

HAWAII ARMY WEEKLY

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Serving the U.S. Army community in Hawaii

January 7, 2005

What's Inside



A Very Wet Ceremony

7th Dive changes commanders – underwater!
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The HAW Seeks Volunteer Writers

If you have good grammar and punctuation and would like to learn newswriting; we want to meet you. Hawaii Army Weekly also seeks a volunteer who can work from the public affairs office full or part-time. Candidates should be reliable, able to meet deadlines, willing to give and receive honest feedback. Call 655-8728 or e-mail editor@hawaiiarmyweekly.com.



Big Island Adventure

Culture, wildlife, black sand and serenity at a discount
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Cartoonist at Aliamanu Library

Cartoonist Dave Thorne will be at the Aliamanu library on Jan. 26 at 2 p.m. Thorne will speak about cartooning and demonstrate how he cartoons. The audience will have an opportunity to practice the techniques that are demonstrated. Call 833-4851.



Sports

Soldiers get thrashed in soccer; sports briefs
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Tropics Closed on Sunday's

Beginning in January, the Tropic's, building 589 on Schofield Barracks, will be closed on Sundays. The facility will re-open on Sundays in mid-March. Call 655-0002 for information.

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Welcome home 40th and 84th!

By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly
Assistant Editor

About 113 Soldiers of the 40th Quartermaster Company and 84th Engineer Battalion returned Dec. 30 from a one-year deployment to Iraq. Their redeployment marks the first major one since the majority of 25th Infantry Division (Light) and other Hawaii-based Soldiers deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism last year.

Soldiers dressed in Desert Combat Uniforms marched into the "Black Jack" hanger on Wheeler Army Air Field to the theme song from "Rocky" as family and friends cheered them on at their welcome home ceremony.

Col. Michael T. McBride, U.S. Army, Hawaii commander, spoke at the event, and called the Soldiers heroes.

"We want to thank each and every one of you standing here today," McBride said. "I am humbled to be standing before you. It is an honor to welcome you all home. I want to thank each of you for your service. We thank you for your sacri-



Spc. Daniel P. Kelly

Soldiers of the 40th Quartermaster Company and 84th Engineers return Dec. 30, 2004, at Hickam Air Force Base. The Schofield based Soldiers redeployed after a year-long tour in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Brig. Gen. Charles Jacoby, Assistant Division Commander (Operations) greeted the Soldiers.

fy, and we want each of you to know we missed you ... from the bottom of our hearts." The ceremony was relative-

ly brief in nature so that Soldiers could return to the arms of their loved ones once again. Sgt. Sherina Ross is a supply sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company,

Division Support Command, and said she was glad to have her husband from the 40th Quartermaster Co. back.

"We [all] can sleep better at night because he was over there defending us," Ross said.

Sgt. Patricia Bush is a mechanic with the 40th Quartermaster company and said she's glad to be home.

"I feel like I'm in a comfort zone here," Bush said. "The worries I have here are nothing like the worries I had in Iraq."

Bush said she was very impressed by her Soldiers during the deployment, and she is proud of them.

"I think the Soldiers did an excellent job dealing with Improvised Explosive Devices," she said. "Our convoys were hit twice over there and our Soldiers handled it like it wasn't a big deal. It was all instinct."

Johanna Martinez held her two children while she looked out into the large formation of Soldiers, her husband somewhere in the mass of chocolate-chip colored uniforms.

See "Homecoming" Page A-3

1,000 paper cranes say "thanks"



Spc. Daniel P. Kelly

Michael McMahon (left) 14, and his brother Thomas, 11, make adjustments to a lengthy Hawaiian lei of more than 1,000 origami cranes Dec. 29 on Schofield Barracks. Students from Kahuku Intermediate and High School, and St. John Vianney School created the lei for 25th Infantry Division (Light) Soldiers deployed to war. The multi-colored lei accompanied a poster that said, "(The lei is) dedicated to all those Soldiers promoting peace in our world." Students volunteered their personal time to create the project. The lei will be displayed for Soldiers as they redeploy from Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

Kalakaua Golf Course closes; players have mixed emotions

By Spc. Charles Hayes
Staff Writer

Kalakaua Golf Course on Schofield Barracks closed Dec. 31 to make room for new homes for Soldiers and their families.

