critical skills and costs millions of dollars to recruit and train replacement troops.

The report, released Feb. 23, traced servicemembers separated from the military since fiscal 1994, when the then-Clinton administration implemented the so-called "don't ask, don't tell" policy, through fiscal 2003. During that period, the report noted that 9,500 military members were discharged under the policy.

Of that total, 770 were discharged in 2003, the lowest

rate since 858 were discharged in 1996.

Pentagon officials said the number continued to drop by another 15 percent in fiscal 2004, to 653. They pointed out that since Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the discharge rate has consistently dropped and now stands at nearly one-half the 2001 number, 1,227.

According to the GAO report, some 8 percent of the troops separated for homosexual conduct through 2003 held critical occupational skills that qualify for selective re-enlistment bonuses. Almost one-third of that group - 322 servicemembers - had foreign language skills in Arabic, Farsi or Korean, the report said.

The costs of these separations are not clear, because DoD does not collect data about administrative costs associated with the separations. However, the GAO report estimated that over the 10-year period covered in the report, the cost to recruit replacements could feasibly have run as high as \$95 million, calculated in 1994 dollars. Training costs for those replacements was estimated

at \$48.8 million for the Navy, \$16.6 million for the Air Force and \$29.7 million for the Army.

In the DoD response to the report, Chu noted the relatively low discharge rate based on the homosexual conduct policy, which makes up about 10 percent of unprogrammed separations for the period covered in the report. Far higher, he pointed out, is the discharge rate based on factors such as drug use, serious offenses, failure to meet weight standards and pregnancy and parenthood issues.

The report noted that passing the statute that implemented DoD's homosexual conduct policy, Congress "indicated that because of the unique nature of military life, the military services may need to treat individuals who engage in homosexual acts, as defined by the statute, differently than they would be treated in civilian society."

DoD "seeks to implement the federal statute concerning homosexual conduct in the military in a fair manner, treating every servicemember with dignity and respect," Chu said in response to the report.

Artillerymen show coalition presence

FOB Tiger Soldiers conduct patrols through Southern Afghanistan

Story and photo by
Spc. Dijon Rolle
17th Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE TIGER, Afghanistan – A convoy of up-armored vehicles maneuvered through the mountainous terrain blanketing Southern Afghanistan.

In the vehicles were Soldiers from Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment. The group conducts daily presence patrols throughout their area of operations near Forward Operating Base Tiger.

“We’re out here to provide a presence for the coalition,” said 2nd Lt. Edward Harrison, the Btry. C fire direction officer.

“We’re here to help, and this is one way that we can express this to the people, by being out, talking to them and assisting them with the resources we have available.”

The Soldiers often stop by the neighboring villages to speak with residents. The informal chats are a way for both sides to communicate face-to-face.

“The people are happy because they have a voice,” said Jawid, one of the interpreters who often accompanies the Soldiers. “For the first time, they can express their concerns, their thoughts openly.”

“It is a good thing the patrols are coming through here and the coalition is making this effort,” he said.

Another benefit of this type of mission is the opportunity for route reconnaissance.

“We’re always looking for new



2nd Lt. Edward Harrison, the Btry. C, 3rd Bn., 7th FA Rgt., fire direction officer, shares a laugh with a village elder during a presence patrol through Shawli Kot District in Southern Afghanistan.

ways to get from one point to another,” said Harrison. “We can use this information and pass it on to the units coming after us.”

The artillerymen’s primary mission is to be a force protection asset for the base. The group has seen a lot during this deployment and daily missions like these help them understand why their jobs are so important.

“It kind of opened my eyes more when I saw the conditions some of the villagers were living in and some of the problems they have to deal with,” said Spc. Bryan Young, a Btry. C cannon

crew member.

“You take a lot for granted,” he said.

The artillery Soldiers say that while they’ve had to endure their fair share of bad weather, equipment problems and other challenges, they’ve remained focused on accomplishing their mission.

“We’re field artillery Soldiers, but we had to take on different roles here – infantry, MPs,” said Staff Sgt. Leondra Felder, a Btry. C section chief.

“Yet, we came out here, did what we needed to do and made

it happen. We deal with things as they come,” he said. “Whether it’s a flat tire, weather, whatever, you adapt and overcome – the mission doesn’t stop.”

The mission hasn’t stopped for the Soldiers, but they look forward to wrapping up their year-long deployment in the next few months.

“Safety and teamwork are at the forefront of every operation (we) conduct,” said Harrison. “We want everyone to leave Afghanistan the same way they came – combat ready.”

Lt. Sloan

From A-1

“I woke up in Walter Reed on Oct. 14, I got hurt Oct. 10 and had surgery on [Oct. 20],” recounted Sloan.

This was a 16-hour surgery where his jaws were wired shut and his upper sinus removed. Sloan was discharged Nov. 15.

Sloan cheated death a third time when a check up revealed a tear in his brain. Emergency surgery corrected the problem.

Despite the emotional and physical battering, Sloan doesn’t hold any grudges.

“I didn’t get hurt doing something I didn’t think was important, so I’m not bitter toward the infantry, the Army, or even the Afghan people. It was just something that happened – I wish it didn’t happen – but I’m not angry or bitter about it,” Sloan stated.

After doctors discharged Sloan from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 2004, he has been selected to serve as the incoming 25th Infantry Division (Light) deputy commander’s aide-de-camp.

Sloan faces a year of dental surgeries, each one a potential reminder of what he’s had to overcome. Still he chooses to “Stay Army.”

“For one, I went to West Point and the American people paid for my education and I committed to doing at least 5 years of service, Sloan explained.

“There is nothing medically wrong with me now to cause me to get out of the military and not fulfill the obligation I made,” he stated matter-of-factly.

Some might say facing death builds character. Sloan disagrees.

“I had character. I didn’t need an RPG to provide me with any more!” He said with a chuckle.

“The only good thing about this whole experience is I got to spend more time with family than I ordinarily would have.

“But, I’m not happy to be back, I’d rather be in Afghanistan,” he emphasized.

(Editor’s Note: Banegas lost his leg to an IED four days after pulling Sloan from the burning humvee. The same blast killed Sloan’s section sergeant, Staff Sgt. Brian Hobbs and a Company C Soldier, Spc. Kyle Fernandez.)

