HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

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Lease Signing at Schofield Barracks and AMR

A lease signing party will take place on Schofield Barracks and Aliamanu Military Reservation this Saturday. Two events will feature food, bounce-houses for the kids, games, and more. Tables will be set up at each location to assist Soldiers and spouses with the paperwork. Spouses with powers of attorneys may sign in the absence of the Soldier. It is critical that all Army Hawaii family housing residents sign their leases. Signing the lease will ensure that families remain authorized for their current house. It also "turns on" the BAH payments to the project that fund ongoing maintenance, new homes and renovations. The leases are what flips the switch on for funding that goes toward the future of Army housing in Hawaii. For more information, call Actus Lend Lease or go to the closest Actus community center.

Deployment Town Hall Meeting

Soldiers who are deploying and their family members can have questions about the deployments answered at a Deployment Town Hall Meeting at 6:30 p.m. this Tuesday at Sgt. Smith Theater on Schofield Barracks.

USARHAW Retirement Ceremony

U.S. Army, Hawaii will conduct a quarterly retirement ceremony at 2 p.m. Aug. 19 in Sgt. Smith Theater at Schofield Barracks to recognize retiring Soldiers for their dedicated service to the U.S. Army and the nation. For more information, call Sgt. Maj. Billie Thompson at 655-8711.

New Times for Worship at AMR Chapel

Effective Aug. 22, all three services will change their time of worship. Religious Education Classes will also change, but will begin at a later date.

- Catholic Mass 8:30 a.m.
- Contemporary Protestant 9:45 a.m.
- Gospel 12:15 p.m.

Registration for Sunday School and Catholic CCD Classes has begun. Register at any time on the downstairs lanai at the self-registration table.

Sunday School (ages 3 - adults) begins Sept. 12 from 11 a.m. - noon

Catholic CCD (ages 4 - 12th grade) begins September 19 from 9:45 - 10:45 a.m.

RCIA classes for adults will be held Tuesday evenings from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

For more information on worship times or religious education, call 833-8175.

25th ID to gain three BCT(UA)s

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
Editor

As part of the Army's ongoing transformation, the 25th Infantry Division (Light) will stand up three new brigades over the next three years, but none of them will be based in Hawaii.

Contrary to a recent Army Times article, 3,600 additional Soldiers will not be stationed at Schofield Barracks. Instead, three Brigade Combat Team Units of Action will be formed under the Tropic Lightning Division, but will be located at other posts.

The new BCT(UA)s will be temporarily located at Fort Riley, Kan., Fort Benning, Ga., and Fort Richardson, Alaska. The BCT(UA) at Fort Richardson will have an airborne capability for forced entry operations.

Those locations could change, however, with a Base Realignment and Closure analysis due in 2005.

These additions will give the 25th ID (L) a total of six BCTs, including 1st Brigade at Fort Lewis, Wash., the Army's second Stryker Brigade Combat Team; 2nd Brigade at Schofield Barracks, which will convert to an SBCT by 2007; and 3rd Brigade at Schofield Barracks, which will convert to a BCT(UA) in fiscal year 2006.

Sgt. Stephanie L. Carl

Third Brigade Combat Team Soldiers dismount from their HMMWV to inspect a possible IED during an exercise in January. 3rd Brigade will be transformed into a unit of action by BCT(UA) in FY 06.

The Center for Military History is currently examining options for renaming the new BCT(UA)s, so they could eventually assume different unit designations.

The temporary stationing of modular BCT(UA)s is critical to ensure the Army is properly postured to fully support its strategic commitments, including ongoing operations in support of the global war on terror, according to an Army press release.

Additionally, this allows the Army to continue its transformation to a campaign-quality force with joint and expeditionary capabilities that meet the future demands of the combatant commanders, the release continued.

The locations of the new BCT(UA)s were selected based on existing capacities, available training space and current locations of similar units. The Army will revisit the locations of these units during the BRAC process.

The new modular forces will be capable of operating across the entire range of military operations. As part of Army transformation, capabilities previously found within the divisions and corps will be shifted to the BCT(UA).

These new brigades are the first conversions in Army transformation and are designed to deploy as independent units in support of the joint force.

"The normal links between divisions and brigades are going away," said Lt. Col. Christopher Rodney, a media relations officer with the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs at the Pentagon. "This is a major change in the command and control piece for our Army."

The BCT(UA)s are designed to operate independently and will in most cases report to the base commander until they are deployed, Rodney added.

On Jan. 30, 2004, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld approved increasing the number of active modular BCT(UA)s from 33 to 43 between FY 04-06. In accordance with the Army Campaign Plan, the Army began converting to modular designs this year with three BCT(UA)s temporarily stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga.; Fort Campbell, Ky.; and Fort Drum, N.Y.

3/4 CAV makes a difference

By Sgt. 1st Class Matthew A. Fearing
105th Mobile Public Affairs Det.

SHAH WALI KOT, Afghanistan – More than 50 volunteers from Kandahar Airfield had come to work July 24 in "Making A Difference Day" organized by 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.

Getting up early and riding more than two hours to reach the village north of Kandahar, Afghanistan, the volunteers descended on Shah Wali Kot's school to fix up the edifice and give the classrooms a fresh coat of paint. Under the Taliban, the school had been used as a jail.

The convoy topped a dusty hill and the riders could see Shah Wali Kot below. The village was nestled in a small valley with brown hills that reached skyward on each side. Children in the village stopped to look as vehicles rolled into town. They turned and waved. This was not the first time the Americans had come to their village and their faces showed the eagerness with which the visit was welcomed.

Shah Wali Kot is slightly larger than many rural villages in the district. At least twenty buildings dotted the landscape of the town. Some homes sat on the hillsides, while others lined the road that followed the valley.

Lt. Col. Mike McMahon, commander of 3/4 CAV pointed to the improvements being made.

"Those windows were full of bricks from when the Taliban used the building as a jail. We're here to help [clean up the school] and make this a community project," he said. The improvements were a joint effort between the American volunteers and the people of Shah Wali Kot.

Along with the civilian and military volunteers from Kandahar Airfield, McMahon said all the children were also working on the school.

"They're the future of Afghanistan. They're the ones that jump in and join us." he said as he smiled. Some children were pushing brooms, sweeping away the dust. Some had paint brushes and were painting walls, the green and white paint dripping on their hands and spatters going into their hair. All of them grinned widely while working.

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing

Dust flies as two 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment Soldiers clear out the rubble from one of the classrooms at Shah Wali Kot's elementary school during Make a Difference Day July 30. The school had been converted into a jail during the Taliban reign.

Running from room to room to check on the progress, 2nd Lt. Jamie McNamara, 3/4 CAV, was the task organizer for the school project. She only

See "3/4 CAV" Page A-12

USARPAC Commander bids "Aloha" to Pacific

Spc. Len Cutler

Lt. Gen. James Campbell, former USARPAC commander, addresses the audience during his farewell speech at Palm Circle, Fort Shafter Aug. 4. Campbell leaves Hawaii to become the Director of Army Staff at the Pentagon.

By Spc. Len Cutler
Staff Writer

Hawaii bid farewell to outgoing United States Army Pacific Commander Lt. Gen. James L. Campbell, at a Relinquishment of Command ceremony Aug. 4 at Fort Shafter's Palm Circle.

Campbell leaves the post he assumed on November 4, 2002, to assume a position as Director of Army Staff at the Pentagon. Maj. Gen. John M. Brown, commander of U.S. Army Alaska will replace him.

Maj. Gen. William H. Brandenburg will serve as acting commander until Brown assumes the position in a few weeks.

Admiral Thomas B. Fargo, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, spoke of Campbell's commitment to service, and his dedication to Soldiers at the ceremony.

"Standing here, it's easy to see why we have the best Army in the world. Thousands of USARPAC Soldiers are deployed in support of the war on terror, and every day, their performance reflects the quality of training they've received," Fargo said.

"General Campbell has played an integral role, injecting dedication and vigor into the testing of the Army's skills. Their training has been rigorous and superb, and they are wholly prepared to execute their mission successfully. Jim's vision, and his ability to move proactively, has positioned the Army for success."

Fargo also credited Campbell for his role in bringing the Stryker brigade to Hawaii while assuaging fears and concerns. Fargo said Campbell's "community approach" to the issue was crucial to getting public support.

"He is a leader who unites people," he said.

Campbell said he appreciates his time in Hawaii – this was his third tour – and that leaving "doesn't get any easier." But the commitment of men and women of the Pacific have left a lasting impression on the senior officer. So many Hawaii Soldiers are deployed, he said "with boots on the ground, and their lives on the line, for our freedom, every day. I am so proud of each and every one of you."

Iraqis tired of attacks, want stability, general says

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

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6, 2004 -- Iraqi citizens are getting weary of the terrorist attacks that appear to be increasing and growing more lethal, a military spokesman said today from Baghdad.

During an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service, Army Brig. Gen. Erv Lessel, deputy operations director for Multinational Force Iraq, said polls show Iraqis want the terrorism to end.

"They're tired of the killings, they're tired of the kidnappings and the bombings, and they want some stability," he said. "They want jobs, they want electricity; they want to return to a normal, peaceful life."

Lessel added that most Iraqis see the best chance for that way of life is putting "their hope and confidence in the Iraqi government and the Iraqi security forces."

He said the Iraqi people would much rather see Iraqi security forces on the streets than multinational forces. "They feel more comforted by those that can speak the same language and that can understand them," he explained, "and they are willing to provide them with more actionable intelligence that will actually help our efforts."

Lessel said the increase in the number and lethality of attacks means insurgents are making every attempt possible to bring down Iraq's new

See "Attacks" Page A-12

3/4 CAV

From A-1

slowed down to share a smile with a small Afghan girl, Negeba, who followed McNamara nearly everywhere she went. The attachment between the two began two weeks earlier when a smaller group of volunteers from the Stetsons had ridden out to start the work on the school.

According to McNamara, the first trip was scheduled to clean up the building and get it ready for painting. On both days, McNamara, a Westminster, Colo. native, coordinated the workers while jumping into the work herself.

"Jamie!" a young Afghan boy called. He smiled and beckoned for her to come over and see what he had accomplished. The scene was repeated with different children calling the lieutenant to talk to them or see what they had done.

Capt. Nelsa Caceres-Agosto, commander of the Arrival and Departure Airport Control Group brought eight service members out to help. Her group, a mix of Soldiers and Airmen, were glad to share in the experience. Each of them indicated they wanted to help the Afghans and see more of the area around Kandahar. "I wanted to see what Afghanistan looked like," said Staff Sgt. Annette D. Garcia, a radio operator with 376 Expeditionary Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron. They weren't the only ones glad to have an opportunity to see more of the countryside.

Staff Sgt. Darrell Osborne, a 3/4 CAV Soldier from Washington, D.C., said "This was something the [Soviets] never did here; to approach and take care of the people."

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing

The 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment organized a Make A Difference Day in Shah Wali Kot with volunteers from Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan July 30. Negeba, a child from the village helps by painting a wall in the school.

Osborne looked around at what was being accomplished by the volunteers and villagers.

Wahdat, an interpreter for the mission, grabbed a paint brush and joined in the work. "I am volunteering since I have to be here anyway," he said jokingly. He walked over to Agosto and pretended to paint her head. They laughed and the two went back to painting the walls of one of the larger classrooms.

In the afternoon, as the clean up and painting continued, McMahon met with the village elders and school officials. He listened to their concerns and needs as Wahdat translated the conversation. They seemed pleased. All the work on the school would mean that the children of the Shah Wali Kot district would have a place to study and learn. Teachers would no longer need to hold classes wherever they could find a place, if at all.

The inability to hold regular school made the assessment of how many students might attend the school difficult. Through the work of the community and volunteers, young people will now have a place to attend school regularly.

After the school was cleaned up and the rooms painted, the villagers and the volunteers gathered on the porch of a nearby building. Everyone shared in the local bread, watermelon, and grapes that were offered by the villagers.

Tired from the work and heat, the volunteers were ready to get back to Kandahar Airfield. Spc. Folet Dussault of D Troop, 3/4 CAV captured the group's mood. Riding back he said, "It was a long, tiring day. But it was a good day."

Attacks

From A-1

government. "Everyone needs to remember that these insurgents, really their No. 1 goal is to bring down and destroy the legitimate and sovereign government of Iraq," he said. "And to do that they want to destabilize the country by attacking the infrastructure, by attacking its security forces, and also by attacking the multinational forces."

The general said efforts to enable Iraq's security forces to counter those attacks are going well. Training and equipping of Iraq's security forces continues, and more Iraqis are being trained and sent to duty, he said. Iraq's security forces can expect a significant amount of new equipment over the next two months, he added.

Just today, Lessel said, the military announced a large shipment of equipment had arrived for Iraqi forces. The shipment includes pickup trucks, body armor, AK-47 assault rifles and ammunition. Such equipment, he added, will help Iraq's security forces continue to grow in strength and capacity and to become more capable.

Lessel said the Aug. 5 attack by some 100 militia members loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr on an Iraqi police station in Najaf proved that capability.

He said Iraq's police force was able to fend off the attack without multinational force support. With the help of the Iraqi National Guard, he added, police were able later to fend off a second attack by more than 300 militia members. It was only with the chance of a third attack that multinational forces were called in, he said.

"This is a great example of how the Iraqi security forces are becoming more capable, and able to defend themselves," the general said.

Lessel expressed hope that the trend will continue, and that as Iraqi security forces begin to control their cities and towns, multinational forces can begin to withdraw.

"Our overarching goal is to try to get more of this localized control in all of the cities throughout the country over time," he said.

However, he added, the multinational force will stay in Iraq until Iraqi security forces can take care of the entire country and more support no longer is needed.

"At that point, when there is a stable environment and a legitimate government that is supported by the people, then at that time we can probably call this mission complete," he said.

Until that day, Lessel said, the multinational force will continue its mission of providing a secure and stable environment and to rebuild the country.

He said a "big focus" now has been on infrastructure security and that U.S. troops are working with Iraqi security forces to provide infrastructure protection throughout the country. He also noted that U.S. forces, along with other aid agencies, are making tremendous progress toward rebuilding the country -- "everything from health facilities, schools, power plants, to all the infrastructure projects across the country," he explained.

"We continue to make great progress, and that progress is accelerating," he said. "It's a long row to hoe, but we are making progress."

We want to hear from you

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.

A Soldier's Story

Commentary

1st Sgt. Robert Jennings
Co. A, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Rgt.

Aug. 2, 3:45 a.m. – A large force from Company A is mounted and rolling out the front gate. We are enroute to assist the first large scale operation planned, coordinated and executed by the Kirkuk police headquarters.

The plan: The police and Iraqi National Guard are working together cordoning and searching an entire neighborhood in the north sector of the city. The National Guard conducted the cordon, surrounding the neighborhood and blocking off all traffic in and out, and the police were to conduct house searches. Our role was to assign a fire team of four Soldiers to each set of 50 police officers. They were there to ensure that the search techniques that were taught were practiced. The neighborhood consists of approximately 800 homes.

After the National Guard was in place, the police moved in to stage. With the go ahead given by the police chief, the operation kicked off. The searches continued as the sun came up until around 8 a.m.

After the operation was concluded, comments concerning sustainments and improvements were forwarded to assist the police on the next operation. We did gain a few pieces of information and a few bad guys were rounded up. All in all, I think this operation is considered successful because it was planned and executed by the Iraqis with minimal help from coalition forces. This is one of our goals that they will be able to execute these operations on their own by the time we depart.

Aug. 4, 2:30 p.m. – Just received multiple reports from our observation posts of an explosion about 1,500 meters from the patrol base. Second platoon was dispatched along with police to investigate. After an initial assessment the platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Richard Woodruff sent back his initial report. An unknown man was pushing a cart containing ice down the middle of the road. Local residents said he left the cart in the middle of the road and ran away, jumped in a cab and left the area. About two minutes later, the ice cart exploded.