A medic also from Co. C, Spc. Jeffrey Guerin, lost most of his eyesight and Sgt. 1st Class Helbert Izquierdo was also injured. Banegas and Guerin are both still at Walter Reed undergoing rehabilitation. Izquierdo is a member of the 2nd Bn., 5th Inf. rear detachment.)

AER

From A-1

for the active duty Soldier. Retirees, spouses with power of attorney, activated National Guard, Reservists, widows and children of deceased Soldiers are all eligible to apply for emergency financial assistance.

In 2004, 550 U.S. Army

Hawaii Soldiers and families received more than \$365,000 in AER loans and grants. Assistance ranged from pay problems, funeral expenses, emergency travel, rent, car issues, and food needs.

From a leader standpoint, Walter pointed out that AER is a great resource for commanders to help Soldiers in emergencies. “In

some cases, commanders refer the Soldier to AER and they are able to get same day assistance,” he said. “It’s another way commanders can take care of their Soldiers.”

Requesting AER assistance has never been easier explained Jackie Torres, assistant AER officer. Soldiers contact Army Community Service to

schedule an appointment. A counselor determines what documentation the Soldier needs to substantiate the request. If a criterion for assistance is met, a same day check can be issued to the Soldier, said Torres.

We are here to help the Soldier and the process is confidential, she added.

To ensure the campaign’s success, more than

150 key unit personnel attempt to contact every Soldier assigned to their units. Additionally, Walter and his team will mail more than 6,000 donation request letters to retirees in Hawaii.

Walter reflected on the importance of giving to this year’s campaign.

“Everyone comes across an emergency in their life.

This organization provides directly for those times when Soldiers and their families need help the most,” he concluded.

(Editor’s Note: For information on the annual AER campaign, contact 1st Lt. Walter at 655-2383 or via email at aercampaign@schofield.army.mil. For AER assistance, contact ACS at 655-2400.)

Military hero

From A-1

“I thought about the situations weeks later once I was out of that environment and it seemed slightly surreal to me,” Ducote said. “From day one of basic training U.S. Soldiers are trained to play his or her role in the movie. And everyone gets their chance to do their part. And for me and the Soldiers in my company this was our part.”

Several months later in Bagram, Ducote

stood in front of a roomful of his peers and was awarded the Bronze Star with V device and the Purple Heart for his efforts by Combined Joint Task Force 76 Commanding General Eric T. Olson.

“I was flattered to be awarded in that manner,” Ducote said. “It really did mean a lot to me to not only be recognized for simply doing my job, but to be awarded by Maj. Gen. Olson in front of my peers and friends was definitely one of the biggest highlights to my career.”

Civil military focused exercise Balikatan 2005 ends with ceremony in Laguna.

By Lt. Col. Mark Zimmer and
JOC(SW/AW) Terry L. Rhedin

CALAMBA, Philippines – Balikatan 2005 wrapped up a very successful combined exercise with a ceremony at the Exercise Directorate Headquarters here. The 21st annual exercise was a bilateral, multi-service event, with a focus on humanitarian and civic assistance. Members from the U.S. Armed Forces worked side by side with their Armed Forces of the Philippines counterparts on 11 Medical Civic Action Projects, an Engineering Project adding five classrooms to a school and a farm-to-market road. In the spirit of cooperation, the construction site preparation funding and materials were donated by the local government and volunteers.

During the medical projects, conducted first in the typhoon impacted area of Quezon and then in Laguna province, more than 23,000 patients were treated, medical supplies worth more than \$100,000 were distributed, and more than 1,000 animals were examined by the military medical professionals from the U.S. and the Philippines. Working shoulder to shoulder, U.S. and AFP engineers built five new classrooms for an overcrowded school in San Buenaventura and completed a 1.2 kilometer road that's a vital economic link in the town, on budget and ahead of schedule.

"The biggest success of this year's Balikatan is the learning, interoperability and cooperation shown while working shoulder-to-shoulder every day between the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines from the AFP and U.S.," said Maj. Gen. Stephen Tom, exercise co-director and deputy commander of U.S. Army Pacific.

The exercise improved combined planning of U.S. and Philippine military forces. It also demonstrated U.S. resolve, consistent with the mutual defense treaty and visiting forces agreement, as the U.S. continues its commitment to train, advise and assist the government of the Philippines.

Approximately 300 U.S. personnel and 550 Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel participated in this year's exercise. Balikatan 2005 was rewarding to the people impacted in Laguna and Quezon. The 21st bilateral exercise also demonstrated the value of interoperability, increased the capability and strengthened the working relationships of the two armed forces.

Exercises like Balikatan 05 and on-going security assistance programs in the Philippines bring enhanced capacity to counter threats from terrorist groups as well as being better equipped to respond to future natural and manmade disasters.



U.S. Army Pacific Deputy Commander Brig. Gen. Stephen Tom and Deputy Chief of Staff for plans and programs Maj. Gen. Romeo Alamillo prepare to retire the Exercise Balikatan 2005 colors by furling the flag. The colors were retired during the closing ceremony for the exercise.

Sgt. Vince Oliver



Salerno Day brings service members together in competition

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
CTF Thunder Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan – Service members here got a break from the daily grind March 5 to participate in a day of sporting events.

Dubbed “Salerno Day,” the event included competitions in basketball, volleyball, weight lifting, soccer, horseshoes, dominoes, tug-of-war, as well as a stress shoot competition and an iron man and iron woman competition.

The event was designed to allow all the Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen here to get together for one day and enjoy friendly competitions and build esprit de corps, said Sgt. Maj. Eugene Brewer, operations sergeant major for Combined Task Force Thunder.

“It was a good relaxing day,” Brewer said at the conclusion of the day. “Everybody got to wear PTs and do some hooah events.”

Marine Staff Sgt. Ignacio Ramirezlazos, a member of Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment thought it was a great event.

“It was good to get a break from work and be able to enjoy ourselves,” he said.

“I work the night shift, so it’s great to be out here and be out of the office.”

In addition to being able to relax a bit and escape the monotony of every-

day life on the FOB, was also a chance for people who normally don’t associate with one another to hang out a little.

“How often does the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines all compete on the same pitch downrange?” Asked Air Force Master Sgt. John Knipe, a tactical air controller with the 25th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron.

“A lot of people in the Navy don’t talk to a lot of people in the Air Force, and a lot of people in the Air Force don’t talk to a lot of Marines,” Knipe added. “So, this is a real unique day for people to speak to other branches of service and find out some things about another branch that you might have never known.”

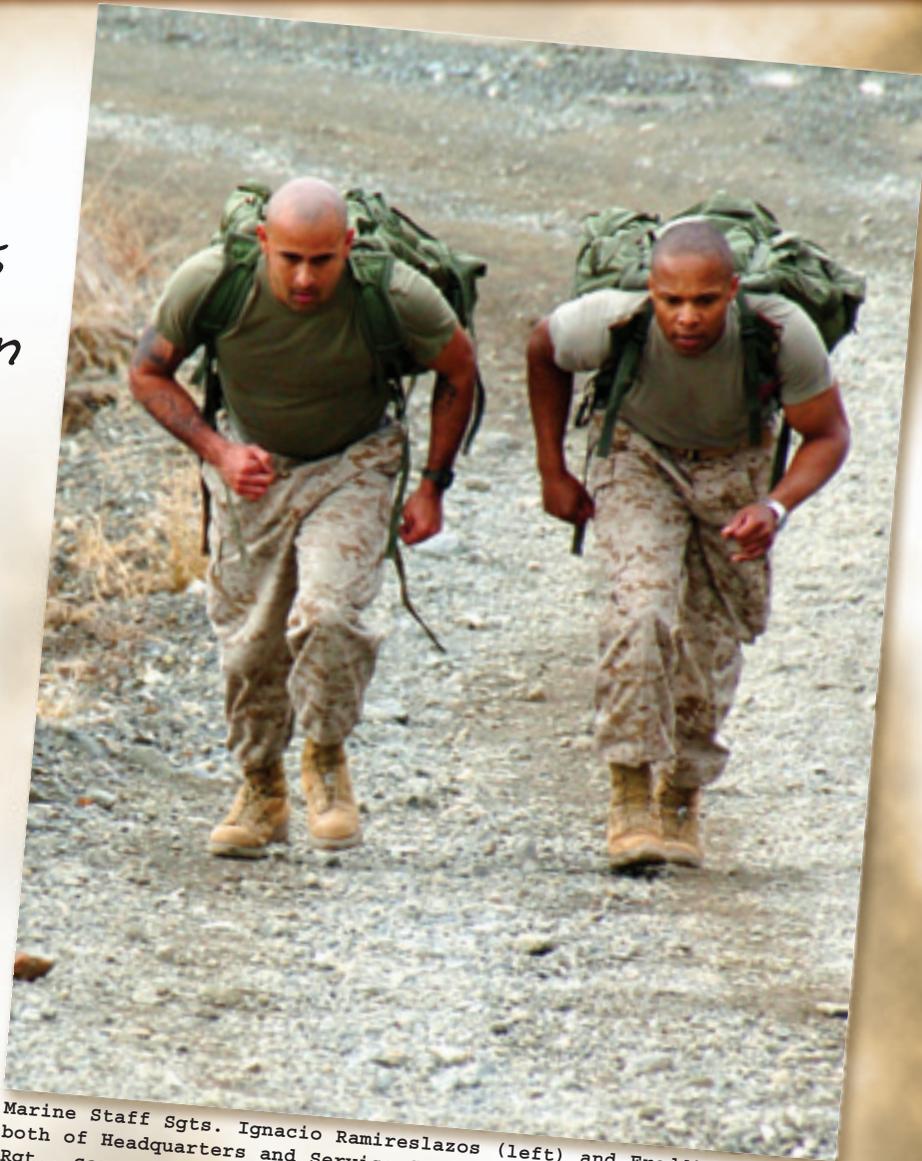
Knipe competed in the iron man competition, and although he finished 14th out of 45, he thinks age played a factor.

“I’m 39, so if there was a 39 and over category, I’d be a winner,” he said.

Brewer lauded everyone who competed, especially those who took part in the iron man and iron woman competitions.

“The iron man and iron woman competition was a true testament to intestinal fortitude,” he said. “They dug it out five miles, with four events in between – rigorous, testing events.”

Following the competitions, there was an awards ceremony and all winners received certificates and commanders coins.



Marine Staff Sgts. Ignacio Ramireslazos (left) and Freddie Scott, both of Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Rgt., carry 80-pound ruck sacks up Radar Hill during the iron man competition at Salerno Day March 5 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.



Army Spc. Miranda Thibodaux, a member of the 546th Maintenance Company, Fort Polk, La., competes in the power lifting competition during Salerno Day March 5 at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

Marine Cpl. Joseph Walters, a member of Headquarters and Service Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Rgt., flips an LMTV tire during the iron man competition.



Army Capt. Jay Luckritz, a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Combined Task Force Thunder (center), battles with two Soldiers from Battery F, 7th Field Artillery Regiment during a soccer game.



This Week at the MOVIES

SGT. SMITH THEATER

Today
Hide and Seek
7 p.m. (R)

Saturday March 12
Hide and Seek
7 p.m. (R)

Sunday March 13
Alone in the Dark
7 p.m. (R)

Monday March 14
Closed

Tuesday March 15
Closed

Wednesday March 16
Closed

Thursday March 17
Alone in the Dark
7 p.m. (R)

HICKAM AFB MOVIE SCHEDULE

Today
The Wedding Date
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Saturday March 12
The Wedding Date
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Sunday March 13
Phantom of the Opera
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Monday March 14
Closed

Tuesday March 15
Closed

Wednesday March 16
Phantom of the Opera
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Thursday March 17
The Wedding Date
7 p.m. (PG-13)

Family Fun Fest and ITR Travel Fair – Enjoy food, fun, entertainment and travel information for the whole family on March 26, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., Sills Field, Schofield Barracks. Children events include fun runs, inflatables, rides, activities, crafts, pictures with the Easter bunny and more. Check out travel deals offered by a variety of local businesses and hourly door prizes. Entertainment provided by the Polynesian Cultural Center, as well as demonstrations of magic, Irish dance, karate and more. Fun run schedule is: 9 a.m., 50 yards, age 2 and under; 9:15 a.m., 100 yards, ages 3 and 4; 9:30 a.m., 800 yards, ages 5 and 6; 9:45 a.m., one mile, ages 7 and above. Visit www.mwrarmy-hawaii.com for information and schedules or call 655-0110 or 655-0112.

Salute the Troops Concert Series – Coming in April to the Tropics, building 589, Schofield Barracks. Enjoy free, live, local entertainment, drink specials, and food from MacGregor's Market. Event sponsored by JN Chevrolet. Call 655-0002.