After further investigations we determined that the ice cart, containing four rockets, was being used as a firing platform probably intended for the airbase. The direction of the street aimed directly into the base. Something went wrong with the launch and the rockets exploded on site instead of launching.

> ***"There is no manual in any school that I've been to that could have prepared us for the different types of situations and problems that we have faced here."***
>
> ***- 1st. Sg. Robert Jennings***
> *Co. A, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Rgt.*

The rest of the week Co. A has been preparing for its change of command on Aug. 10. We will say goodbye to our current commander, Capt. Todd Moe, and welcoming Capt. Derek Bird from Lynchburg, Va.

As we prepare for our new commander, I only find it fitting to put our outgoing commander in this week's spotlight. Meet Capt. Todd Moe, company commander for Company A since March 2003. He is from San Diego, Calif. and has been in the Army for 14 years. Capt. Moe said that when they first were alerted for Afghanistan he understood exactly what the mission was going to be.

"When they changed the mission to Iraq, everyone thought we were going into a much more dangerous environment." He went on to say, "There is no manual in any school that I've been to that could have prepared us for the different types of situations and problems that we have faced here. The only reason we have been as successful is our ability to adapt. This has been most attributable to our most junior leaders in the company who have been able to problem solve in all the situations they've faced. All of them are an outstanding group of young men."

I asked Capt. Moe what his most satisfying moment as a commander was. He said, "When 1st Lt. Hollis, 3rd platoon leader, thanked me for putting his platoon on a combat mission just two days after he lost Staff Sgt. Nunes in an ambush. I think he realized I still had the confidence in his Soldiers even after this traumatic incident." I asked Capt. Moe to sum up progress here in Kirkuk in one sentence.

He said, "Even though it may seem slow, we are making a huge difference throughout the city." He finished his interview by saying hi to his mom, dad, wife and son. "To my wife Naomi and son Michael, please be patient with me, I'll be home soon." He also wanted to say thanks to all the families and friends who have sent packages and letters.

He went on to say, "Even though they may not have expressed it in a timely manner, it was definitely a huge moral booster and greatly appreciated. If the Soldiers couldn't use the items, they were distributed to the many needy families and children throughout the city."

A journalist's account of an R&R experience

Commentary

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
CJTF-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – When my sergeant told me I was going to be able to go home on rest and recuperation leave in July, I didn't think much of it. We had only been in Afghanistan for a week at the time (he told me back in March), and I was really focused on the mission.

As the first few months flew by, I saved up a lot of money, and my R&R was around the corner. I was definitely ready for it.

Joking with my peers, I called myself the "guinea pig" for how R&R was run. Let me tell you, it's a pretty squared away operation.

After receiving a brief about going home, and getting all of my leave information squared away, I was finally at the Bagram PAX Terminal awaiting a flight to Kuwait. We all loaded up on a C-130 aircraft for our five-hour and 45 minute flight to the staging country for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

By the time we landed in Kuwait, my rear was completely void of feeling because of the seats, but that wasn't bad. What was bad was the heat when we got off the plane. It was 135 degrees – no joke. As we stood out looking over vast desert flat lands, it felt as if we were all praying for a bus with air conditioning to come pick us up and take us out of the oven of Kuwait.

Soon charter busses with weak air conditioning answered our prayers, and we were off to Camp Doha. Camp Doha has paved roads, streetlights and buildings, something many of us hadn't seen in months. We were put into formations and then sent to stay in separate warehouses filled with hundreds of bunk beds, and told to "stand fast" in our separate warehouses. The air conditioning in the warehouse was extra cold, and I was overjoyed for that.

A few hours later we were herded into a nice office with metal chairs neatly set in rows in front of a projection screen. The screen had a graphic projected on it, obviously made in Microsoft Power Point, calling the briefing we were about to receive the "gateway" to R&R. Soon the briefing began and we were issued our flight itineraries. We were to fly to Germany the next night.

I went to midnight chow at the Camp Doha Dining Facility because I hadn't eaten all day. There were a few hundred others who seemed to join me that night in the chow hall. Steak and lobster were available, or French toast with eggs and bacon. I had steak and some lime Jello. It was good.

I went to bed late that night and woke up early. I think it was the anticipation of being home. I had also heard there was a Subway, Pizza Hut, Starbucks and other places to eat at the Post Exchange. I ate a double cheeseburger from Hardees with a large coke. I really shouldn't have though, because it made me sick later. They told us in the briefing that diet is one of the things we should watch when going home. I think deep down I knew it would make me sick, but I had to try it anyway.

Sickness aside, the day was long. Everyone was anticipating our flight to Germany, and then on to Dallas Fort Worth Airport in Texas. By the time the buses came and picked us up and we were loaded on the Boeing 737 aircraft, it was about 11 p.m. at night. I think everyone on the plane slept all the way to Germany.

A chaplain and some other military personnel greeted us in Germany's Rhein Main air terminal. We were given a briefing telling us to stay in our Desert Combat Uniforms and not to drink alcohol. For some reason I thought we would change into civilian clothes here, but it was ok. I just wanted to be home.

When we re-boarded our aircraft, it was decorated in a patriotic red-white and blue theme. The flight attendants were wearing mock Uncle Sam hats, and there were small U.S. flags everywhere around the aircraft. The song "Proud to be an American" was playing on the aircraft as we boarded, and our flight crew was glad to have Soldiers on their aircraft.

After a long flight across the Atlantic Ocean, we landed in Texas. Firefighters had their yellow trucks on the flight line, and sprayed water cannons at the aircraft to welcome us home. When we got off the plane, there were Americans with posters thanking us. Numerous people shook my hand with joy, and thanked me for my service. This was great.

When I went to get my ticket for my flight back to California, the woman at the counter bumped my ticket up to 1st Class because of my service to America. This was incredible.

By the time I got home, I had shaken so many hands, received hugs and more praise than I ever have as a Soldier. Time at home was a blessing, but so was the trip.

Voices of Lightning

Why is it important to stay vigilant against terrorism?

"It's important to protect our freedoms for the next generation."

Tanza Cooper
Family member

"To protect our families and loved ones, and ensure we don't have another September 11th."

Staff Sgt. Jesse Garcia
3rd Squadron, 4th Calvary Regiment
Section Sgt.

"If we don't take steps to prevent terrorism, we'll revert to a situation similar to the first gulf war. We have to protect the freedom of our children and grandchildren."

Staff Sgt. Letonja Nixon
125th Signal Battalion
Operations Sgt.

"As professional Soldiers, it's our job to defend the nation against threats to our freedom and security. We owe the people our best effort, because they are depending on us to protect them."

Pfc. Heidi Salway
HHC DIV
Paralegal

"Because we've seen what can happen now. 9/11 showed us we're not invulnerable anymore."

Spc. Yvonne Smith
84th Engineer Batallion
Transportation Specialist

"To protect our country and the people, and do the best job we can for them."

Spc. Robenson Joseph
84th Engineer Battalion
Heavy construction equipment operator

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Fallen Soldier remembered in Iraq

Sgt. Eishaw Meade

A Soldier kneels in front of a memorial for Spc. Joseph F. Herndon, Co. A, 1-27 IN BN, who was killed in action July 29 while on patrol in Hawijah, Iraq.

By Sgt. Eishaw Meade
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

To many, Spc. Joseph F. Herndon II may have seemed indestructible. Twice this dedicated Soldier, assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, looked into the face of death and survived. On April 7, an RPG hit his chest and failed to detonate while fighting in a battle in Hawijah, Iraq. Despite being wounded, he risked his life to aid two other injured Soldiers on his fire team, and helped carry them to safety.

June 27, he was again wounded while on patrol in the city of Huwayjah, when his vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device. For his selfless service, Herndon received two Purple Hearts and an Army Commendation Medal with Valor.

Then, some might say, when it seemed like the hard part was over and things were winding down, tragedy struck. After returning to Iraq from seeing his high school sweetheart, wife Melaine, on R&R, Herndon, 21, was mortally wounded during a sniper attack July 29 while pulling security during a patrol North of Hawijah.

Herndon was remembered by his fellow Gunslingers at a memorial service held recently at the Kirkuk Regional Airbase. Known for being the one man his squad could count on, his friends shared the contributions Herndon made to the bond all the Gunslingers share with each other.

"He bought a pick-up truck for the Soldiers to use, that did not have transportation," said Sgt. Christopher Mayberry of Co. A, 1-27 IN. "He didn't even need it, that is just the kind of guy Joe was."

"Specialist Walker," 1st Sgt. Fidelito Ordonio called out during a role call at the memorial service for Herndon.

"Here, first sergeant," a pain-filled voice answered.

"Specialist Herndon."

Silence

"Specialist Herndon."

Silence

Specialist Joseph F. Herndon," Ordonio called out, but no one answered.

A rifle shot broke the deafening silence. Taps began to play.

"He put himself on the line everyday and gave his life for his country," a tearful Soldier said after the ceremony. "We all take that risk when you're in a combat zone, but the hurt is so great when you lose one of your own."

Herndon was posthumously awarded a third Purple Heart and a Bronze Star Medal which is the Nation's fourth highest award for valor in combat.

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29th BCT Priority ID Card Processing Hours:

Approximately 2,500 Soldiers from the 29th Brigade Combat Team will be preparing Soldier Readiness Packets on Schofield Barracks Aug. 16 - 26. During this time, there will be possible traffic delays, and parking limitations. Additionally, each member of the unit will be inprocessing and obtaining a new identification card. The ID card processing hours below that have been set aside for the 29th BCT. For more information about changes to the ID card section hours, call 655-4104 or 655-1064.

Week One

Mon: Aug. 16,
(1 p.m. – 3 p.m.)

Tues: Aug. 17,
(7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
and (2:30 – 8:30 p.m.)

Wed: Aug. 18,
(7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
and (2:30 – 8:30 p.m.)

Thurs: Aug. 19,
(7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
and (2:30 – 8:30 p.m.)

Fri: Aug. 20,
(7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
and (2:30 – 8:30 p.m.)

Sat: Aug. 21,
(7 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.)

Sun: Aug. 22,
(7 a.m. – 8 p.m.)

Note: DEERS computers will be shutdown for maintenance on Sat., Aug. 21 at 3 p.m.

Week Two

Mon: Aug. 23,
7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.) and
(2:30 – 8:30 p.m.)

Tues: Aug. 24,
7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and
(2:30 – 8:30 p.m.)

Wed: Aug. 25,
7:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Thurs: Aug. 26,
7:30 a.m.– UTC (for late comers)

Fri: Aug. 27,
7:30 – 3 p.m. (late comers)

Briefs

22nd Annual MI Ball – The 22nd annual Military Intelligence Ball will take place Aug. 20 at the Renaissance Ilikai Waikiki Hotel. Tickets are $45. Call Staff Sgt. Mclean, 655-5360 or Pfc. Booth, 655-9575 for information.

The Schofield Barracks Military Police Found Property Program – Lost items can be received by showing valid identification, a detailed description of the property, and proof of ownership.

The Found Property office is located at the Provost Marshal Office, Bldg. 3010, Lyman Road, Schofield Barracks. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Found Property office has a variety of items. If you have items that have been lost or missing, contact Staff Sgt. Dorothy Bundra or Harold Roberts at 655-7114.

* Bike, purple in color, 18 speed
* NAPA Air Filter
* Blue Quicksilver wallet
* arm band (plastic) with contractor ID's
* Two computer monitors (broken), video game controller (race car steering wheel type).

Army's First Theater Support Vessel Detachment Activated — On July 30, the Army hosted two events; the activation of the US Army's first theater support vessel detachment, the 544th TSV Det. and the change of command ceremony for the 163rd Transportation Det.

The activation of the 544th TSV Det. was historic in that it's the only TSV detachment in the U.S. Army. The 544th was originally activated in April 1944 as a Harbor Craft Company.

The unit went through numerous changes and re-designations until it was deactivated in September 1992 at Fort Eustis, Va. The 544th Trans. Det. was re-designated as the 544th TSV Det. and activated as of July 16. The 544th TSV Det. is commanded by Chief Warrant Officer 3 Charles E. West assisted by Sgt. 1st Class Nelson Etrata as the detachment sergeant. "Let the High Speed Vessel adventure continue," said West.

The 163rd Transportation Detachment change of command ceremony was held on historic Ford Island in Pearl Harbor. The outgoing commander, CW3 Charles E. West was relieved by incoming commander, CW3 Glen A. Spence. CW3 Spence is the 9th commander of the 163rd since its activation in 1991.

The Hui O' Na Wahine Schofield Barracks Thrift Store extends it's hours – The store will be open on Thurs. night from 4 until 7p.m. (consignments taken from 4 - 6 pm). Regular hours are Tuesday, Thursday and the first Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Consignments are from 9 a.m. until noon on the days the thrift shop is open. The shop will be closed the third Thursday during the day, but open in the evening from 4 - 6 p.m. The thrift shop will be open that Friday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Volunteers are always needed. The thrift shop is in building 2107, located behind Army Community Service on Schofield Barracks. For more information call April at 624-4646.

Hui O' Wahine Craft and Information Fair – The Fort Shafter Hui O' Wahine Spouses' Club presents its Annual Craft and Community Information Fair at the Hale Ikena, Fort Shafter Building 711, from 5 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 25. All military ID card holders are invited and families are encouraged to attend.

More than 30 military and community organizations will be on hand during the fair. Participating organizations include Army Community Services, Boutiki, Fort Shafter Arts and Crafts Center, Boy and Girl Scout troops, the Honolulu Symphony Association, Hale Koa Hotel, MWR, the Joint Spouses' Conference, Tricare and the Fort Shafter Thrift Shop.

The fair also gives attendees the chance to shop till they drop. More than 20 craft vendors and independent home-party retailers will be available. Refreshments will also be served.

The Fort Shafter Hui O' Wahine invites all eligible community members to register for membership in the spouses' club. The Hui O' Wahine serves the Fort Shafter, AMR, TAMC, USARPAC, SOCPAC and JICPAC communities. Active membership is open to spouses of active duty and Reserve military members, spouses of DoD and red cross civilian employees and female active duty service members. Associate membership is open to spouses of military retirees and widows of active duty and retired military members. Hui fundraising is accomplished through the Fort Shafter Thrift Shop, which enabled the Hui O' Wahine to disburse more than $20,000 last year in welfare funds and academic scholarships. Annual membership is $20. New and returning Hui members can sign up for the club's member activity groups during the fair. For more information, contact Amanda Purdom, 234-2816, or Beth Roussel, 839-2458.

Boating Skills and Seamanship Class to be taught Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 18 is offering Boating Skills and Seamanship classes to the public in two sections at McDonalds Pearlridge Uptown. Classes will be held on Monday and Thursday evenings beginning Monday, Sept. 13 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Section one, Boating Skills and Safety, $35 fee and includes a manual and exams. This course meets U.S. Coast Guard, state, and national boating education requirements. Combined courses are offered for a $60 fee and students completing section one may sign up for the second for the reduced fee. These courses are designed to make the boater more safety conscious and safer operators. Send a check payable to USCG AUX F-18 to this address:

ATTN: Kawika Warren
23 Kimo Drive
Honolulu, HI 96817
Contact: Robert Keller
E-mail: rkeller@verizon.net
Phone: 258-3489

Funded Legal Education Program – The Office of The Judge Advocate General is now accepting applications for the Army's Funded Legal Education Program. Under this program, the Army projects to send up to 15 active duty commissioned officers to law school at government expense if funding permits. Selected officers will attend law school beginning in the fall of 2005 and will remain on active duty while attending law school.

Interested officers should review Chapter 14, AR 27-1 (The Judge Advocate General's Funded Legal Education Program) to determine their eligibility. This program is open to commissioned officers in the rank of second lieutenant through captain. Applicants must have at least two, but not more than six years of total active federal service at the time legal training begins. Eligibility is governed by statute (10 U.S.C. 2004) and is non-waivable.

Eligible officers interested in applying should immediately register for the earliest offering of the Law School Admission Test. Applicants must send their request through command channels, to include the officer's branch manager at HRC, with a copy furnished to the Office of The Judge Advocate General, ATTN DAJA-PT, 1777 North Kent Street, Rosslyn, VA 22209-2194, to be received NLT Nov. 1. Submission of the application well in advance of the deadline is advised.

Interested officers should contact their local Staff Judge Advocate for further information.

Hui O' Na Wahine Membership and Community Sign-up Night – The Hui O' Na Wahine, an all ranks club for women on Schofield Barracks, will hold its community membership and activities sign-up night from 5 to 8 p.m. Aug. 30 at the Nehelani on Schofield Barracks. More than 50 vendors and community organizations will attend. Anyone interested in being a vendor should call Amy Snyder at 624-4989. Anyone interested in becoming a Hui member, annual membership cost is $20 for E-6 and below, and $25 for E-7 and above. Membership includes a monthly magazine, membership directory and invitation to monthly events.

Cub Scout Joining Night – The Cub Scouts of Pack 197, supporting families residing on Aliamanu Military Reservation, invite all families with boys in 1st through 5th grades to attend "Joining Night" on Sept. 11 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Mokulele Elementary School cafeteria. The purpose of this event is to provide AMR families an opportunity to learn about the Cub Scouts and to join Pack 197. For more information, call Bob Hoelscher at 833-7623 or e-mail rhoelscher@hawaii.rr.com.

Interviewing Techniques – Does your stomach knot up when you think about going for an interview? Learn some hints and basic interviewing skills to be the best candidate for the job. The workshop will be held on Sept. 9 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Army Community Service classroom in building 2091, Schofield Barracks. Call ACS at 655-2400 for information.

Women's Equality Day Celebration – The 10th Annual Women's Equality Day Celebration will be held at 7 a.m. Aug. 28 at Stoneman Field on Schofield Barracks. There will be a 5k Fun Run, a 1-mile Keiki Run, a guest speaker, keiki activities and information booths. Call 655-3578 or 655-8389 for more information or for a race application.

New Hours of the Fort Shafter Vehicle Registration Office – The public can register or unregister vehicles, weapons, and bicycles at the Fort Shafter Vehicle Registration Office, building 1599, Fort Shafter Flats during the following hours: Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Registration and unregistration services will not be available on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and federal holidays. Call 438-1092 for information.

Free Basic Skills Course – Brush up on math and reading, get ready for college and improve GT scores with a free basic skills course offered by the 9th RSC at Fort Shafter Flats. Courses are 60 hours each. They will be held Oct. 21 to Dec. 13. All classes are held 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Room 105, building 1554, Fort Shafter Flats. Call 438-1600 Ext. 3293; or e-mail education@9rsc.army.mil for more information.

American Red Cross CPR Class – The Red Cross will hold a CPR class from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 28 at the Schofield Barracks Red Cross Office. This course will cover adult, infant and child CPR, First Aid and AED. The cost for military ID cardholders is $53. For more information or to register, call the Red Cross office at 655-4927.

All Army sports application deadlines – Here are the deadlines for the following 2004 All Army Sports: Men's and Women's All Army 10 Miler team - Aug. 23. (This team will compete in a separate international running division for world-class military teams). 2005 All Army Sports deadlines are as follows: Men's and women's bowling - Nov. 1. Men's and women's boxing - Nov. 12. Men's and women's wrestling - Nov. 24. Cross country - Nov. 29. Applications (DA Form 4762-R, Jan 01) must be submitted through the USAG-HI, CRD Sports Office, Kaala Recreation Center, Building 556, Schofield Barracks. Applications are available at all Army Hawaii Physical Fitness Centers. Athletes obtaining the application on Form Flow must ensure it is the updated Jan. 01 edition. Earlier editions are not accepted by DA Sports and will be returned to sender. Failure to make the event deadline due to return of application or resubmission lies with the applicant. Call 655-9914 for more information.

"Golden Knights" Tryouts – The U.S. Army Parachute Team, "Golden Knights" is accepting applications to attend its annual Assessment and Selection Program in September. A downloadable version of the application is available on the Golden Knights' web site: www.armygoldenknights.com. To become a Golden Knight applicants must have a minimum of 150 freefall parachute jumps, a flawless civilian and military record and volunteer to become Airborne qualified. Applications are now being accepted, packets can be sent to the U.S. Army Parachute Team P.O. Box 70126, Fort Bragg, NC 28307. Call the Golden Knight administration office at 910-396-4800 for information.

205th MI Bn. Activation Ceremony – The 205th Military Intelligence Battalion will conduct an activation ceremony at 10 a.m. Oct. 1 at Palm Circle on Fort Shafter. The ceremony will begin with the deactivation of Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, followed by the activation of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Company A and Company C. In the case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be conducted in the Fort Shafter Physical Fitness Center.

Protestant Women of the Chapel – Protestant Women of the Chapel at Schofield Barracks welcomes all military spouses to their weekly Bible study and time of fellowship. Meetings are held each Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. in room D-9 of the Main Post Chapel on Schofield Barracks. Pre-arranged on-site child care is provided. Call Effie at 624-8251 for more information. For child care, call Sonya at 455-4011.

84th Eng. Bn. winning hearts and minds in Iraq

By Capt. Karl D. Jansen
84th Eng. Bn.

AL HATYMA, Iraq – Soldiers of Headquarters and Support Company, 84th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) completed a two-month Civil Military Operation in a Shia Muslim village Aug. 2.

Al Hatyma lies atop an ancient bank of the Tigris River near Logistics Support Area Anaconda, home of HSC. The riverbank is a large eroded mass of rich sediment ideal for growing many of the local produce, such as citrus fruit, melons and a variety of vegetables.

The local sheik, Yosef Al Hatyma, made contact with the LSA Anaconda Civil Affairs officials in May 2004 requesting earthmoving support from the Army to help smooth the large sediment outcrop behind his village to prepare it for farming.

Members of the 84th ECB (H) visited Al Hatyma in late May to conduct reconnaissance of the project and to meet with Yosef and his associates. Traveling throughout Iraq is risky business, and the Soldiers involved in the convoy remained vigilant as they traveled in tight confines through the village to the sheik's home.

Locals kept close eyes on the Soldiers with a guarded suspicion that is common within the Sunni triangle. Upon arrival, the nerves of the Soldiers eased as the unit was warmly received by the sheik, members of his family and the many children of the village.

Capt. Karl D. Jansen

Soldiers of HSC, 84th Eng. Bn. use bulldozers to level the large deposit of sediment left by the Tigris River, which is now home to Al Hatyma.

After formal introductions, the leaders of the 84th enjoyed a round of piping hot sweet tea on the porch of Yosef's home while getting to know each other and discussing the upcoming project.

Yosef is a very important local figure to the Iraqi people and to Coalition Forces. LSA Anaconda is attacked nearly every day with sporadic mortar and rocket fire. Each attack is analyzed to determine the point of origin of the munition, and it has been illustrated that no attacks are launched from the village of Al Hatyma.

Undoubtedly, Yosef's leadership is the reason why the village remains friendly. All villages in Iraq are led by the sheiks, and they govern the overall area by acting together as a council.

It is hoped that Yosef's example will be followed by the neighboring areas and they will learn that a healthy relationship with Coalition Forces keeps everyone safer and creates more opportunities to bring services and aid to their villages.

Once the scope of work was agreed upon, members of HSC's equipment platoon developed a construction schedule based on weekly visits to the village. Equipment platoon is comprised of heavy construction equipment such as bulldozers and hydraulic excavators, as well as the transport trucks necessary to haul these items throughout the area of operations.

The plan was to use bulldozers to level the eroded silt deposit and then grade the area to leave a smooth surface ready for development by the village. Over the next two months, the platoon conducted tactical ground convoys to Al Hatyma each week and spent five to six hours during each visit operating equipment and interacting with the local population.

A typical visit began with the establishment of local security followed by the local children swarming the Soldiers to welcome them. All of the children were very interested in the Soldiers, enjoyed watching our heavy equipment, and loved trying to barter for anything and everything in sight. Most children spoke enough broken English to ask for simple items- soccer balls, pens, chocolate, bandages, and even sunglasses.

The Soldiers learned very quickly how to handle the large groups of children so that the situation would not get out of control. One of the most effective ways of keeping the children in line was to take group photos with digital cameras. Children were amazed that a photograph could be taken of them and they were able to immediately see it on the small screens of the cameras. Kids posed alone, with siblings, and friends just to see a "pic-cha" of themselves.

Bonds between the Soldiers and children grew quickly and often they remembered each other's names on subsequent visits, had their own special handshake, and just enjoyed their time together.

Around noon each day, work ceased on the project and Soldiers were invited inside Yosef's home for a lunch prepared especially for them. The break was timed nicely to get the Soldiers out of the sun as temperatures approached 120 degrees.

Inside a large open room, Soldiers sat on chairs and sofas lining the walls around a long serving table. Yosef's assistants served the meal family style, preparing plates of rice, chicken and relish as well as bowls of okra soup and sides of locally baked bread and chilled watermelon.

After the meal, hot tea was served and the Soldiers, the sheik, and other villagers relaxed and conversed before heading back to work. Although skeptical about the digestive effects of the local cuisine, our Soldiers displayed manners and courage by trying everything. Most gave positive reviews, while others spent time over the next few days reliving the experience in the latrine.

At the completion of the final visit, nearly 20 acres of previously useless land was cleared, leveled, graded, and turned over to the people of the village. Adults and children alike were amazed at the capabilities of our equipment and skills of our operators. They were also excited about the prospects of developing the land for gardens and perhaps a nice place for the children to play football.

More important than development of the land was the emergence of a mutual trust between our Soldiers and the Iraqi people. Both realize that the operations like this must continue and must succeed in order to build relations and establish the conditions necessary for Coalition Forces to leave Iraq in a state where it will prosper in peace.

Equipment Continues to Flow to Iraqi Security Forces

American Forces
Press Service

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8, 2004 – Iraqi security forces received "massive shipments" of weapons and material from coalition partners in the last week, as the security effort to assist the Iraqi government in equipping its forces continues, a Multinational Force Iraq news release announced today.

As of July 28, Iraqi army, coastal defense, air, and National Guard forces had received more than 2,500 vehicles, 600 radios, 55,000 weapons and 25,000 pieces of body armor. Interior ministry forces, including police, border enforcement and facilities protection services, had received more than 6,800 vehicles, 14,000 radios, 101,000 weapons, and nearly 46,000 pieces of body armor.

Equipment totals for all forces eventually reached nearly 290,000 weapons, 24,000 vehicles, 75,000 radios, and more than 190,000 pieces of body armor, officials said.

Also last week, the 5th battalion activated while two additional battalions deployed to the Baghdad area, joining the previously deployed Iraqi Intervention Force's 2nd Battalion, to form an army security force of three fully trained regular army units in and around the capital city.

In other news from Iraq, an improvised explosive device detonated under a road wheel on an Army M3 Bradley fighting vehicle near Samarra around 5 p.m. Aug. 7. The patrol engaged anti-Iraqi forces in a sedan nearby, but the enemy broke contact, according to a multinational force news release. There were no injuries or damage reported.

An Iraqi National Guard soldier was killed and another was wounded Aug. 7 when an IED detonated near Balad Ruz. The soldiers were investigating an IED when a secondary IED exploded, a multinational force news release said. About two hours later, the release continued, an IED exploded near Dujayl, setting a contract tractor-trailer on fire.

Another release reported that two more IEDs were found in Balad Ruz Aug 7. Iraqi National Guard soldiers found one and moved it to a vacant lot, where soldiers secured the area until an explosive ordnance device team destroyed it. The second IED, consisting of four rocket-propelled grenade rounds, was found by 1st Infantry Division soldiers. EOD personnel responded and disposed of it, the release said.

Army offers bigger enlistment bonuses

By Sgt. Lorie Jewell
Army News Service

FORT KNOX, Ky – The Army is beefing up cash bonus programs for new recruits and allowing them to collect from a combination of programs they qualify for.

Meeting the right criteria could net a recruit as much as $15,000 for a three-year enlistment and $20,000 for signing up for four years in some high-priority jobs, said Douglas Smith, public affairs officer for the U.S. Army Recruiting Command. The maximum available for qualifying recruits going into non-priority military occupational specialties for three years is $10,000.

Three-year enlistment bonuses were previously capped at $6,000.

"The fastest way to reach the maximum is to ship quickly, have some college, and pick the right MOS," Smith said.

Recruiting and retention rates are holding steady despite concerns about current operations straining the force, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker told reporters in a Pentagon briefing last month. The active Army is projected to reach 101 percent of its recruiting goal for the current fiscal year, Schoomaker said.

But with recruiting being a key tool in the Army's effort to grow the force by 30,000 Soldiers, Schoomaker said officials would continue looking at ways to keep the rates on target – including bonuses.

Enlisting for at least three years in a critical-need job – infantryman (11X) or cannon crewmember (13B), for instance – and reporting to basic training by Sept. 27 brings a $6,000 bonus to qualifying recruits, Smith said. The bonus is $9,000 for high-priority jobs like fire support specialist (13F), petroleum supply specialist (92F) or food service operations (92G), with the same report date.

"That's a limited time bonus that could roll over or change, depending on the needs of the Army," Smith said.

College education can earn a qualified recruit even more money. A bachelor's degree could net an $8,000 bonus; associate or two-year degrees, a $7,000 bonus; $6,000 for high school graduates with 60 or more semester hours; and $3,000 for 30 to 59 semester hours.

The Army previously offered bonuses of $3,000 and $6,000 for college-level education, Smith said.

Under the Civilian Acquired Skill program, having certain civilian job skills can bring a qualified recruit a $3,000 bonus.

Additional information about the bonus programs is available from a local Army recruiter or at the recruiting command's web site: www.goarmy.com.

"If Soldiers know of anyone who is interested in joining, this is a good time to enlist," Smith said.

U.S. Army, Pacific helps to build a brighter future for youth

By Sharon Mulligan
U.S. Army, Pacific Public Affairs Office

Maj. Kirk Zecchin

As part of a Humanitarian Civic Assistance Project in the Republic of the Philippines, U.S. Navy Mobile Construction Battalion Three Seabees worked with U.S. Army, Pacific personnel and Philippine Army Engineers from the 564th Engineer Battalion to construct a four-room schoolhouse, a new restroom facility, and on the renovation of an existing two-room schoolhouse.

From a simple plot of land once adorned by grass and trees, a new center of learning has taken seed and grown into a complex, dedicated to educating the youth of Batangas City, Republic of the Philippines.

As part of a U.S. Army, Pacific Humanitarian and Civic Assistance mission, a combined Philippine and American military construction team recently completed work on a new four-room schoolhouse. Troops also completed construction of a new restroom facility on the grounds and on the renovation of an existing two-room schoolhouse.

The Jose C. Pastor Elementary School complex offers the opportunity of a brighter future for the children attending classes there. The new facilities feature modern conveniences, quality construction, and upgraded furniture.

"These facilities will greatly improve the quality of life for the young students," said Maj. Robb Husbands, 412th Engineer Command (Forward), Hawaii operations officer with the Assistant Chief of Staff for Engineering, U.S. Army, Pacific. "The old school did have running water and electricity, but was overcrowded and had substandard restroom facilities.

"The new classrooms are much nicer in terms of quality of construction and furnishings. This mission has drastically improved the conditions at the school compound. It will now provide children with a wonderful place to learn and grow," he said.

Humanitarian and Civic Assistance missions are part of the Pacific Command's Theater Security Cooperation Plan. These projects were completed through the joint efforts of the U.S. Navy Mobile Construction Battalion Three Seabees, U.S. Army, Pacific personnel, and Philippine Army Engineers from the 564th Engineer Battalion.