Free Salsa Lesson – Free salsa lesson, March 24, 5:30 – 7 p.m. at the Health and Fitness Center, Schofield Barracks. Salsa classes offered in April on Thursdays, 5:30 – 7 p.m. for \$25 a month. Call 655-8007.

Pure Gold Dance Team Performance – The dance team will perform at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks, March 19, 7 p.m. Call 655-

0002 for information.

Yu-Gi-Oh Tournament – March 12, 2 p.m., Yu-Gi-Oh Tournament for all ages. Registration at 1 p.m. Cost is \$6 and includes Yu-Gi-Oh merchandise. Prizes awarded. For information, call 655-8522.

Spouses Night Out – Only offered at Schofield Barracks Army Community Service, March 17, enjoy a foot pampering session, bring a friend, and win a prize! Enjoy a free pizza dinner. March 24, learn tips for instant relaxation and discover how hypnotherapy can help you. Presenter is Maria Endler. Call 655-2736 to sign up. MWR Blue Star Card holders receive free child care from 6 - 9 p.m. by reservation only at Peterson Child Care Center. Call 655-3929 by noon of the Tuesday before each Thursday event to make child care reservations. Reservations can be made two weeks in advance. Call 655-2400 for information.

Richardson Pool is Open – Richardson Pool on Schofield Barracks is open. Hours are: Mon – Fri, active duty physical training, 6 – 8 a.m., open swim, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Open swim on weekends from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Call 655-1128 for information.

Blue Star Card Program Closing – The Blue Star Card Program for spouses of deployed Soldiers will end as Soldiers redeploy. Operation Iraqi Freedom cards, those with a blue background, are valid until March 31. Operation Enduring Freedom

cards, yellow background, are valid until April 30. The program will continue for units returning after this date. Program end date will be publicized. Green background cards issued for the 29th Infantry Brigade and the 100th and 442nd Infantry Regiments are valid through 2006. Visit your Installation Access Pass Office to receive your Blue Star card. Call 438-0572 or 655-1620.

Sgt. Yano Library Day Closure – The Sgt. Yano Library, Schofield Barracks will be closed on March 20 for quarterly carpet cleaning. Call 655-8002.

"Miss Saigon" – Fort Shafter's Richardson Theatre presents "Miss Saigon," a classic love story of an American Soldier and Vietnamese girl. Performances held Friday and Saturday, final performances on March 18, and 19, curtain at 7:30 p.m. Adult tickets, \$25 and children under 12, \$17. Adult subject matter not recommended for children under 12. For tickets, visit the box office Mon – Fri, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Or, call 438-4480.

Easter Sunday Brunch at Hale Ikena – Featuring a breakfast station, chilled shrimp, smoked salmon, garlic pepper crusted prime rib, furikaki crusted mahi mahi and more, March 27, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Cost is \$23.95 for adults and children's prices are available. Now taking reservations. Call 438-1974.

Wine and Dine at Nehelani – March 23, an evening of wine and a gourmet four-course dinner

including soup and salad, appetizer, entrée, and dessert. Each course served with a selected wine. Dinner starts at 6 p.m. Reservations accepted through March 18. Cost is \$29 for adults. For reservations, call 655-0660.

Easter Buffet at Waianae Beach Club – An Easter breakfast buffet, March 27, 8:30 – 11 a.m. or an Easter Dinner Buffet served from 5:30 – 9 p.m. at the Waianae Beach Club. Call 696-4778.

Right Arm Night, Salsa Style – March 24, 3:30 – 10 p.m. at the Nehelani on Schofield Barracks. Appetizers served from 4 – 7 p.m. Enjoy fun, food, entertainment, and great prizes. Civilians and all ranks welcome. Tickets before March 24, \$5 per person. Tickets on March 24, \$7 per person. Adults only, must be 18 years or older to attend. For ticket information, call 655-4466.

Hawaiian Luau Lunch Buffet – Taste a traditional Hawaii style feast March 25, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Hale Ikena, Fort Shafter or Reggie's, Schofield Barracks. Cost is \$9.95 per person. Call the Nehelani 655-4466 or Hale Ikena at 438-1974 for reservations or information.

Bunny Brunch at Nehelani – Join the Easter bunny, March 27, for an all-you-can eat brunch featuring breakfast favorites with a ham and beef carving station and more. Brunch from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Cost is \$18.95 for adults and children's pricing is available. For reservations, call 655-0660.

Twilight Golf Family Special – Dependents 17 years of age and under are free with paid adult family member, March 24, Nagorski Golf Course. Green fee and care fee is included. Call 438-9587.

Tropics Extreme Teen Challenge – Come meet the challenge and test your skills March 23, starts 2 p.m. Grand prize is \$50. Register until March 19 at the Tropics. Parental release required. Call 655-8522.

Buns on the Run Biathlon – See how far you can go during 45 minutes of Cardio Biking, March 22 and 30 minutes of treadmill running, March 23 at the Martinez Physical Fitness Center on Schofield Barracks. Top finishers in each category and division receive awards. T-shirts given to the first 49 participants that complete the biathlon. This event is free. Register at any Army Physical Fitness Center by March 15. Call 655-4804 or 655-0900.

Craft Vendors Wanted – Seeking craft vendors for the Family Fun Fest and ITR Travel Fair March 26, 9 a.m. –

2 p.m. on Sills Field at Schofield Barracks. Call Leisure Activities, 655-0110 or 655-0112.

St. Patrick's Lunch Buffet – Eat an Irish Lunch Buffet at Reggie's, Schofield Barracks March 17, 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. \$9.95 for adults. Call 655-0660.

New Sports Night at Reggie's – Every Monday, 4 – 9 p.m. join the excitement with a special sports bar menu and watch your favorite sports program on satellite. Call 655-0660.

St. Patrick's Day at Library – Enjoy St. Patrick's Day stories and crafts at the Sgt. Yano Library on Schofield Barracks March 16, begins at 3 p.m. Call 655-0145.

Spring Break Youth Art Classes – Register children for spring break art classes offered at the Arts and Crafts Center, Schofield Barracks. Classes March 23 – 30, 10:30 a.m. – Noon, and open to youth ages 7 – 11. Activities include woodcrafts, March 23, shrink art, March 24, create your own puzzle, March 25, foto frame fun, March 26, and paint n' take, March 30. \$12 per class or \$10 per class for two or more classes. Call 655-4202 for registration and information.