About 400 students in grades first through fifth will attend school at the complex, which is in an area about 85 miles south of Manila on the Luzon Island.

These types of missions are important for the Army to be involved in as they provide service members with real world deployment and construction training, Husbands said. Military personnel have the opportunity to use and develop their military occupational specialty skills as well as learn about other cultures and local construction techniques. "In addition to great training, the HCA program offers engagement with other country's armed forces, which helps to develop shared techniques and understanding."

Helping to welcome the community to this new complex were dignitaries and military personnel who helped make it a reality. Among those in attendance were Sarah Fargo, wife of U.S. Pacific Command commander Adm. Thomas Fargo, Susan Abaya, wife of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Gen. Narciso Abaya, and Batangas City Mayor Eduardo Dimacuha.

USARPAC and the 412th Engineer Command (Forward), Hawaii takes projects like this one from the "cradle to the grave." "We plan, design, provide quality assurance, and work with the host country's armed forces," Husbands said. "It's wonderful to see a project completed that will help so many youth."

Planning the Humanitarian and Civic Assistance projects takes many months and involves coordination with various United States and foreign government agencies.

"The whole process takes about a year, with the construction phase lasting about 45-60 days," Husbands said.

Working on humanitarian missions like this one are win-win situations for everyone, said mission contracting officer Master Sgt. Steve Walton, Army Contracting Agency, Pacific Region. The troops involved gain experience, the community gains new facilities, and the local economy also benefits through construction contracts and purchases, he explained.

"The Army and our country also benefit by helping to improve the lives of others," Walton said. "We create goodwill and build relationships with other countries."

Handheld digital assistance hits battlefield

By Jennifer Sowell
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - Technology that has been available on Soldiers' vehicles since the early '90s is now being designed into a portable device.

The Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below Commander's Digital Assistant, known as the FBCB2-CDA, can be used all over the battlefield to track Soldiers, map the battlefield and send digital messages.

"A unit with the 18th Airborne Corps is currently training with the latest generation of the device," said Lt. Col. David Gallop, product manager for Land Warrior. "They will deploy in the fall with about 1,000 devices to gather information on insurgents."

User evaluations from this use in the field will be used to make adjustments and develop the next generation of the device, which will become common software for all land forces within the Department of Defense.

Jennifer Sowell

Col. Richard Hansen demonstrates the FBCB2-CDA to media representatives.

"Until recently there was no powerful, affordable and portable processing abilities available," said Gallop. "This new technology puts battle command in the Soldier's hand."

The device is a portable, ruggedized, digital information system designed to give commanders, leaders and Soldiers across the battlefield improved command and control capabilities, data sharing and enhanced situational awareness.

The lightweight, handheld device operates on an Intel X-scale 500+ MHz processor and uses satellites that enable over-the-horizon communications, an integrated Global Positioning System and Blue Force Tracking to map the battlefield. Each device is networked so that all Soldiers are working off the same information.

Soldiers use drop-down menus on a color, LCD touch screen operating on a Microsoft Windows system for compact devices to use the many features of the device. These features include sending digital and voice messages and reports, requesting support at specific locations, mapping the area with locations of friendly forces, and using information provided by other Soldiers in the system to plan movements and operations.

The device also has the capability to be cleared quickly by the Soldier or remotely to protect operational security in case it falls into enemy hands.

The FBCB2-CDA is being incorporated onto the battlefield through a spiral development process. A handful of systems were developed from the original idea in September 2002, and through feedback from internal testing and field use, changes were made over the course of the last two years, said Gallop.

The spiral development process allows an improved product to be developed at less cost, in less time and with higher levels of satisfaction from the Soldiers who use the device because their feedback prompted changes and improvements along the way, he said.

"Every Soldier is a sensor," said Lt. Col. Steve Iwicki, deputy director for Actionable Intelligence, G2. "Those who observe first and see first on the ground must pass information up quickly for analysis."

"The device allows Soldiers to get messages across with speed and precision. It helps cut through the fog of war," said Gallop.

The FBCB2-CDA enables Soldiers all over the battlefield to share and view information that is linked to show relationships without filtering anything out, constructing an overall picture of the battlefield.

For example, a Soldier spots a sniper in his area. The location of the enemy can be entered into the CDA where it is immediately accessible to all Soldiers with the device. Other Soldiers now know to be aware of the enemy in that location and can plan to avoid the area, or eliminate the threat.

"The Soldier will be connected to a network for the first time, with the ability to turn local knowledge into global knowledge," said Iwicki. "This helps commanders visualize how people and events are linked."

All applications of the device serve to gather intelligence and save Soldiers' lives, said Gallop.

"We want to get information out, but we want to get it right so it doesn't put Soldiers at risk," said Gallop. "This device does the job and does it safely for the Soldiers."

Spc. Claudia K. Bullard

Col. Richard Pedersen, commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light), listens as his words are interpreted to Mullah Fayez, head of religious leaders in Kandahar. Pedersen met with the Mullahs to discover what they needed for reconstruction in their city and to pledge his support for the projects. Fayez, (third from right) said he appreciates Pedersen's time and invited Pedersen and his staff to consider letting them provide hospitality for the next meeting.

Making the connection for Reconstruction

By Spc. Claudia K. Bullard
105th Mobile Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD, Afghanistan –Task Force Bronco Commander Col. Richard Pedersen, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Light), met with local religious leaders at the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team's headquarters in Kandahar City Aug. 5.

Pedersen and the mullahs came together to discuss possible reconstruction projects and to build a common vision for Kandahar's future.

"We must spark hope and then turn hope into trust," said Pedersen. "In time, trust can turn into belief that the vision — the dream – can come true. Then the Afghani people can believe that the Afghan government and the international community can make these things happen." Pedersen said this will take time and assured the leaders he was here to reinforce the commitment.

Mullah Fayez, in charge of mosques and education for Kandahar province, was the spokesperson and leader of the participating mullahs.

A mullah is a Muslim religious leader who is trained in the doctrine and law of Islam. Fayez answered Pedersen's opening remarks by saying, "On behalf of my office, thank you to you and your Soldiers for leaving your family behind and coming here to repair Kandahar." Fayez then, in Muslim tradition with hands open and palms up, offered a prayer asking forgiveness from Allah and a good life for all present and for everyone in Afghanistan.

Third Brigade information officer Capt. Todd Schmidt said this is the second meeting between Pedersen and the mullahs since the 25th ID (L) took over operations at Kandahar Air Field in April.

He said the meetings "build and maintain positive relationships with religious leaders." According to Schmidt, mullahs wield a strong moral authority that carries over to everyday village life. This is especially true, he said, where 86 percent of the country is illiterate. Schmidt said the mullahs, by nature of their education, have authority and power in a village. The people seek him for advice because he is a teacher and has made a pilgrimage to Mecca, giving him a worldview perspective.

As part of his opening remarks Pedersen said, upon learning of his deployment, he began studying Afghan history, paying special attention to the last 25 years under the Soviets, the mujahadeen and the Taliban.

"For whatever the reason," said Pedersen, "the Afghan people have suffered. I have only studied it; you have lived it."

Pedersen told the mullahs the coalition forces are here for two purposes. One is to drive out the insurgents and the other is to support the Afghan people. "The way to drive out the insurgents," said Pedersen, "is to reach out to the people, giving them a new message. We are here to help the Afghan people to build a better life for themselves." But, said Pedersen, "the Afghan leaders and people alike must learn to dream again."

To illustrate, Pedersen related a story of an infantry operation in the Arghandab Valley where, because there was no district leader, he met with some village elders.

While drinking tea with them he asked their leader if he could dream of an Arghandab Valley five years from now, what kind of place would it be? Pedersen said the elder was obviously puzzled, so he then clarified asking the elder if he could imagine the Arghandab with peace, security, prosperity and education.

Pedersen said the village leader answered him saying, "I had such dreams once and the Soviets came and destroyed them. I dreamed these dreams again and the mujahadeen came and destroyed these dreams. And I dreamed them yet again and the Taliban came in and destroyed them, too."

Then the village elder asked Pedersen, "Are you here to build or to destroy?"

Pedersen said he told the village elder the coalition is here to build. To the mullahs he said, "I tell you we are here to help the Afghan people to build a better life for themselves. Afghan leaders and Afghan people must learn to dream again of good things.

This time," said Pedersen, "we will build and not destroy."

As part of the rebuilding process Pedersen laid down the bottom line by urging the mullahs to reject extremist ideology and embrace traditional Islam that is in "line with the Afghan government."

Fayez agreed this needed to be done saying he and Pedersen shared the same view. "The Afghan people have a hope in the Coalition Force. The Soviets and Taliban also had good things to say but finally people realized they were not here to rebuild. A true and outspoken scholar would never take their side," said Fayez. "The Taliban would not allow the true scholar to preach."

Fayez thinks if schools are built in Kandahar then the kids will be able to get an education here under their scholars instead of leaving the country.

He said, "If we build a lot of schools and educate a lot of kids so the old way of thinking will not affect the younger generation, people will wake up and take the old knowledge out of their mind and come to new light."

Fayez understands the seriousness of dealing with extremist ideology. Four members of Fayez's office have been killed by Taliban recently. Also one of the mullahs who attended the first meeting last May has been killed.

Fayez himself had been placed under house arrest by the Taliban for teaching "according to Islam. The Taliban did not want me preaching because the people would understand the true word."

But, said Fayez, the Qu'ran itself preaches persistence and patience. He and members of his office continue to work everyday despite fears of being killed.

As the meeting came to a close, Mullah Wakil Mehmodi, a poet as well as a holy man, stood before the group to tell about a dream he had in the Soviet time. He said he dreamt in his mind and his heart the whole world would become like one nation.

"People would welcome you like a family," he said. I would like to see the whole world together, not fighting."

"God is in charge of all humankind not just Islam. If one hand hurts, the whole body hurts," said Mehmodi. "The world should be like that. When one country hurts, the whole world should hurt."

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Submit it to HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY for consideration for publication
Photo must have Army content. Email your photo, a brief description, name and phone number to
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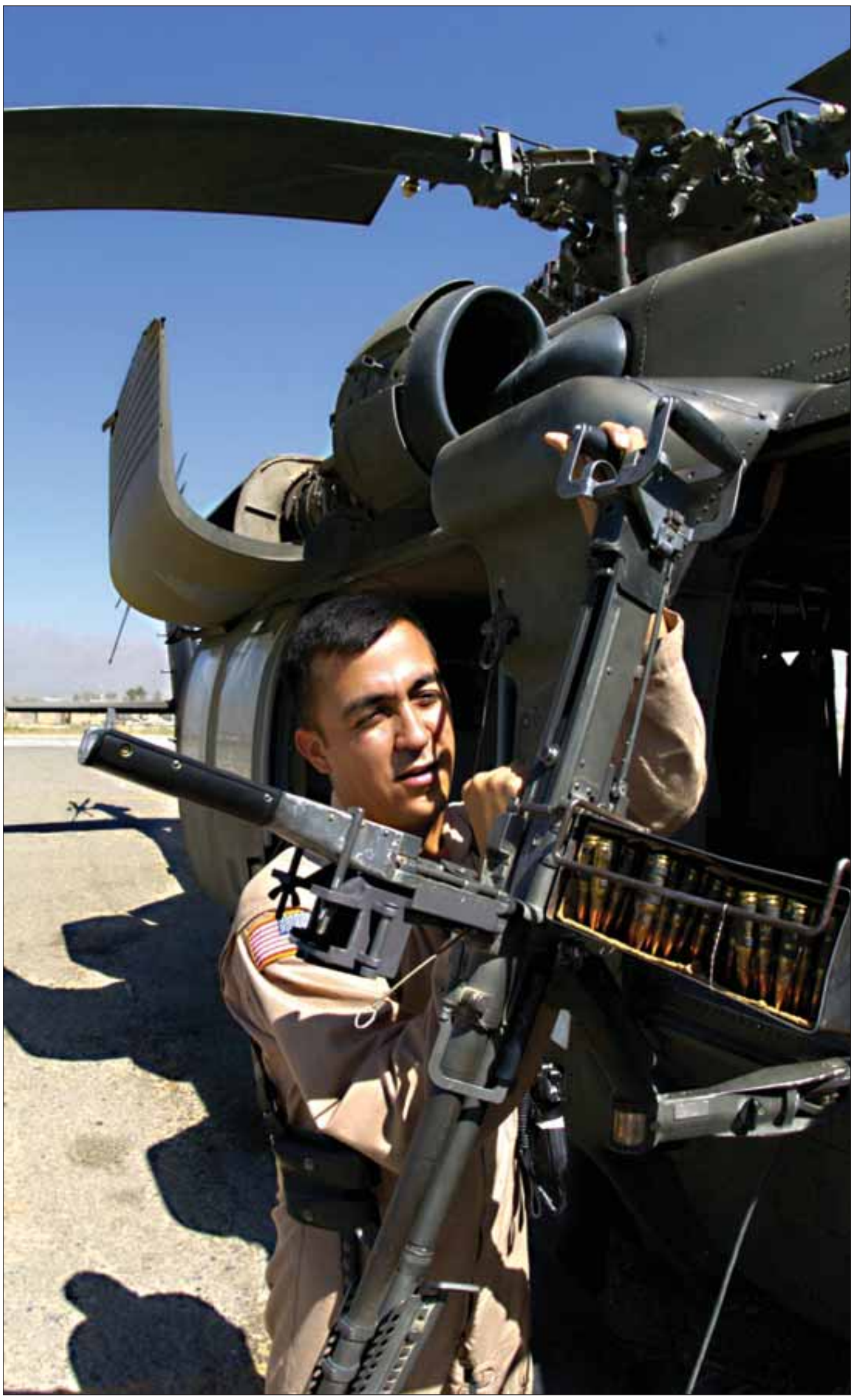

Spc. Daniel Kelly

Sgt. Jose Madrid, a UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief with Co. Co, 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, assembles a M-60 Machine Gun before a mission on Aug. 5.

Blackhawk crew chiefs strive for mission safety

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
CJTF-76 Public Affairs Office

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan – Of all the important missions in Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan, aviation crew chiefs have a diverse one. From being aircraft mechanics, to machine gunners, these Soldiers are challenged on a daily basis.

Sgt. Jose Madrid, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter crew chief with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment said his mission is unique.

"We do everything," Madrid said. "We do resupply, troop transport, aerial reconnaissance, emergency medical evacuation, quick reaction forces and VIP visits."

Madrid said he has flown on missions almost every day since being in Afghanistan and said his mission as an aviation mechanic is much different than an auto mechanic.

"You can't just pull over in a cloud to change a tire," he said. "Safety is the most important thing."

Madrid, among many other helicopter crew chiefs, has been here since March and said the hardest part of his job isn't his mission.

"Being away from family is the hardest part," he said.

Fortunately for Madrid, the Rest and Recuperation program set up for deployed Soldiers allowed him to take part in an important part of parenting.

"I was able to be home to see my second child born," he said.

Aside from being away from his wife and two children, Madrid said the most difficult part of flying would be night missions.

"You have no peripheral vision at night because of the Night Vision Goggles," he said. "But sometimes when the moon is out, you can see just as well as if it were day."

Madrid said he spends a lot of time in the air, but also a lot of time on the ground ensuring the Army's more than $1 million UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter stays airborne.

"Just one rotor blade from the top costs over $100,000," he said. "We have to ensure than the aircraft is maintained efficiently because we fly every day."

Although there are months to go in Madrid's mission, he said he plans on continuing mission success.

225th FSB hosts Iraqi National Guard CSS visit

225th FSB

FOB WARRIOR, Iraq – As U.S. Forces continue to train and assist the Iraqi National Guard to be self-sufficient a key area that has not received a lot of attention is the ING Combat Service Support structure and training.

In mid-July the 225th Forward Support Battalion began working with the Kirkuk ING Brigade Headquarters to develop a CSS training plan for the 207th,208th and 209th Battalions and the brigade supply and logistics shop. Maj. Rob Weaver, executive officer for 225th FSB, Capt. Herb Willingham, 225th FSB training officer and Capt. Karl Hatala the 225th ING liaison, met with the ING brigade commander and executive officer to determine the areas where they wanted assistance.

Brig. Gen. Anwar laid out several focus areas to include: property accountability, supply procedures, equipment service schedules, vehicle dispatching, repair parts management, maintenance facility layout, weapons maintenance and medical training.

The ING leadership is very interested in this because they understand in order to be self-sufficient they must be capable of supporting themselves and maintaining their own equipment. The ING are very appreciative of the vehicles and equipment U.S. Forces have provided them, and they understand if it is not maintained, it will not last.

After the initial coordination meetings, it was determined that the best way to get the ball rolling was to do a site visit and tour of the FSB logistics facilities on FOB Warrior. On Aug. 3, key logisticians from the three ING battalions and the brigade supply and logistics shop visited FOB Warrior. The battalion executive officer, supply and logistics officer, maintenance officer and medical platoon leader from each unit came to FOB Warrior.

Lt. Col. Donnie Walker, commander, 225th FSB, gave a welcome briefing and orientation for the 13 Iraqi officers in the Ivory Combat Clinic Classroom. After the overview, the 225th FSB warrant officers and medical platoon leaders were introduced to the ING leadership. It was determined the best instructors and technical experts the 225th had for this training were the warrant officers, who are the logistical experts within the brigade.

Courtesy photo

CW4 Andres Leandry gives Iraqi National Guard representatives a brief overview of maintenance operations during a tour of 225th FSBs maintenance shop in July.

Once the introductions were complete, the ING medical platoon leaders were linked up with Capt. Joe Shaha, Company C, 225th FSB treatment platoon leader. Shaha and three ING representatives toured the ICC. Shaha pointed out the concept of patient flow through the treatment tent, including the capabilities of patient hold and the procedures for requesting further medical evacuations.

Additionally, the Iraqi National Guardsmen were shown a UH60A MEDEVAC aircraft and given a short description of the aircraft's capabilities.

When asked about the experience, Shaha replied, "It was interesting to listen to the perspectives of the medical ING representatives. Their biggest concern, understandably, was their lack of reliable logistical support.

"Because of the constraints caused by their lack of resources, the technical and operational training the need for medics is lacking but, the will to improve is definitely there, and each of the officers I spoke to are eager to take charge and excel," Shaha said.

While the medics toured the ICC, the rest of the group headed for the 225th Unit Maintenance Section to observe organizational maintenance operations. Chief Warrant Officer 2 Danny Taylor, 225th FSB battalion maintenance officer, provided a walking tour of his area taking the time to explain some of the scheduled services being conducted and also how unscheduled maintenance is performed.

The ING officers received a brief overview of dispatching procedures, service scheduling, prescribed load list management, tool room procedures and the Unit Level Logistics-Ground, or ULLS-G, System. The ING BMOs were very interested in watching Spc. Barney work on a M998 HMMVW engine and were ready to provide assistance if the group did not have to move to the Strike Lightning Supply Support Activity.

After the ING tour Taylor said, "When I deployed, I never thought I'd be briefing the Iraqi National Guard on maintenance procedures. When I think about the big picture though, I realize it will enhance or improve their overall way of doing things, especially maintenance."

Barney also said, "It was good to know that our operations can help ING better their operations. I was glad to be a part of the ING learning how we operate."

CW2 Leonard Pettis and 2nd Lt. Andre Fields provided a tour of the SSA highlighting the five major areas of their operation: stock control, receiving section, issue section, storage section and the turn-in section. During the tour, the ING officers took the time to make some observations about their sponsor battalion's part bins and provided some good natured jabs at them, depending how much equipment was in the bins.

The last stop on the tour was CW4 Andres Leandry's Direct Support automotive repair shop. Leandry provided the complete rundown of the DS automotive mission and the differences between his operation and Taylor's operation. All of the Iraqi counterparts were familiar with the different levels of maintenance since most had experience in the Iraqi Army maintenance operations.

The greatest area of interest at DS automotive was a M916 tractor in the shop for a cab replacement. This was probably one of the largest pieces of equipment most had the opportunity to see taken apart.

The visit was a great learning experience for everyone involved with a free exchange of information about logistics operations and areas in which the ING would like some assistance.

During the visit, as operations were explained, Col. Mushin, the ING brigade supply and logistics officer, provided an interesting history of the facilities and operations at FOB Warrior. Mushin was stationed at Kirkuk Airbase for eight years until the mid 1980s.

With CSS facilities and maintenance facilities programmed for construction at the end of fiscal year 2004, the next phase for the CSS training will be the development of instructional programs and providing classes to the ING logistics community.

The visit was another step in setting the conditions for an equipped and self-reliant Iraqi Security Force to maintain a safe and secure environment in Iraq.

Ghazni PRT continues to support local education

by Maj. Scott C. Ford
Ghazni Civil Military Operations Center

GHAZNI PROVINCE, Afghanistan –– Members of the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team delivered a large quantity of school supplies to village elders of the Nawabad region of Ghazni.

Lt. Col. Steven J. Ford, the PRT commander, accompanied by representatives of the PRT's Civil Military Operations Center and Civil Affairs Team-Alpha, met with the elders of the area to present a truckload of school supplies that would benefit approximately 1,500 students. They also delivered desks to support the Bajaual school.

This delivery continues to show the citizens of Ghazni Province that their government and the Coalition forces represented by the PRT is actively supporting reconstruction efforts and bringing humanitarian assistance to those areas that desperately need assistance.

"If the Ministry of Education has a warehouse full of books or supplies, or we have a lot of school supplies on hand, it does the children no good. We need to get this stuff out to where it is needed," said Sgt. Maurice Allen, a U.S. Army reservist working for the CMOC and an assistant principal with the Baltimore City School System.

This donation demonstrates the PRT's continued support to the ongoing efforts of the Afghan government to emphasize education.

Ford said he felt it was a good experience to meet the local elders because it shows the people that there is a strong bond between the PRT and the elders. Working closely with their local national colleagues, the PRT personnel have met with local shuras, or organizations, elders and district leaders and continue to seek out opportunities for more visits and other interactions.

Most of the schools in the area have extremely limited resources and are unable to provide the basic supplies necessary to properly study in school. This delivery is one of many made by the PRT to support the national education initiative with the desire to continue with as many more as they can until the school year ends or they run out of supplies.

Spc. Kelly Spann, a civil affairs specialist, saw firsthand the benefits that the delivery of school supplies has on the local population.

"When we first got here, the kids would just stare at us, but now when they see us, they … wave and smile because we were probably at their school and gave them stuff to help them learn. That impression will stick with them for a long time and for a few minutes worth of work, we will affect someone for their whole life," she said.

Russell, an interpreter who has worked with the U.S. military since the PRT arrived in Ghazni, has also seen the difference.

"I like what they are doing for the people of Afghanistan. When people see the Americans doing this, they know they are here to help," he said.

In addition to the civil affairs Soldiers, members of the Minnesota National Guard assigned to the PRT, Soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division (Light) Division Artillery, and Marines from 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, worked together to deliver the school items.

Later, following this meeting and delivery, Ford met with two members of the Constitutional Loya-Jurga, Fatima Mushtaq and Dr. Jamal. The Loya-Jurga is a prominent group within the province that works with the PRT and the provincial government to make improvements throughout the region. During this meeting, they discussed other ways the PRT can continue to support the reconstruction and humanitarian efforts in the area. Ford also presented Mushtaq with a computer system and digital camera for use by the women's council, which meets with PRT representatives on a regular basis.

Maj. Scott C. Ford

Coalition Soldiers work with the Ghazni PRT to distribute school supplies to the Bajaual High School in the Nawabad area of Ghazni city.

The PRT had its grand opening in March, but has been operating in Ghazni Province since January.

Building Afghanistan's "West Point"

By Lt. Col. David Wallace
Department of Law, United States Military Academy

Teams of officers from the United States Military Academy at West Point and officers from the Office of Military Cooperation – Afghanistan are working closely with their Afghan counterparts in the Ministry of Defense to establish the National Military Academy of Afghanistan (NMAA) modeled after West Point. The purpose of the NMAA is to provide the Afghan National Army (ANA) with professional officers who support and defend the Constitution of Afghanistan.

The effort began in Aug. 2003 when Maj. Gen. Karl Eikenberry, then Chief of the Office of Military Cooperation in Afghanistan, sought the assistance of the United States Military Academy in establishing a National Military Academy of Afghanistan. Lt. Gen. William J. Lennox, Jr., USMA Superintendent sent Col. George B. Forsythe, USMA Vice Dean for Education, and Lt. Col. Casey Neff, Special Assistant to the Commandant for Systems and Planning, to assist with the effort to establish the military academy.

For a six week period starting in Oct. 2003, Forsythe, Neff and other international officers joined a working group from the Afghan Ministry of Defense to work in Kabul, Afghanistan, to produce a concept plan that would serve as the blueprint for the new military academy.

The plan outlined the NMAA's mission and purpose; the three developmental programs of the NMAA: academic, military, and physical; a cadet leader development system; an honor code and much more.

Of note, the concept plan envisions a rigorous four-year program which should prepare professional officers for service in the ANA and to the Afghan nation. Much like West Point, the NMAA will have three developmental pillars: academic, military, and physical. The academic program is designed to establish the intellectual foundation for service as a commissioned officer.

Moreover, the plan explains how academic study develops in NMAA cadets the knowledge and skills necessary for service and continued growth as an officer. During their first year at the NMAA, cadets will take such courses as Chemistry, Information Technology, Composition, Calculus, World History, and Introduction to the Military Profession, among others

Under the concept plan, the NMAA's military program will provide an organized framework for the sequential and progressive military training and leadership development.

The ink hardly dried on the concept plan before a second team arrived from West Point to begin working on implementation. Lt. Col. Donna Brazil and Maj. Bill Caruso, both from the Behavioral Science and Leadership Department, made significant progress in making the NMAA a reality. Among other things, they developed a detailed implementation plan and identified a temporary site for the new academy. Additionally, they screened a pool of Afghan candidates for the USMA class of 2008.

The current West Point team hit the ground running. The fast start can be attributed in large measure to Brazil who returned with the current team in June 2004 to assist with the transition. Her assistance was invaluable. Col. Barry Shoop, who is the chief of the current team, is a Professor of Electrical Engineering and Director of the Electrical Engineering Program at West Point. The other member of the current team is Lt. Col. David Wallace, a faculty member in the Department of Law.

Courtesy photo

The Military Academy Implementation Support Team conducts a candidate interview. From left to right are Lt. Col. Donna Brazil, USMA Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership; Team Chief Col. Barry Shoop, USMA, Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science; Lt. Col. David Wallace, USMA, Department of Law; and candidate Shoaib Yosousfzai.

"The work we are doing here in Afghanistan is important to the future success of the Army and the nation," said Shoop. "A national military academy will teach a nascent Afghan National Army officer corps about their new constitution, civilian leadership of the military, what it means to be a member of the profession of arms, and to instill the values of duty, honor, country and of selfless service to the nation."

During the most recent term much as been done to move the NMAA toward its successful opening in Feb. 2005. For example, the selection process for the NMAA's key leaders moved forward. Within a relatively short amount of time, the Afghans will move forward with the board selection process and appointment of the NMAA's key leadership including: the Commander, the Deputy Commander for Education, Commandant, Chief of Staff, Director of Admissions, and the Department Heads for Language, History, Social Sciences, Management and Leadership, Military Studies, Mathematics, Basic Sciences, Information Systems Engineering, and Religion and Culture.

Additionally, the Afghan Minister of Defense formally designated the former Air Academy in the vicinity of Kabul Airport as the temporary site of the NMAA. While this establishes the site for the NMAA, renovations to the facility are scheduled to begin soon. The team developed and provided department head duty descriptions and credentials, faculty recruiting, selection, and credentials, a faculty development program, and a computer network architecture.

Finally, the team worked hard on the admissions process for the new military academy outlining key considerations for the first class and beyond. The first entering class for the new academy is projected to be 100 students. Most of the students will likely come from the Kabul Military High School.

The team visited with the Minister of Higher Education, Dr. Mohammad Sharif Fayez, President of Kabul University, Professor M. Akbar Pobal, and the Deans of the Faculties of Engineering, Education, and Political Science and Law to explore opportunities for greater cooperation and collaboration with the new NMAA. The team also developed a working relationship with Dr. Derek Hodgson, the Senior Advisor for Education for the Afghanistan Reconstruction Group at the U.S. Embassy. In addition to the specific work on the NMAA, the current West Point team also screened and interviewed six Afghan candidates for admission to the United States Military Academy.

One candidate, Shoaib Yosoufzai, has been selected for a West Point Preparatory Scholarship Program. He will study at a civilian university in the United States for a year to better prepare him for possible admission to the United States Military Academy next year.

The effort to establish the NMAA has been strengthened immeasurably by the support given to it by Maj. Gen. Craig Weston, U.S. Air Force, the current Chief of OMC-A, and by the assignment of Col. James Wilhite, U.S. Army Reserve, to lead the implementation effort for OMC-A.

Wilhite, a lifelong educator and Soldier, is a professor at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Okla. He brings his vast experience and knowledge to bear on many of the issues that arise as the fledgling academy moves closer to its opening in early 2005. Additionally, he will provide continuity for the teams of West Point officers that will continue to come to Afghanistan to support the NMAA. Wilhite welcomes being part of this significant event for Afghanistan:

"History is when a significant event happens at any one time and place," he observed. " I believe we are on the verge of making such history in the establishment of the NMAA."

2ID brigade deploys from Korea for OIF

By Spc. Chris Stephens
Army News Service

SEOUL, South Korea (Army News Service, Aug. 10, 2004) -- Units from the 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division are now deploying to the Middle East from South Korea.

For more than 50 years the 2nd Infantry Division has guarded freedom's frontier in South Korea, as part of the Armistice Agreement signed on July 27, 1953.

But, today, that mission has changed for the division's 2nd Brigade.

"Our new mission is to support Operation Iraqi Freedom," said Capt. Eric Morris, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Inf. Div. "It's a change from what we're used to on the Korean Peninsula. Now, we must support the people of Iraq and their endeavors to become a free nation."

In May, the brigade received orders that it would be deploying to Iraq for one year. With that knowledge, key leaders from the brigade and the division started the process of training the Soldiers for their upcoming deployment.

Yu, Hu Son

1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, Soldiers pass Gen. Leon LaPorte, United Nations Forces Commander and Maj. Gen. John R. Wood, 2nd Inf. Div. commander, during pass and review ceremony at Camp Casey's Indianhead Field Aug. 1. LaPorte and Wood used the ceremony to wish the Soldiers the best of luck while in the Middle East and both stressed the Soldiers are ready to "Fight Tonight," which is the motto of the 2nd Inf. Div.

"In the past few months, we've done a lot of training on improvised explosive devices, Iraqi culture, ambush attacks and live-fire scenarios," said Sgt. James Coombs, HHC, 2nd Brigade. "Those are things that we wouldn't normally see here in Korea.

"But, although the mission has changed, the intensity level is still the same," he said. "It's just the enemy is different."

For many Soldiers, this will be their first deployment to the Middle East, something not many of them expected when they received their orders to come to Korea.

"No Soldier assigned to any of the units of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team ever thought they would deploy from Korea," Morris said. "It was assumed that we are already forwardly deployed and the nation would not call on us to do a tour in Iraq."

But, due to the number of brigades needed in Iraq and the number of brigades the Army has, it was decided for 2nd Brigade to relieve the stress from other units, who have served in the Middle East.