Noodle "Kicker" Tournament – Participate during your reserved tee time every Saturday and Sunday during March at Nagorski Golf Course, Fort Shafter. Entry fee is \$4. Prizes awarded daily. Call 438-9587.

Leilehua Golf Pro Shop Specials – Visit the Pro shop after 6 p.m. for "Leilehua After Dark" specials. 10 percent off all merchandise. For every \$50 merchandise purchase, receive a free range balls token and free use of training aids for the driving range. Call 655-4653.

Fort Shafter Gym Closed Sundays – The Fort Shafter Gym is closed on Sundays. The Aliamanu Gym is open on Sundays from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Call 438-1152 or 836-0338 for information.

Schofield Barracks Troops Breakfast – Mon – Sat, 8 – 10:30 a.m. Purchase any breakfast burrito, biscuit sandwich, or breakfast croissant and add hash rounds for 50 cents. Or, try the new Monster Muffins – blueberry, cinnamon caramel, lemon poppy seed, and cream cheese. Cinnobabies available for \$1 with the purchase of any other menu item. Call 655-0002.

Koa Box Class – Create your own Koa Box at this creative class for beginners, Fort Shafter Arts and Crafts Center. Cost is \$150 for five class sessions and includes materials and woodshop safety qualification. Begins March 17, 6 – 9 p.m. Call 438-1315.

HAGN TV Schedule		March 11 - 17	
Morning			
6:00	Sign on	3:32	OAHU-Aloha Begins
6:30	What's Down the Drain	3:40	Welcome Home
6:36	Fit for Life	3:44	Volunteers
7:00	Bulletin Board	3:54	Safety Video
7:30	SHAMU-Wild Life, Grasslands	4:00	Pentagon Channel
8:00	Army News Watch	Evening	
8:30	Pentagon Channel	6:00	Bulletin Board
9:00	Pentagon Channel	6:30	Community Focus
10:00	ASAP	6:42	Welcome Home
10:30	Bulletin Board	6:47	Army Values-Respect
11:20	Safety Video	6:56	Safety Video
11:24	Dash and Grab	7:00	NFL-Turf Talk
11:30	Hawaii Hidden Beauty, Danger	8:00	Bulletin Board
11:52	Welcome Home	8:45	History of JAG
12:00	Pentagon Channel	9:00	Anti Terrorism FP
Afternoon			
2:02	What's Down the Drain	9:30	Oakland Army Base
2:10	Dash and Grab	10:00	Youth Protection
2:19	Safety Video	11:00	NFL-Greatest Games
2:22	Welcome Home	12:14	Bulletin Board
2:30	SHAMU-Rumble in Jungle	1:00	What's Down the Drain
3:00	SHAMU-Great Ape Story	12:51	Pentagon Channel
Overnight			

What's happening in your neck of the woods?

Focus on Aliamanu Military Reservation

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

Situated east of Pearl Harbor in the crater of an extinct volcano is Aliamanu Military Reservation, or AMR.

The latest Army Hawaii Family Housing plan for AMR has community center teams and residents optimistic about the future. Original plans called for the renovation of the reservation's 1970's vintage homes. However with the increased basic allowance for housing, the plan now is for total demolition of the old homes followed by construction of 1,355 residences.

AMR sprawls across more than 538 acres. For this reason, AHFH divided the reservation into three distinct communities: AMR East, West, and Rim. Nick Warner, AMR Rim community manager, and Lisa Lepore, AMR East and West senior community manager, agree on several points concerning the communities.

First is the location and community-feel of the neighborhoods.

"AMR is centrally located to everything on the island, and because we just have families out here, it feels more like we are a community unto ourselves," said Lepore.

Warner added, "AMR as a whole is self-contained."

Second, both cited the available services as a plus for living on the reservation. Services include a gas station, recreation center with pool, chapel services, and child development programs.

AMR Rim, as the name indicates, sits on the edge of the crater. The community of 477 units, houses Marine, Navy, and Army senior enlisted, officers and their families. Warner listed the accomplishments of his community center team.



Sharee Moore

Aliamanu Military Reservation is home to 1,300 families. Army Hawaii Family Housing manages more than 2,000 housing units in three separate communities: AMR East, West, and Rim.

"We have improved maintenance, both in response time and customer satisfaction, and we care about the residents," he stated.

Warner highlighted what he termed "success stories" like the installation of new exterior lighting, improvements to drainage problems caused by the steep slopes around the Rim community, and landscaping efforts. He cited parking and security as concerns he is addressing within the community.

Down in the crater are AMR East and West communities housing predominantly junior enlisted

military families. "This is a family environment and we are working closely with the residents to make improvements, and I think they see the difference," said Lepore.

Some challenges tackled by the AHFH community center team include controlling the feral cat population and improving the visual appeal of the neighborhoods. Recently, dumpsters located in less visible areas replaced individual trash receptacles, which had become eyesores to many.

One success Lepore described was a new reading room, established at a resident's suggestion. "It is a beauti-

ful reading area and provides some peace and quiet for our residents while still being close to home," she explained. Plans are underway to add book clubs and a kid zone.

All three communities held focus groups to determine resident priorities. Shared priorities include painting housing unit exteriors, common area enhancements such as lighting, and walkways, and more playgrounds.

Community center programs have added to the neighborhood atmosphere at AMR. Cookie decorating at Christmas, barbeques, petting zoo visits, dog parades,

and a pumpkin carving contest were a few of the events held to foster friendships and develop relations between the community center staffs and their residents. All centers have an Easter event on the drawing board.

"It will take time for residents to see all the improvements happening, but we are in a learning curve," said Warner. "We give all the time we can to meet the needs of our residents."

For information at AMR East call 275-3850; at AMR West call 275-3840; and for AMR Rim, call 275-3860.

Solomon School Seuss-a-thon success

By 1st Lt. Kevin A. McQueary
65th Engineer Battalion

Say that title five times fast. Better yet, try it out loud to the delight of your children! That was the goal March 2, at Solomon Elementary School – to show children the joy in reading.

Each year on the birthday of children's author Dr. Seuss, schools nationwide participate in the Annual National Education Read Across America Day to promote children's literacy. This was the eighth anniversary of the event. At Solomon Elementary on Schofield Barracks, the event is supported by school staff, parents, and volunteers from the 65th Engineer Battalion and Schofield Barracks Fire Department.