"The Army needs every able-bodied unit to serve in Iraq," said Staff Sgt. James Render, 102nd Military Intelligence Battalion. "Many units come back after being in Iraq for a year, and find themselves in the blocks to go again. That doesn't suit families well, so this is a way to provide a little bit more time for those units, not only to get themselves back up to the standards in training, but it also allows them more time to spend with their families."

Even with the number of Soldiers who haven't deployed before, there are a number of veterans who know what to expect during deployment.

"Many of us who have deployed before took our knowledge and passed it down to our Soldiers so they would be better prepared than we were on our first deployment," said Sgt. James Murray, B Company, 122nd Signal Battalion. "In turn, our Soldiers are going to know what to expect and they will have all of the tools to accomplish their mission.

The Soldiers of the 2nd BCT are also creating history with the 2nd Inf. Div. as it is the first time anyone from the division's storied history has deployed since the Korean War - history many Soldiers said they are ready to add to.

"When you think about it, the history of the 2nd Infantry Division won't be the same when we get back," Coombs said. "We're going to be deployed to a region the division has never been to before and that's something the history books will take notice of."

For some of the Soldiers, they're following in the footsteps of their fathers, uncles or grandfathers by deploying to a combat zone. With that in mind, many feel the pride of serving their country.

"My grandfather served in the Korean War and for me there is no higher honor than serving my country in a time of war as well," said Pvt. Ryan Johnson, 44th Engineer Company. "All I'm doing is carrying on the family tradition."

As each of the battalions and companies deployed in the first days of August, they were reminded of what their mission is in Iraq.

"We're there to support the nation of Iraq and do whatever it takes to help them become a free nation," Coombs said.

(Editor's Note: Spc. Stephens is the editor for 2ID's newspaper, Indianhead.)

Hawaii Army Weekly
Community & Sports
Friday B-1 August 13, 2004

A cure for the leashed dog blues

Above: Kaipo, a service dog, grins up at the camera after meandering around the McInerny Dog Park at the Hawaii Humane Society facility.

Below: The dogs in Moanalua Dog Park are more interested in each other than the few humans in their midst. The park is a leash-free doggie playground. See article for directions.

Story & photos by Sharee Moore
Assistant Editor

On-post housing isn't the best place to let your dog out of the house without a leash, but there are several places where dogs can romp and run without restraint.

Visit one of three off-leash dog parks on Oahu to see the more frisky side of your favorite pet. If this is your dog's first trip to a dog park, go before 4 p.m. on weekdays since the park is busiest on weekends and after 4 p.m. during the week.

First stop is the Moanalua Dog Park, which is located off the Tripler Hospital exit on Moanalua Freeway. Make a left at the second traffic light and another left turn toward the parking area next to the tennis courts. The park is open seven days a week, during daylight hours, and is closed on Tuesdays until noon for maintenance.

Next stop: McInerny Dog Park, at the Hawaiian Humane Society in Honolulu. This doggie paradise is located on a one-third acre lot with grass, trees, foliage and even has a waterfall for dogs to frolic in. Hours of operation are noon to 8 p.m., during the week and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Third stop is the Bark Park located on the corner of Diamond Head Road and 18th Ave. in Honolulu. This park is privately owned, but open to the public.

By the end of Aug., a fourth park will open in Mililani.

Maybe your dog isn't the type of dog who likes to socialize with other canines. Don't despair. There are 39 parks and more than 90 beaches on Oahu that allow leashed dogs to hang out with their humans.

Check out the Hawaiian Humane Society's Web site at: www.hawaiian-humane.org/programs/dogparks/other-parks.html for their addresses.

Some basic rules for the off-leash parks are: clean up after your dog, no dogs in heat are allowed, no more than two dogs per owner, no aggressive animals, dogs must be vaccinated and pest free, and owners are fully responsible for themselves, their children and their dogs.

Maltese puppies, Stitch and Abigail, check each other out during an excursion to Moanalua leash-free dog park Aug. 10.

Left: Denver and Scooby frolick together in the Moanalua Dog Park.

McInerny Dog Park, located at the Hawaiian Humane Society, offers plenty of shade for dogs and their humans.

SGT SMITH THEATER

TODAY
7 p.m. (PG-13)
White Chicks

SATURDAY JULY 14
White Chicks
7 p.m. (PG-13)

SUNDAY AUGUST 15
Notebook
7 p.m. (PG-13)

MONDAY AUGUST 16
Closed

TUESDAY AUGUST 17
Closed

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 18
Closed

THURSDAY AUGUST 19
Closed

HICKAM MEMORIAL THEATER

TODAY
Spiderman 2
7 p.m. (PG-13)

SATURDAY AUGUST 14
Spiderman 2
7 p.m. (PG-13)

SUNDAY AUGUST 15
Spiderman 2
2 p.m. (PG-13)

SUNDAY AUGUST 15
Sleepover
7 p.m. (PG)

MONDAY AUGUST 16
Closed

TUESDAY AUGUST 17
Closed

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 18
Sleepover
7 p.m. (PG)

THURSDAY AUGUST 19
Sleepover
7 p.m. (PG)

Schofield Barracks Floats and Flicks – Floats and Flicks will be held Aug. 21 at the Schofield Barracks Richardson Pool, movie showing is "Finding Nemo." Activities begin at 5 p.m. and movie begins at 8 p.m. Enjoy hands-on water activities, contests and prizes, free swim, free hotdogs, chips, drinks and popcorn (while supplies last) and air jumpers. Enter to win a ceiling fan from Home Depot or a bean bag chair. Bring beach blankets and mats for viewing the movie. Call 656-0110 for more information.

Spouse's Night Out – This free adults-only program at Army Community Service on Schofield Barracks is designed to get spouses out of the house every Thursday night from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. to have fun. Aug. 19, participate in Art Class: Learn to Draw and Sketch, Rubber Stamping; Make a Custom Card to Send a Soldier, Family Readiness Group Leader Support Groups with Dr. Faran, Create a Family Web Page and Quilting. MWR Blue Star Card holders will receive free child care from 6 - 9 p.m. by reservation only at Peterson Child Care Center on Schofield Barracks. Call 655-3929 by noon of the Tuesday prior to each Thursday event to make your child care reservations. Child care reservations can be made two weeks in advance. Pre-registration for classes is required, call 655-2736.

Fun Day to Make a Sundae – Cool down and make a free sundae with an assortment of toppings (while supplies last) this Saturday from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. at the Tropics on Schofield Barracks, courtesy Meadow Gold Dairies. Help make Harms Way 4 Kids bracelets in honor of the troops and their families from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sign-up for the Yu-Gi-Oh Tournament at 11 a.m. and the tournament will begin at 12 p.m. Cost is $5 and all participants will receive Yu-Gi-Oh merchandise. Don't miss the inflatables, games and contests. Call 655-0002 for more information.

Commissary Dash N' Grab – Enter for a chance to win the next commissary Dash N' Grab event that is scheduled for Sept. 30 at 7:30 a.m. Entry boxes are located at the Schofield Barracks Commissary, Army Community Service and Tropics. Three finalists will be chosen at the Sept. town hall meeting. MWR Blue Star Card members are automatically entered to win. Finalists will be notified. Open to active duty families and spouses. This event will be held quarterly. Event is sponsored by Actus Lend Lease, DECA and MWR. Call 438-0117 for information.

Mongolian BBQ – Select from a large variety of meats and vegetables, and have them grilled to personal preferences on Aug. 15 beginning at 5 p.m. at the Nehelani, Schofield Barracks with seating at Reggie's. Meals are priced by the ounce. Reservations required by calling 655-0660.

August Tropic's Activities – Aug. 19, 4 p.m. Wearable Art Class, we provide the paints, beads and sequins so, bring attire to decorate. Aug. 22, Family Day at the Schofield Barracks Tropics, 1 - 5 p.m. Make Hawaiian crafts and play games. Aug. 28, 11 a.m., build, stack, throw, and design in an Oreo Olympics competition. $1 entry fee. Call 655-0002 for more information.

Bowling Special – Come in, cool off and bowl. Bowl 12 games and choose either a bank or a towel. Bowl 25 games and earn a bag. Special ends Aug. 31 and does not include league games bowled. Contact the Schofield Barracks Bowling Center at 655-0573 or Fort Shafter at 438-6733.

New Touch screens at Museums – Learn more about the 25th Infantry Division (Light) by using the new interactive touch screens placed throughout the Tropic Lightning Army Museum galleries. Get more information, view additional photographs and watch videos about the Division and Schofield Barracks. Call 655-0438 for the Museum on Schofield Barracks or 438-2821 for the Fort DeRussy Museum.

Care Package Material – Do you need space, boxes and packaging material for care packages? Visit the Tropics on Schofield Barracks from 12 - 4 p.m. or the Fort Shafter Library from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m Aug. 15. All material is free. Tropics and the Fort Shafter Library will hold this event monthly, the third Sunday of each month. Call Tropics at 655-0002 or the library at 438-9521 for information. We do not bring the packages to the post office or pay for shipping.

What's happening at MWR – To find out more information about Morale, Welfare and Recreation activities, programs and facilities, pick up a copy of the Discovery Magazine which is available at the Schofield Barracks Commissary, Fort Shafter Post Exchange, Aliamanu Shoppette, Tripler Mountain Side Entrance and at all MWR facilities. Visit the MWR Web site at www.mwrarmyhawaii.com.

Free Golf Clinics – Blue Star Card holder's can participate in a free golf clinic every Wednesday at Kalakaua Golf Course from 10 - 11 a.m. Clubs and range balls are provided, call 655-9833 for reservations. A free ladies golf clinic is also held the first Sunday of every month at Leilehua Golf Course from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Call 655-4653 for reservations.

Sunday Brunch – Taste dishes with flavors infused from the Pacific Rim, Asia and Hawaii at the Hale Ikena on Fort Shafter. Brunch is served from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Cost is $17.95 for adults with children's pricing available. Reservations required. Call 438-1974. Reggie's on Schofield Barracks offers a brunch buffet with classic favorites from 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. The cost is $12.95 for adults with children's pricing available. Call 655-4466 for information.

Karaoke at Reggie's – Join in and sing the night away from 8 - 10 p.m. every Tuesday and Thursday at Reggie's, Schofield Barracks. Cost is $1 per song and order from a special pupu menu and buy ice cold beverages. Call 655-4466 for information.

Dart Room Now Open – Schofield Barracks Bowling Center's dart room is now open. Come and compete against your friends or just for fun. For more information call 655-0573.

Parent's Night Out – On Saturday, from 6 - 11 p.m. drop off the kids at Child and Youth Services and enjoy an evening out. If child is not registered with CYS, a $15 registration fee is applicable. Fees for Parent's Night Out are: E-5 and below, $15 for one child and $5 each additional child. E-6 and above, $20 for one child and $5 for each additional child. Reservations are on a first come first serve basis. Call the registration and referral office for more information: Schofield Barracks 655-5314, AMR 833-5393.

Queen Emma's Summer Palace Tour – View rare artifacts and personal belongings of Hawaii's royalty at Queen Emma's Summer Palace followed by lunch (on your own) and shopping at Aloha Tower marketplace on Aug. 26. Cost is $3 and includes round trip bus transportation from Tropics on Schofield Barracks. Bus departs from Tropics at 8 a.m. and will return at 2 p.m. Registration is limited to the first forty people, call 655-0002.

2004 Army Photography Contest – Enter prints and short videos in the categories of people, place, thing, military life, experimental. Entry packets, entry forms, contest info is available at your nearest Arts and Crafts Center. Deadline for entries is Oct. 15.

Play and Win: Golf for Food and Fun – Get a team together every Tuesday from 2 - 4 p.m. for a round of golf at Nagorski Golf Course on Fort Shafter. Receive a 9- hole green fee, foursome platter of pupus, pitcher of beverage, and entry into the lucky door prize for $15 per person. Answer the golf question of the week correctly and win a FootJoy Door Prize. Get a hole-in-one and win a 2004 club of the year from Nike. Call 438-9587 for more information.

Blue Star Card Bowling Special – Blue Star Card holders can bowl at Schofield Barracks Bowling Center, Monday - Friday from 2 - 5 p.m. for $1 a game. Call 655-0573 for more information.

Aliamanu New Temporary Library Hours – Aliamanu Library hours are as follows: Monday and Tuesday 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Saturday 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. The library will be closed on Fridays. Call 833-4851 for more information.

Child and Youth Services Fee Increase – The Department of the Army has issued new fee policies and guidelines for Army Child and Youth Services, which include child development centers, school-age programs, family child care, middle school and teen programs and team sports. Patrons can expect to see an average 5 percent increase in their fees beginning September 1, 2004 in compliance with the Department of Army Guidance. For more information contact the nearest Child and Youth Services Facility.

Patriotic Magnetic Ribbons for Sale – The Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter Arts and Crafts Centers are selling several different designed patriotic magnetic ribbons. Large ribbons are $4 and small ribbons are $2.50. Call 655-4202 or 438-1315 for information.

Tennis Lessons – Participate in tennis lessons every Wednesday evening at the Schofield Barracks Tennis Complex. From 7 - 8 p.m. beginners and intermediate level players ages 6 - 14. The cost is $10 per session. From 8 - 9 p.m. beginners and intermediate teenagers and adults. Cost is $12 per session. Classes are on-going. Private lessons are available by appointment. Call 284-7986 for information.

Tee Time Policy Change – For a limited time only, the call in for tee time policy has changed. Weekdays and weekends at Nagorski Golf Course and weekdays only at Kalakaua Golf Course are as follows: Priority A and B can call in seven days in advance beginning at 10 a.m., Priority C and D can call in seven days in advance beginning at 12 p.m. and friends of MWR can call in five days in advance. Call Nagorski at 438-9587 or Kalakaua Golf Course at 655-9833 for information.

R&R Deployment Specials – Soldiers returning from Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom will receive 50 percent off regular cottage rates at Pililaau Army Recreation Center in Waianae or 30 percent off all room categories, dining and entertainment events at the Hale Koa Hotel in Waikiki. For Pililaau reservations call 696-6783. Eligible Soldiers must be accompanied by a Blue Star Card holder upon check-in or have a copy of their leave orders. For Hale Koa reservations call 955-0555 or visit www.halekoa.com. Eligible personnel must mention at time of reservations that they will be using the R&R or Leave Program. A copy of leave orders is required at the time of check-in.

HACN TV2 Schedule | August 13 - 19

Morning

6:00	Sign on
6:25	Bulletin Board
6:30	Cardio Kickboxing
7:00	Fit for Life
7:30	Bulletin Board
7:40	Voting 04' Assist Program
7:42	MG Olson Afghanistan
7:50	OIF Photo Montage 6
8:00	Pentagon Channel
9:00	Pentagon Channel
10:00	Honor to Serve
10:30	VATV
11:00	US Army Safety Message
11:46	OIF Photo Montage 2
11:51	Volcano

Afternoon

12:00	Pentagon Channel
2:00	Dash N Grab
2:15	Hurricane Safety
2:30	ASAP
2:34	Voting 04' Assist Program
2:40	Shamu-Animal Rescue
4:00	Pentagon Channel

Evening

6:00	Community Focus
6:20	OEF Deployment photo Montage
6:30	Families in Transition
7:00	OEF Deployment Ceremony
7:30	OEF Deployment Luau
7:54	OIF Photo Montage 2
8:00	Helicopter Introduction
8:22	MG Olson Afghanistan
8:48	OIF Photo Montage 5
9:00	ASAP Smoking Part 1
9:24	Bulletin Board
9:30	ASAP Smoking Part 2
10:00	The History of Army AVN
10:44	OEF Deployment Photo Montage
11:00	US Army Safety Message
11:50	Oakland Army Base
12:20	Dash N Grab
12:30	Bulletin Board

Overnight

12:44	Pentagon Channel

Army Hawaii Soldiers compete to enter the Army Ten-Miler

By Spc. Len Cutler
Staff Writer

It's 5 a.m. Slowly they gather in the dark, watching and waiting for the signal to begin. Silently breathing the early morning air, each one stretches, feeling sinew and muscle draw taut with anticipation. There's no wasted energy, no distraction from the mission at hand. Then it begins – and suddenly, fighting each other, the clock, and their own bodies, the first tryout team for the 2004 Army Ten- Miler runs down Trimble Road Aug. 6 on Schofield Barracks.