The event lasted all day, with volunteers reading to the children in the morning and afternoon. After school, the parents read aloud and attended workshops during the Dr. Seuss Family Night. Children participated in activities such as Dr. Seuss Face Painting and Green Eggs and Ham Art, and the PTSA sponsoring a spaghetti dinner.

Principal Linda Yosikami is a solid supporter of the event.

"We have a terrific partnership," Linda commented on the school's relationships with the fire station and the 65th Eng. Bn.

"It's great when they come in uniform. The children see them as role models and it means so much to (the children) when they show interest."

Capt. Robert Chandler led a small team of firefighters to the event in the fire truck, and a few children had the opportunity to explore it.

"We love taking the time



Spc. Misty Brown, 65th Eng. Bn., does her part to get Ms. Freitas' kindergarten students excited about reading during the 8th annual Dr. Seuss-a-thon celebration at Solomon Elementary School March 2.

1st Lt. Kevin McQueary

to do these events," he commented. "We make visits to all the schools in the area. It's such an important program."

2nd Lt. James Foreman was one of seven from the 65th Eng. Bn. that read to the children. "I was surprised to see the children gather round with such excitement as I read, 'Oh the Thinks You Can Think,'" he commented.

"At times they laughed, gasped, and pointed as each page was turned. It was rewarding to see them in their (Cat In the Hat) hats and being so excited about the read along."

Lily Shimabukuro, Solomon's reading coordinator, organized the event.

"Commitment to reading is our number one priority here," she stated.

"In today's world of DVDs

and video games, children don't spend time reading anymore and it shows in lacking imagination.

"When children read and are read to, it exercises their imagination and at the same time develops those skills. Our policy is 90 minutes of reading every day," Shimabukuro said.

A recent report by the Alliance for Excellent Education, "Reading Next: A

Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy," supports Lily's concern for developing reading skills in America's youth. That report found that nationally only 31 percent of 4th graders could read proficiently. By 8th grade, that number declines to 30 percent. In Hawaii, only a sobering 22 percent of 8th graders are proficient at

their level. The report goes on further to cement the relationship between children's literacy and academic achievement in later years, as well as their ability to cope with social and economic demands as adults.

To learn more about how to foster America's youth visit www.all4ed.org or just start at home by reading a book to your child.



Courtesy photo

Fifteen sergeants and one corporal were inducted into the Noncommissioned Officers Corps during the first ceremony for the U.S. Army Garrison Oahu Base Support Battalion and 101st Garrison Support Unit on Schofield Barracks in January.

16 Soldiers inducted into NCO Corps

USAG-HI News Release

The U.S. Army Garrison Oahu Base Support Battalion and 101st Garrison Support Unit, hosted their first semi-annual noncommissioned officer's induction ceremony in January at Sgt. Smith Theater on Schofield Barracks.

Guest speaker for the event was Command Sgt. Maj. Bruce Roberts and the official party included Sgt. Maj. Rogelio A. Davidson of the Oahu Base

Support Battalion; Sgt. Maj. Randall T. Hariki represented the 101st Garrison support Unit; 1st Sgt. Venis Mathews of Installation Troop Command; and 1st Sgt. Ever Gutierrez of Replacement Detachment hosted the event that inducted 15 sergeants and one corporal into the noncommissioned officer's ranks.

The ceremony was highlighted by the reciting of the NCO oath and was followed by cake and refreshments.

The following Soldiers were inducted:

- Cpl. Luis A. Nicolas
- Sgt. Francis A. Arthur
- Sgt. Amy C. Byrne
- Sgt. Freddie Cantorna

- Sgt. Vanessa Carides
- Sgt. Annemarie J. Clarke
- Sgt. Ricardo R. Coronado
- Staff Sgt. James A. Holloran
- Sgt. Felicia D. Herrera
- Sgt. Kathleen E. Holguin

- Sgt. Joyce L. Jones
- Sgt. Richard O. Perez
- Sgt. John e. Walter
- Sgt. Sergio J. Nuevo Jr
- Sgt. Merlinda T. Suka
- Sgt. Anthony B. Roy

Lightning Spirit

A chest hoping death loses its sting

Commentary

By Chaplain (Maj.) David Baum
Schofield Barracks Family Chaplain

The men and women who have been deployed deserve incredible honor and thanks. Their sacrifices and countless acts of bravery have earned our highest forms of admiration and regard.

Taking nothing away from these returning warriors, I am proud to have served this past year with the rear detachment team. In every situation in which I was involved, Soldiers and FRG members selflessly worked to support and provide for the needs of the loved ones of the deployed Soldiers.

However, I do have one confession to make. As a part of the rear detachment this past year, the war never really was a personally scary and awful thing. That was impressed upon me this month when I received orders to go to a unit at Fort Hood, Texas that will soon be deployed.

During the 25th Infantry Division (Light)'s recent deployment I have sat with spouses and children as they learned that their husbands and fathers have died in combat.

I have spent hours with spouses in counseling sessions trying to help them to keep things together until their loved ones return. In these settings I have literally been prompted to tears when I allowed myself to feel their fear and their exhaustion.

But it was always their fear, their exhaustion. It was never really my own no matter how hard I tried to share their emotions.

And so now it appears after my upcoming PCS I will take a turn to carry a portion of the burden of this war. With that realization I am struck by the fact that feeling someone else's fear is not quite the same as struggling with it personally.

When his nation was at war with Germany in 1939 C. S. Lewis said that war "...aggravates the permanent human



Courtesy photo

Emma, 6, and Anna Baum, 3, smile as they look at their family history book. In the foreground are their hope-chests prepared by their parents in anticipation of their father's upcoming deployment.

situation so that we can no longer ignore it. Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice ..."

This will be my first deployment to a combat zone. In anticipation of that experience I think I have, for the first time in my life, started to recognize that in fact we are all living on the edge of a cliff. There is no guarantee of tomorrow for any of us.

The realization of what is to come has inspired me to do something I had not anticipated. Recently, my wife and I bought two 16x30x19 inch rosewood chests for our daughters. They are beautifully hand-carved and ornately decorated with intricate brass designs hammered into the top and sides. They remind me of small versions of the ark of the covenant (remember the movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark?").

I like the fact that the chests were made in Pakistan. Perhaps the money we paid for the chests will persuade the craftsmen who constructed them to continue to choose a productive life instead of the other options for survival that exist in much of that part of the world.

Into these "hope-chests" we have placed some items that we want our daughters to have when they grow up. We have placed a Bible, three books (see titles below), some pictures, a family history book, and some other small items that we believe will encourage them to mature into the women God wills that

they become.

Do I have some kind of paranoia, some twisted death-fixation? Are these chests some morbid reminder of the possibility of death? I have to be honest with you. The thought crossed my mind that maybe the thought of a combat deployment was causing some bizarre, dramatic, psychological overreaction.

But then I thought about my motives and after talking it over with my wife we agreed. No. Life is fragile and fleeting. There are no guarantees. We are both ready for death but not obsessed with it. The Bible says that because Jesus rose from the dead he has conquered death and we do not have to fear it - "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (1 Corinthians 15:55, NIV).

Death may come before we expect. If so, we want our girls to have some small gifts which encourage them along in the faith that has prepared us for the death they will also one day confront.

(Author's Note: The books we placed in our daughter's hope-chests were: "Mere Christianity" by C.S. Lewis, "How People Grow" by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, and The "Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren. Interested in having hope-chests for your children? I will give you a full list of the items we placed in our daughters' if you email me at david.baum@schofield.army.mil.)

VA cares for veterans worldwide



Veterans Affairs's Hometown News Service

DENVER, Colo. – With a network of medical centers and clinics throughout the United States, the Department of Veterans Affairs offers comprehensive health care for veterans, but what do they do if they're traveling or living overseas and find themselves in need of medical attention? Well, VA has that covered too, for veterans with service-connected medical problems.

Managed by the VA Health Administration Center in Denver, the Foreign Medical Program gives veterans the ability to seek medical care related to their service-connected conditions in almost any country in the world, with VA picking up 100 percent of the medical bill.

"The department established the Foreign Medical Program to fulfill its responsibilities to our veterans who were temporarily or permanently living outside the United States," said Ralph Charlip, director of the Health Administration Center.

"While it is not possible to have a VA medical facility in every country or every city, through the FMP, service-connected veterans can still obtain the medical and vocational rehabilitation services they earned while

serving our country, no matter where they are."

Here's how the program works. A veteran who currently lives overseas, or plans to travel overseas, sends a registration form to the Health Administration Center, preferably with a copy of their VA rating decision. After processing the form, the Foreign Medical Program office sends the veteran a letter confirming enrollment in the program and outlining the conditions that will be covered. If the veteran does not provide a copy of their rating decision, the Foreign Medical Program office will contact the veteran's VA regional office of record to confirm their service-connected status.

A unique aspect of the program is that unlike disability compensation or VA medical center treatment categories, percentage of disability has no bearing on the payment for treatment; whether a veteran is rated 1 percent or 70 percent for a service-connected condition, payment will be made to the provider in full for treatment related to that specific condition.

Once enrolled, if a veteran is traveling or living overseas and needs medical treatment related to a service-connected condition, they simply go to a health care provider and then send the bill to the Foreign

Medical Program office in Denver. The bill is translated, the exchange rate for the foreign currency is determined and the veteran is reimbursed.

"It is very important to remember that the treatment must be related to the veteran's service-connected condition outlined in the acceptance letter," said Ted Benn, plan administrator for the Foreign Medical Program.

"For instance, if a veteran is traveling in Mexico and the prosthetic leg he received as a result of a service-connected condition breaks and he falls down and gets hurt, the Foreign Medical Program will pay for the related medical expenses.

"If the same vet becomes hospitalized in Mexico for food poisoning, the program will not pay for it.

"Unfortunately, due to the fact that we are such a small program, the vast majority of health care providers overseas have not heard of the program, so the veteran more often than not has to pay for the medical care up front out of their own pocket, then send us the claim for reimbursement."

Veterans who would like to learn more about FMP and how to enroll can go to the Foreign Medical Program Web site at www.va.gov/hac/fmp/. They can also e-mail the Health Administration Center at HAC.FMP@med.va.gov; call FMP offices at (303) 331-7590; or write to: VA Health Administration Center, Foreign Medical Program, P.O. Box 65021, Denver, CO, 80206-9021, USA.



Courtesy photo

CJ1 Soldiers stationed with the 25th Infantry Division (Light) take time away from the office to hit the rifle range and fulfill their weapons qualifications. Even while on a year-long deployment to Afghanistan all Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines assigned to CJ1 maintain all their service - unique qualifications while working up to 20-hour days.

Behind the scenes troops help keep morale high

By JO1 (SW/AW)
Kristin Fitzsimmons
Combined Joint Task Force 76
Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – U.S. forces spanned Afghanistan during the past year in efforts to help the country's citizens rebuild their nation and form a strong and safe foundation for future generations.

However, when it came time for the troops who were assisting others to be taken care of, the Soldiers, Sailors,

Airmen and Marines assigned to the Combined Joint Task Force 76's personnel section stepped to the front lines.

Many people may tend to take for granted how important a strong support element can be while deployed. Without them, a lot of what service members consider second nature – like emergency or regular leave, four-day passes, awards or American Red Cross messages – might not happen as easily or sometimes at all.

“To say the very least it has been hectic,” said Spc. Jennifer Rupert, a 25th Infantry Division (Light) Soldier, deployed here from Schofield Barracks.

“For many reasons life out here on deployment is greatly different than our job is back in Hawaii. There are a lot of tasks that we as an office accomplish out here that aren't really needed when we are at home ... being out here and simply knowing that we are helping our fellow Soldiers, who are scattered

throughout Afghanistan is one of our biggest rewards.”

In the previous year, CJ-1 has covered a large variety of the support spectrum by working 12 to 20 hour days processing more than 5,000 awards; 10,000 general leave requests; 10,000 pass requests; more than 1,200 emergency messages for leave requests; numerous extensions and Morale, Welfare and Recreation and United Services Organization tours in addition to upholding all their

daily duties.

“They work hard 24-hours a day seven days a week ... and they don't complain,” said Sgt. Maj. Mildred Ruiz, 25th Inf. Div. (Light) CJ1 sergeant major.

“It didn't matter if we have to wake someone up in the middle of the night or ask them to pull a security detail on a flight out to one of the fire bases then turn around a couple of hours later and come back to work. (The) majority of them did it with a smile on their face knowing

their efforts were making life a little easier for those out in the field.”