It's slow going at first. Not many people, even professional Soldiers, train to run ten miles regularly. But one by one, they all finish. No one falls out, and no one ever quits.

The best time goes to Staff Sgt. Ricky Deshaw, who finished the grueling course in 58 minutes, 53 seconds. His secret? Get out there and run.

"You have to run a lot. There are races out here every week. You have to love running. The more you do it, the more enjoyable it becomes," he said.

This will be the fourth time Deshaw, a former All-Army track and field team member, has made the trip to D.C. for the race, and he said it won't be the last.

"Every year I drop a minute from my time. This year, I want to finish in the top 100," he said. "I'll keep coming back until I'm too old to run."

Private 1st Class Kurt Sommer finished second at 59 minutes, 43 seconds. He doesn't have Deshaw's experience, but the chemical operations specialist knows that running is something that only gets better with practice, and he intends to get plenty of it.

"Anyone could do this if they train hard, and have the passion to compete. You have to love it," he said. "D.C. is beautiful this time of year, so this is the perfect excuse for me to start training."

This is only the first tryout, and the team will have several more before a team is finally chosen, said Sgt. Maj. Raymond Arnold, Division food service sergeant major. Because of the deployment, the pool of available participants has shrunk. According to Arnold, the team is going to address this by adopting an "international" tryout format. The best runners in Hawaii will only form half of the team.

The rest, he said, are coming from the 25th Infantry Division (Light), currently stationed in Afghanistan. There will be tryouts in-theater, the same as those being held stateside, and the best Soldiers there will get a chance to take a break from the combat zone to participate in the competition. So far, said Arnold, things are shaping up nicely.

"It's was a good run, and I'm proud of the way the Soldiers ran," said Sergeant Major Raymond Arnold. "We've got a lot of time to really improve our times."

This year's race – the 20th so far – is part of a growing tradition that has seen participation grow to become the largest such event in the world, hosting 20,000 runners each year.

Part of the Association of United States Army's "Annual Meeting and Exposition" convention, the race serves as an opener to the three-day event which, like the race, is the largest of it's kind in the world. Featuring exhibitions of the latest military technology, forums on a variety of subjects, and several social events, the convention has become a mecca for Soldiers, a community where a life spent under arms is the norm, not the exception.

Spc. Len Cutler

Soldiers gather at the water point as Sgt. Wayne Gallegos sprints to the finish line during the Army Ten-Miler Qualification race Aug. 6 on Schofield Barracks. Qualified finishers will compete in Washington, D.C. in October.

Tripler's Nguyen wins gold with the US Armed Forces Volleyball Team

By Leslie Ozawa
TAMC Public Affairs

On most days, you'll find Capt. Trang Nguyen in her green Battle Dress Uniform at her desk, hitting the phones to coordinate military training activities for the 1,200 Soldiers working at Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii's pink landmark nestled halfway up the Koolau mountains. From there, she can gaze south for a spectacular view of Oahu's southern coastline, and beyond, wisps of surf streaming in from the balmy, blue waters of the Pacific Ocean.

Yet only a few months ago, this lithe, unassuming captain was worlds away, literally twice removed. Most recently in May, she donned the black and gold jersey of the All-Army Women's Volleyball Team. Yelling at her teammates, she was digging volleyballs off the gym floor, helping her team trounce the Air Force and Navy and Marine Corps Teams, 4-0 at the Armed Forces Volleyball Championships at Fort Lewis, Wash.

"It was an unbelievable season for the women's volleyball team and for myself as a player," said Nguyen. "We had players ranging in rank from a private first class to captains, from all over the globe, from Korea to Germany to Texas. It's been 10 years since the Army last won a gold medal."

With the Global War on Terrorism, fewer Soldiers tried out for this year's team, said Nguyen. "I've been lucky. In the past 10 years in the Army, my commands have allowed me to try out and play for the all-Army team four times."

Nguyen's specialty is playing the libero, the designated back-row player who can freely go in and out of games as a ball-control specialist and not be counted as a substitution. Her prowess on the court got her selected as one of five Army Soldiers to the U.S. Armed Forces Volleyball Team. This was the first time she was selected to represent the United States on its CISM women's volleyball team.

A week later, both the U.S. Men's and Women's Volleyball Teams then traveled on from Fort Lewis, Wash., to Kingston, Ontario, this year's venue for the volleyball games sponsored by the Conseil International du Sports Militaire (CISM). Since 1948, CISM has conducted tournaments around the world in a variety of sports "to develop friendly relations between the Armed Forces of member nations," according to its website (http://www.cism-milsport.org/eng/welcome.html). The U.S. women's team finished third in that tournament, garnering the bronze medal, with Italy coming in first and the Netherlands second.

Even that is quite an honor, Nguyen said. The U.S. is usually at a disadvantage at these games, because the team's players change from year to year, depending on what active duty players are available during the tournament time window of May and June, especially now, with heavy U.S. military commitments around the world. "The Italian team," said Nguyen, "is pretty much intact from year to year and some of the teams even have players who have played professionally."

Nguyen herself has always been strictly an amateur. A first-generation Vietnamese, she came to the U.S. while still an infant in 1975, when her family fled the communist takeover of Vietnam. As a child, she grew up in Galesburg, Ill., where her family was one of only three Vietnamese families in the small town 180 miles southwest of Chicago. But that didn't stop her from participating in sports, where she lettered in track and volleyball for her high school teams. Even now, she is a volleyball enthusiast, playing the game up to five times a week in local leagues around Oahu.

So what else has Nguyen been up to, during the past nine months? Last winter, she found herself in Pol-e-Charkhi, Afghanistan, where she was medical operations officer for the 136th Regiment's Mobile Training Team for 12 weeks, as part of Task Force Phoenix. For three months, she helped develop course materials and classes for a Combat Medic course for more than 80 Afghan National Army soldiers in a makeshift classroom heated by a small wood-burning stove. For this, she received another medal, this time an Army Commendation Medal.

Capt. Trang Nguyen displays the gold and bronze medals she won while playing for the US Army and the US Armed Forces women's volleyball teams during the interservice and international (CISM) tournaments in May and June

Courtesy photo

Soldiers aim for gold in Athens

By Tim Hipps
Army News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Eighteen Soldiers and four competitors from other U.S. military branches will represent Team USA in the Summer Olympic Games at Athens, Greece, Aug. 13 through 29.

The U.S. Army is providing eight shooters, two modern pentathletes, a race walker, a rower, a wrestler, a marathoner who may double in the 10,000 meters, a head coach for boxing, a Greco-Roman wrestling coach, a rifle coach and a gunsmith for the world's largest sporting event. The Air Force will be represented by a hammer thrower, race walker and fencer. The Navy will provide a rower.

First Lt. Chad Senior, a member of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, will compete Aug. 26 in modern pentathlon, a five-sport event that includes pistol shooting, fencing, swimming, equestrian riding and cross-country running.

Senior 29, of North Fort Myers, Fla., finished sixth in the event in the 2000 Olympics at Sydney, Australia. He was leading after three events before a skittish horse refused two jumps in the equestrian event, ruining his golden moment.

"I don't think the same thing can happen now; I'm a much stronger rider than I was in 2000," said Senior, who returned to the sport after 18 months of soul searching following his heartbreaker in Australia. "I just hope I can have the same day I had in Sydney, aside from the ride."

One day after Senior's grueling event, Army Capt. Anita Allen, 26, of Star City, Ind., will compete in the women's modern pentathlon.

Sgt. Oscar Wood, 29, an Army WCAP wrestler from Gresham, Ore., defeated five-time national champion and 2000 Olympian Kevin Bracken of New York Athletic Club in the finals of the 66-kilogram/145.5-pound Greco-Roman division of the U.S. Olympic Wrestling Team Trials to earn an Olympic berth.

Wood, who will wrestle Aug. 24 and 25, will have another Soldier in his corner. Staff Sgt. Shon Lewis, 37, of Oakland, Calif., is one of three Greco-Roman coaches for Team USA. He has led All-Army wrestlers to three of the past four Greco national team titles and twice been named Greco-Roman Coach of the Year by USA Wrestling.

Capt. Matt Smith, 26, an Army WCAP rower from Woodbridge, Va., will team with civilians Steve Warner of Livonia, Mich., two-time Olympian Paul Teti of Upper Darby, Pa., and Cincinnati's Pat Todd on Team USA's lightweight four that begins rowing Aug. 15 with a chance to compete again Aug. 17, 19 and 21 in the B final or Aug. 22 in the A final.

Courtesy photo

Spc. Hattie Johnson, a member of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit from Athol, Idaho, will compete Aug. 14 in 10-meter air rifle shooting in the Summer Olympic Games at Athens, Greece.

"I hope to succeed on the water but also to represent the Army, MWR and WCAP in a positive light and show the world that the U.S. is one of the better countries out there in rowing and in general – to show what freedom will do for you," Smith said. "It allows you to succeed."

Team USA also will feature Navy Ensign Henry Nuzum, 27, a two-time Olympian from Chapel Hill, N.C., who will team with Aquil Abdullah of Washington, D.C., in men's double sculls. They begin rowing Aug. 16 with the A final Aug. 22.

Oregon National Guard Capt. Dan Browne, 29, of Portland, Ore., qualified for the Olympics by finishing third in the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials with a time of 2 hours, 12 minutes and 2 seconds. He will run the marathon, the final competitive event of the Games, Aug. 29.

Four-time Olympian Sgt. 1st Class James "Todd" Graves, 41, of Laurel, Miss., became the first U.S. men's skeet shooter since 1984 to win an Olympic medal with a bronze in the 2000 Sydney Games. He will compete Aug. 22.

"I'm doing this for my family in green and I've decided that if I get a medal this time that I'm going to dedicate it to the troops," Graves said. "Every time I break a target or stand on a podium to get a medal, I'm dedicating it to all those guys and gals over there. That's the least I can do."

Spc. Hattie Johnson, 22, of Athol, Idaho, will compete Aug. 14 in women's 10-meter air rifle, the first event of the Games. Sgt. 1st Class Daryl Szarenski will compete later that day in men's 10-meter air pistol shooting.

(Editor's note: Tim Hipps writes for the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center and is now on his way to Athens to cover the Olympics. Visit www.army.mil/olympics to read the entire article.)

While dad is deployed to Iraq, daughters excel in local karate competition

By Tracy Price-Thompson
Contributing Writer

While deployed Army Master Sgt. Gregory Thompson of the 411th Engineer Battalion does duty in Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, his two youngest daughters, Kharyse and Khaliyah, did their part to represent the military community.

They excelled in tournament competition during Hawaii Okinawa Karate-do Shudokan's 22nd Annual Aloha State Traditional Karate Championships held on Aug. 8 at the AMR gymnasium under the direction of Chief Instructor Joseph A. Bunch.

"HOKK is the best," says Khaliyah, and her mother agrees. "The members of our Dojo have been our primary source of support during this deployment," said Tracy Price-Thompson. "We are a very close-knit group; training hard and living the Aloha spirit, and enduring this separation would be very difficult without our HOKK family."

During this year's competition Kharyse, 15, was a true champion. She walked away with 1st place trophies in empty hand kata, kobudo (weapons), and kumite (sparring). Kharyse also entered the 18 years and over kumite adult division and shined by earning a second place trophy in that event.

Like her older sister, Khaliyah, 9, is also a fierce competitor. She won first place trophies in her age category for open hand kata and kumite (sparring), and a second place trophy in kobudo (weapons) kata. Khaliyah then moved up an age division to compete in the girl's 10-11 year-old category, earning a 1st place trophy in weapons kata, and a 3rd place trophy in empty hand kata.

The highest point of the day was when Khaliyah was pronounced the Outstanding Color Belt Competitor of 2004 and awarded a large trophy. While both girls wish dad could have been there to witness their triumphs, they are certain he could feel the brightness of their smiles, all the way in Iraq.

Courtesy photo

Khaliyah Thompson, age 9, receives a 3rd place trophy in the 10-11-year-old age group for empty hand kata, which is a type of sparring without a partner.

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing

Military police HMMWVs are lined up in preparation for a security patrol outside Kandahar Airfield.

MP's and Afghan Police enhance area security

by Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing
105th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — A fog of dust rolled in off the Helmand Desert as members of the 25th Military Police Company queued up their high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles for an early morning mission. Third Platoon is the only 25th MP Co. platoon in southern Afghanistan. They venture out from Kandahar Airfield and set up vehicle control points north of Kandahar city.

"We practically live in these vehicles," said Staff Sgt. Robert Blanchard, while checking a digital map to verify his team's position.

On this day's mission, 1st Lt. Noel Bergeron, 3rd Platoon leader, coordinated with General Gul Pawani, Kandahar police chief, on the vehicle control point mission.

"We're working together with the Afghan National Police," he said. Afghans play key roles in these missions. Joining the MPs for the operation were two interpreters, to assist in communication with the local populace, and two Afghan policemen, to provide local authority.

While VCPs are an important part of creating a secure and stable Afghanistan, these MPs play a much larger role in the operations of Combined Task Force Bronco. The MPs augment security forces in and around Kandahar city for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light), which heads up Combined Task Force Bronco.

Blanchard described working area security patrols, convoy security, route reconnaissance missions, and, as with the present mission, vehicle control points. All tasks they've accomplished in the last few months.

"We're on these missions just about every day," he said. They also work intelligence operations and VIP security details.

Equipped with an array of weapons and special up-armored HMMWVs, the military police are prepared to respond quickly to attacks and hostile situations.

It is with this equipment that these MPs continue to train. They train so that the use of the equipment and their actions are second nature to them.

"We trained with battle drills, talking and going through each situation. We've trained hard," said Blanchard. "Each one of us," he said, pausing to look at the two other MPs in the vehicle, "can do any other team member's job. That's the way we train."

Upon arriving at the designated point, the MPs were ready within minutes to run the VCP. Like a well-oiled machine, each Soldier moved into place. Cots were set up vertically to mark off a private area for searching the Afghan women. This was to ensure cultural sensitivities were being met. All around, security was up, scanning the area.

Vehicles were stopped by the Afghan police and MPs, and occupants were checked to ensure contraband wasn't being brought into Kandahar. The VCP is effective and efficient as an unannounced spot check.

Sgt. Jayde Fry said she looks for anything suspicious when conducting a VCP. It's all part of the effort to help make Kandahar safe.

Fry led the female search element. She provided training to two female Soldiers from the 325th Forward Support Battalion who had been tasked to assist with this mission.

"Be thorough. Don't be squeamish about searching," she told them as she demonstrated search techniques. Fry understands the importance of thorough searches. "We know what we have to do and do it. We're thorough so we'll be safe."

As the VCP wrapped up, the MPs prepared to convoy back to the city and on to the base. Sgt. Donovan McManus commented on the MPs' mission in Afghanistan, saying, "It's what we do and what we trained to do."

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing

1st Lt. Noel Bergeron, 3rd Plt., 25th MP Co., talks with Afghan National Police officers at the ANP compound in Kandahar city.

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Fearing

An Afghan man is searched by military policemen of the 25th MP Co.

Dog safety for parents and kids

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

Picture this, a balmy summer day, kids playing in the yard, and the family dog frolicking nearby. It sounds like a Norman Rockwell painting of the good life, doesn't it?

Suddenly, you hear a blood-curdling scream. Running out of the house, you are just in time to see the family dog take a bite out of your child or your neighbor's child. Just a nightmare you think? Think again.

The reality is this: of the nearly 5 million reported dog bites in the United States each year, nearly half will involve children and of these, approximately 10 will be fatalities.