In their “free” time service members working in CJ1 participated in several humanitarian assistance missions. They delivered clothing, toys, food and other essentials to local orphanages and shelters, thereby helping U.S. forces build a stronger bond between the troops and Afghanistan citizens.

“Honestly, I don't think I could have asked for a better group of Soldiers,” Ruiz said.

When silence is not golden: Surgery helps restore hearing

By Les Ozawa
Tripler Army Medical Center
Public Affairs

“The ‘Aha!’ moment for me with Makayla Houston came when she was heading for the double doors to leave,” said Susan Grau, Tripler Army Medical Center's pediatric speech therapist.

“I was behind her and said, ‘push!’ Dr. Ramsey just happened to be walking down the hallway when [Makayla] said, ‘tush!’”

“Dr. Ramsey said, ‘She heard you! She wasn't looking and she heard you!’ Makayla had understood and came back with her version of the same word,” said Grau.

That was just one hurdle, but a very significant one, for the then 3-year-old, strong-willed toddler, in her journey towards learning speech as a means of communication. Grau renewed her efforts to go over dozens of sounds and carefully selected words with Makayla, teaching her to control the movement of her breath and parts of her mouth and throat, and to correctly imitate and reproduce the speech sounds she heard.

For centuries, deaf people have developed a separate, but rich cultural space in which to live with the rest of society. They have developed their own ways of communicating to others, through signing, lip-reading and other silent cues.

Technology developed in the 1980's, however, has

aided tens of thousands of people who could not be helped with conventional hearing aids. “Cochlear implants have brought hope to many people who are hard-of-hearing or deaf,” said Maj. (Dr.) Mitchell Ramsey, co-director of Tripler's cochlear implant program.

“At first, people thought this would never work,” said Ramsey. “Through a number of different engineering advances, auditory research, safety trials and most importantly, working with patients, cochlear implants have become a large success.”

The technology has taken off, according to the Tripler otologist (ear specialist). While cochlear implants (CI) are still relatively rare in Hawaii, their use has expanded widely in the rest of the nation, and in Europe and Asia. In 1994, there were approximately 6,000 CI users worldwide. Today there are about 60,000 users.

“It's widely accepted as the medical standard of care for patients with severe to profound hearing loss, who don't benefit from hearing aids but who choose aural-oral communication,” said Ramsey. The procedure, first approved by the FDA in 1985, is covered by most medical insurance, including Medicare and TRICARE. In 1999, the FDA approved the surgery for children as young as 1 year old.

While the surgery itself runs in the tens of thousands of dollars, cost-effectiveness

is not an issue. A Johns Hopkins University study compared this procedure to other surgeries like knee replacement and pacemaker. The study looked at lost income and quality of life. Other studies have looked at the cost savings of mainstreaming hearing-impaired students into regular schools. “Cochlear implants are one of the best medical values available,” said Ramsey.

In the past two years, Ramsey has performed nine implant surgeries on adults as well as on young children. While his practice is limited to Department of Defense beneficiaries, a former Tripler pediatric otolaryngologist, Dr. Lenhanh Tran, has recently started a CI program at Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children in Honolulu.

The surgery is technically

challenging, performed almost entirely under a microscope. However, selection and rehabilitation are the most critical aspects to the overall success of the program, especially for young children. CI users have to work hard at linking meaning with sounds. A coordinated effort between the state's Department of Education and Department of Health, and the medical providers is needed to ensure success.

To help CI users and their families, Tripler Army Medical Center recently helped start a support group for CI users, their parents and other family members, and professionals working with CI users. For more information, contact Suzanne Leclair at 433-3206, suzanne.leclair@amedd.army.mil.



Les Ozawa

Tripler Army Medical Center pediatric speech therapist, Susan Grau, coaches Makayla Houston to correctly pronounce vowel sounds, while her mother Jessica observes.

AHFH makes room for new homes

By Kelli Wilson
 Directorate of Public Works

The demolition of the fire damaged units at Aliamanu Military Reservation and the closure of the Kalakaua Golf Course have set the stage for what is to come when the privatization financial closings, scheduled for April, take place.

The financial closings will provide the initial funding, which will ultimately allow for the demolition, new home construction, and renovations across all installations to begin.

The demolition of specified units will begin in May, with the exception of the offline-damaged units at AMR, which are not up to standards and are currently in the process of getting torn down.

The Porter Neighborhood, across from the Post Exchange on Schofield Barracks, will be the first neighborhood to be demolished after the financial closings have taken place, making room for the construction of new homes.

The initial new home construction will begin on the Kalakaua Golf Course, an area that provides open land for development. Scheduled to begin in early May, the new neighborhood will consist of junior and senior enlisted homes.

This is a significant step in the process to provide better homes to the military community, according to Gordon Takeshita, Residential Community Initiative program director.

“Financial closings will also provide Army Hawaii Family Housing the legal authority to award contracts, make commitments, and incur expenditures they were not previously empowered to do. We will begin to realize the benefits of new homes and renovations that our residents have been waiting for,” said Takeshita.

While residents may be excited to see the beginning of construction, the waiting period between financial closings and May is part of the conversion process, a necessity for the project’s success.

According to Takeshita, this pre-construction period will be used to “ensure that construction plans meet required building codes and program specifications, safety and environmental considerations are addressed, and ensuring minimum disruptions to the current residents.”

Along with new home construction the renovation of non-historical quarters will begin across all installations in May. Residents should not expect to have renovations in their occupied unit, as only available units will be renovated.

Renovations will include interior floor finishes, kitchen fixtures, bathroom fixtures, lighting, electrical meters,



Photo courtesy DPW

Bulldozers tear down damaged units at AMR in January offering just a hint at what privatization will entail. New home construction will begin on the Kalakaua Golf Course in May. Renderings and floor plans of new homes are online at www.armyhawaiifamilyhousing.com.

external motion detector light, and air conditioning.

Neighborhoods will also benefit from renovations as tot lots, water parks, basketball and multi-purpose courts, picnic tables, barbeques, tennis courts, and jogging and biking trails will all be added to neighborhoods in an effort to increase recreational opportunities to families and offer a community environment, increasing the quality of life for families.

Residents can expect noise, dirt, and road closures during the course of renovations though AHFH will make every effort to minimize these disruptions. There should be no impact to residents due to the initial demolition and new home construction as these events will take place in open space or previously vacated quarters.

Learn more about AHFH homes and floor plans by logging on to www.armyhawaiifamilyhousing.com. Or, visit a local community center for more information.