The statistics may give parents cause for concern, but the specifics may be even more worrisome. For instance, boys, between the ages of 5 and 9, are bitten more often than girls. Dog bites are the second most frequent cause of injury to children and children make up half of the 800,000 emergency room visits for dog bites annually. The injuries, primarily, are bites to the face, head, and neck areas. (All statistics compiled by the Center for Disease Control)

Surprisingly, most children are bitten in the home by a dog they know, usually the family pet or a friend's pet. Although Pit bulls and Rottweilers top the list of dogs that frequently bite, any dog can bite. Case in point, in Oct. 2000, a Pomeranian, a breed averaging four pounds, killed a 6-week-old baby whose owner left the two alone while getting the baby a bottle.

Tragic and preventable, experts say. In efforts similar to baby-proofing a home, teaching fire safety, or stranger danger, parents must teach their children how to be safe around dogs. Dog-proofing children should be done early and reinforced often even if the family does not own a dog.

Joy Boisselle

After asking permission to pet the dog, Isabella Isacco demonstrates the proper technique for introducing herself to Dezi, a miniature Schnauzer, while June Odom watches.

For starters, children should never go near stray or loose dogs even if they know the dog belongs to a friend. When meeting a dog, children must learn to ask the owner for permission to approach the animal. Before petting the dog, they should always let the animal sniff them first. The phrase "let sleeping dogs lie" takes on a completely new meaning where dog bite statistics are concerned. Children should never disturb a sleeping dog, a dog that is eating, or one with puppies. A startled dog is more likely to respond with a bite more from reflex than anger.

Even after dog-proofing children or kid-proofing the dog, dog bite and attack situations can still occur. Children need to know how to react to a potential dog attack or one in progress. The best defense is never to place oneself in a dog bite situation. Unfortunately, the potential is always there.

If a strange dog approaches, the dog-proofed child will at least know what to do. A child's natural tendency is to run and scream which instinctively causes the dog to want to catch and take down his prey. This is not a good option and this scenario will most likely end disastrously. A hard concept for parents to teach a child is for the child not to look the animal directly in the eye, and for the child to back slowly away while using commands such as "No," "Go Away," or even, "Sit." If the child has an object such as a bicycle, book bag, or bat, the object should be kept between the child and dog.

If the dog attacks, it is imperative that children know to remain motionless and still. If the dog manages to knock the child down, parents should instruct the child to roll into a ball with hands locked behind the head. This position while not protecting the hands should help to protect the face, neck, and head from attack.

As a final point, children should report strays and loose animals to their parents immediately and above all, stay away from the animal. Constant reinforcement by parents will help to ensure their child does not become a part of what some call the dog-bite epidemic in America. To report a stray or loose dog, call the Military Police Desk at 655-5555. The Animal Control Officer will investigate all reports and attempt to capture the loose dog.

Dog owners can help as well. Neutering and spaying dogs helps to reduce aggressive tendencies and veterinarians and behaviorists alike recommend it. A male dog that has not been neutered is three times more likely to bite than other dogs. In addition, owners should socialize their dogs around other animals and people of all ages, particularly children. Teaching the dog to be less fearful in new situations helps too. In any case, owners should exercise caution when introducing their dog into potential bite situations.

Most importantly, there is no substitute for dog training and owner education. Training can help with many dog behavior problems, but even more critically, owner education teaches the owner proper techniques for handling their pet. If your dog displays aggressive tendencies, get help from a professional immediately. It is already too late if an attack has occurred.

Morale, Welfare, and Recreation offers dog obedience training. The next class is Sept. 11 through Nov 1. Registration is at the Tropics, building 589, Schofield Barracks, Sept. 9 at 7 p.m. (no dogs at registration). For more information, call 655-8945 or 385-4201.

Dog Tips:

- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog.
- Do not run from a dog and scream.
- Remain motionless (e.g., "be still like a tree") when approached by an unfamiliar dog.
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still (e.g., "be still like a log").
- Do not play with a dog unless supervised by an adult.
- Immediately report stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior to an adult.
- Avoid direct eye contact with a dog.
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Do not pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first.
- If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult.
- Research breeds to pick the best dog for your family.
- Aggressive breeds are not a good choice for a family with children.
- Make sure your child is ready for a dog.
- Never impulse buy a dog, spend time observing and interacting with the dog.
- Spay or neuter your dog.
- Never leave children alone with any dog.
- Do not tease, play-fight, or wrestle with your dog.
- Socialize your dog with people and other animals.
- Train your dog

Heartworms can kill your pet (and your pocketbook)

Capt. Rachel Maulton
Chief Fort Shafter Branch Veterinary Services

What is Heartworm disease and how does my dog or cat get it?

Heartworm disease is a 100 percent preventable fatal disease. It is the result of an infestation of the main blood vessel leading from the heart to the lungs by a worm called Dirofilaria immitis. These worms are transmitted to dogs and cats by mosquitos. A mosquito becomes a carrier of heartworms by biting a dog that is already infested with them. The mosquito picks up immature stages of the heartworm, known as microfilaria, during feeding. The microfilaria undergo changes within the mosquito over a two week period. This new stage of the larva is then injected into the skin of a new, uninfected dog or cat during feeding. As the injected larva mature into adult worms, they travel through the tissues to the blood stream, and then to the heart. It takes approximately 6-7 months after an infected mosquito bites your pet for the adult worm to arrive in the heart. Disease onset and severity is a reflection of the number of adult worms that are present. Cats are usually affected much more severely by a small worm burden than are dogs. The most common clinical signs associated with the disease are: coughing, exercise intolerance, and lethargy. However, many dogs show no clinical signs until the infection is very far progressed.

How do I prevent my dog or cat from getting heartworms?

The bad news: we can't keep mosquitoes from biting our dogs or cats. The good news: we can easily kill the larval stages of the heartworms before they make it into the heart as an adult. There are many products available that will kill the larval stages of heartworms. These products are much less expensive than treating a dog once they are infected with the worms, and there is no effective treatment for cats with heartworms! It is usually fatal. Dogs and cats should be started on a heartworm preventative by the time they are six weeks old. This ensures that there will not be any adult worms to make their way to the heart. Here in Hawai'i, all dogs should be tested every year, as early detection can save your dog's life. Heartworm prevention is available as a once-a-month topical or oral treatment, and is very affordable.

Sharee Moore

How do I know if my pet already has heartwoms?

There is a test that will detect the presence of adult worms (already living in the heart) in dogs. The test requires a small amount of blood, takes approximately 10 minutes, and the cost at a U.S. Army Veterinary Treatment Facility is about $15. We do not routinely test for the presence of heartworms in cats, because there is no available heartworm treatment for them once they are infected.

What happens if my dog's heartworm test is positive?

Without treatment, heartworm disease is always fatal. However, because of the fact that we are killing adult worms living in the heart, treatment can be dangerous. The treatment involves a series of 2-3 shots given in the muscle along the spine. It is very important that dogs treated for heartworm disease remain very calm and quiet throughout the treatment process, which could take 4-8 weeks, and costs a lot of money.

More importantly, heartworm disease is preventable. All dogs and cats should be on some form of heartworm prevention year round.

For more information on heartworms, to schedule your pet for a heartworm test, or to obtain lower cost heartworm prevention for your dog and cat, please call the Fort Shafter Veterinary Treatment Facility at 433-221 or the Kaneohe Bay Veterinary Treatment Facility at 257-3643.

Sign leases on Saturday, enter to win prizes

By Ryan Mielke
Actus Lend Lease

Shayla Walden did it. Sgt. Angela Thomas and Col. Howard Killian did it, too. And like them, Sgt. Cedric Blankenship did it when he recently walked into one of Army Hawaii Family Housing's community centers and secured his housing future - he signed his lease to stay in his home beyond Oct. 1.

All Army Hawaii families who have not signed their leases have two places to go tomorrow between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. during Lease-Signing Saturday at Schofield's Stoneman Sports Field and the Aliamanu Military Reservation West Community Field.

Residents are encouraged to bring their families to one of the two events to sign their leases, enjoy some free food, play games and have a little more piece of mind. Families who choose to not sign their leases to stay with Army Hawaii housing may be sent termination processing letters to begin the process of moving to an off-post home.

As an incentive for families living on Army installations to sign their lease, Army Hawaii Family Housing residents who sign a lease by Sept. 1 to live in Army Hawaii homes are eligible to win multiple prizes, in particular, gift certificates to shop at the Post Exchange or at Wal-Mart. More prizes will be added to the drawing, according to Actus Lend Lease officials.

"We really want to give our residents one more good reason to sign their lease," said Harry Jackson, vice president and asset manager for Actus Lend Lease. "We are making a tremendous effort to contact families to get their leases signed so that they can remain in military housing after Oct. 1," Jackson added.

"Providing our Army Hawaii Family Housing residents with additional reasons for signing their leases, such as prize giveaways, is also our way of saying thank you to our residents for choosing to stay in Army homes," added Jackson. "When they commit to staying in Army Hawaii homes by signing their leases, it is a show of support that makes us work harder to provide them our very best."

Actus Lend Lease community center staff are walking through neighborhoods, briefing at community meetings and going wherever possible to get leases signed.

Anyone seeking information about signing a lease can call their community center or can show up this Saturday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., at Stoneman Field (behind Canby community) or at AMR West Community Field, across from Burger King.

More information is also available on the Actus Lend Lease Web site at www.ArmyHawaiiFamilyHousing.com.

Chillin' with the chaplain

Commentary

By Chaplain (Col.) James Griffith
Schofield Barracks Installation Chaplain

In 1910, Russian composer Igor Stravinsky following what he said, "was a fleeting vision of a long forgotten past" set out to write the score to his ballet, "The Rite of Spring." He hoped he would create a thing of power and beauty, a gift to the musical world.

When it was first performed, in Paris, in 1913 it created a riot, the sort you see at Australian rugby matches, and the French police had to be called in to stop it. Sometimes when you start out to do something good and innocent, well things happen, and you wind up with chaos.

A friend of mine, deployed in Afghanistan, recently called his wife and asked her to send him one of every variety of steak sauce she could find but especially some of that special stash of Cajun magic that her parents sent her. It was an innocent request, a thing of beauty to spice up his boring desert existence and make it a little more colorful.

She asked him what it was for, picturing her poor Soldier desperately trying to flavor MREs. He said he needed them because every Thursday was "steak and shrimp night" and he needed more variety. Her reaction was classic, "I'll send you the sauce, if you send me a steak." She said this while she was laughing. They have a great relationship and are lucky to have each other. He thought he was expressing a need and she heard it as a luxury.

Things like this happen all the time during deployments. One person is up when the other is down. One is excited by something that happened and the other hears it as you're having fun and I'm not. With the distance so great, and that all important non-verbal facial and body language missing, it is easy to add to the message you hear. It is hard not to, when you miss someone you love.

Rather than being a great, fun deployment story, sometimes people just blow by each other in a conversation and allow themselves to read into what is being said. That can lead to a lot of hurt feelings and occasionally hurtful words.

The apostle James gives us some good advice when he wrote, "Let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger." (James 1:9) If we did this maybe we could be happy for our special someone when they called. If we listened and withheld our baggage for another time, or another conversation maybe we could create a thing of beauty rather than a riot.

I wish I could practice what I preach. I remember when I went to Fort Drum, N.Y. for winter Recondo training while my own loving wife stayed at home. I called her from the officer's club, where I was having dinner, and complained, "That we didn't have any snow!" I can imagine she pictured me sitting in a tent in a raging blizzard. Meanwhile, she was sitting out the worst snow storm the town had gotten in ten years and had just come in from shoveling the driveway for the third time. Needless to say my whining was received like "The Rite of Spring."

Chaplain (Col.) James Griffith can be reached at 655-9355.

'Aunt Peggie' finds answers for parents, military students

By Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo – When it comes to getting information for parents, students and educators about different state high school test requirements, nobody does it better than "Aunt Peggie."

"Aunt Peggie" is research consultant Peggie Watson, who updates the Military Child Education Coalition Assessment Resource Center Web site whenever she finds new information about state testing requirements -- which change constantly.

The center evolved out of parents' requests for help. At the high school level, when a student is moving from one state to another and going from one assessment program to another, it's extremely important to have as much information about that program as soon as possible, Watson said. That's especially true if it's going to count for graduation purposes, she added.

Watson noted that the role of assessment and accountability has intensified with the implementation of the No Child Left Behind legislation. "States have progressed to meet the mandates of No Child Left Behind," she said.

According to the state education commissions, as of July 14, 30 states are fully meeting the annual reading-test requirement and 29 states meet the annual math-test requirement, Watson said.

By 2008, Watson added, 24 states will have exit-level exams -- 21 will have standards based on end-of-course tests and three states will have minimum- competency exit exams.

"We have information for every state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity schools," said Watson, who calls herself "a military brat" because her father was an Army artillery-man. "We have Internet links to the major assessments, locations of standards, curriculum guides and the calendar for assessments.

"Sometimes I find samples of released tests," she said. "Some states, like Texas, have released tests you can download or take online."

There are also links to state education departments across the country. "We try to find links to English-as-a-second-language offices, which are sometimes a little difficult to find," noted Watson, who taught math for 20 years in the Kileen, Texas, Independent School District and spent 13 years as coordinator for testing and research for the district. "And we have links to the gifted- and-talented offices as well."

Watson, who started working for MCEC after retiring four years ago, noted that having this information available on the MCEC Web site makes it easier for a parent to find information on a particular state, their assessments and other areas they have questions about.

For example, Watson said, "You go into the Texas agency's assessment area and you're going to be looking at mostly the TAKS, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills. Under the annual TAKS program, testing will occur in grades 3 through 11. Students must pass the exit-level TAKS exams in order to receive a high school diploma. The tests cover English language arts, math, science and social studies.

"There's also information about state alternative assessment programs designed for special-needs students who are not scheduled to take the regular assessments tests," she said. "Generally, you'll find grades 3 through 8 math and language arts -- the biggies. You're also going to find information on other assessments that states have started, such as adding some social studies or science tests."

Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Students from Wahiawa Elementary School, where more than 60 children have parents in the military, show off pictures they drew for Soldiers deployed in support of the War on Terror.

Watson said there's also information on the high school tests, including exit tests. Some states administer general-standards exit tests, while others require end-of-course tests. The most common end-of-course tests are Algebra I, U.S. History, Biology, and English I and II.

"It all depends on the state," Watson noted.

Parents and students can go on the MCEC Web site at www.MilitaryChild.org/assessment for more information. "Once you get in, click on the state you have an interest in," she said. "You'll find from 10 to 20 links for every state."

Those who need more information can search on their own by clicking on the state and going to the Department of Education, which is under state government.

"Others might want a little more guidance," Watson noted.

One day, a parent told Watson that her family was moving to Fairfax, Va., and she needed information on gifted-and-talented-student programs in that area. She'd already visited the MCEC Web site, but wanted more information.

The mother was concerned that, as with most gifted-and-talented programs, they have their own assessment process and screening, Watson said. "The middle school assessment had closed for the summer. So the mother was afraid that her child wouldn't be able to get into classes until the beginning of the new year, three months after school started."

Watson came to the rescue by finding Internet links the mother hadn't found. "That made her little bit happier because she had more background and information and a couple more phone numbers to call," she said. "That's what it's all about."

About 18 months ago, when Watson started receiving up to 10 telephone calls a week, plus a bunch of e-mail messages, she told her co-workers, "I guess I'm becoming 'Aunt Peggie.'"

"The name stuck," she said with a chuckle.

"So, in order to put a face or name with the program, I'm listed as 'Aunt Peggie,'" she noted. "If you contact Aunt Peggie, I'll try to find the answer to your questions. If I can't find the answer, I'll try to find you a contact person."

(Editor's Note: visit the Military Child Education Coalition Assessment Resource Center at www.MilitaryChild.org/assessment/. Click on the state of Hawaii, for information about education resources.)