"This will contribute to the quality of life of Army Hawaii families as the acreage is replaced by neighborhoods," said Mike Iyoki, senior golf pro for the three major Army golf courses on Oahu.

"The communities that replace the course will be created by Army Hawaii Family Housing, a partnership formed by U.S. Army Hawaii and Actus Lend Lease, an organization charged with carrying out privatization of Army Hawaii's military family housing."

Markhan Soerles is a frequent visitor to the Kalakaua golf course, and was one of many golfers who played on the final day.



Spc. Charles Hayes

With the Army closing Kalakaua golf course to make way for housing, many long time golf enthusiasts, like Burt Murao, will have to find another course to visit.

"The only reason that I am here on the last day is just to make that history," Soerles said.

"Because of the new changes that are taking place with the Stryker coming here,

they need new housing. I think that it is okay as long as they replace this golf course. The military has priority so, there's not much people can do."

Even with the prospect of newer and better housing on post, not everyone agrees with where those houses should be placed.

"Housing is good. There are other places to put houses though," said Ken Zitz, executive director of the North Shore Junior Golf Association and a volunteer with other local youth golf programs.

"That's the sad part. They could have done it elsewhere. Now there won't be a place for youth on post to go and play golf. That's not going to stop us though. We will have fields to go in ..."

With the course closure, many people who work there have been affected.

"All employees of the See "Golf" Page A-3

MG Olson visits Division troops in Iraq

Sgt. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq – Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson left his duties as the commander of Combined Joint Task Force-76 in Afghanistan to visit 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light) Soldiers deployed to Iraq on New Year's Eve and Day.

Olson, who is also the commander of the 25th Inf. Div. (L), came to see 2nd BCT Soldiers back in July but wanted to visit for a second time before they redeployed.

"I felt like, it was a good time to come over again and hear about all the great things that are going on here," Olson said. "And talk to Soldiers and let them know about what's ahead in terms of the rest of this deployment and the return to Schofield Barracks."

Olson traveled to all 2nd BCT's seven forward operating bases in the Kirkuk area during the two days. He spoke with thousands of Soldiers on matters ranging from Schofield Barracks' concerns, housing and transformation.

"There have been some significant changes and I would say improvements back there," Olson said about Schofield Barracks. "Over the next couple of years, all the old housing will be demolished and new housing will be built in a new initiative called the Residential Commercial Initiative."

But the biggest news back on Schofield Barracks was the ongoing transformation, Olson said.

The 2nd BCT will be converted into a Stryker Brigade Combat Team and the 3rd BCT will transform to a unit of action when they return from Afghanistan.

"When the 3rd Brigade goes back they won't be an infantry brigade anymore, it will be a combined arms brigade with all the different branches and specialties," Olson said.

He went on to say that the 2nd and 3rd Brigades will be out of the deployment loop for a couple of years because of the transformation process.

"A vast majority of us aren't slated for another deployment for a good year and a half, two



Sgt. Sean Kimmons

Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, 25th Inf. Div. (L) commander, serves lunch to Btry. C, TF 2-11 FA Soldiers during his visit to FOB Dibbis on New Year's Eve.

years after we get back from this one here," Olson said. "The bottom line is there are no scheduled deployments right now for the 3rd Brigade or the 2nd Brigade because of the transformation."

Another important issue Olson addressed to his troops was Iraq's upcoming elections at the end of this month.

"The elections in Afghanistan changed the course of that war. I bet when you have these elections here in Iraq, it's going to change the course of this war too," Olson said.

Free elections in Iraq will do two things, Olson explained.

"It's going to give the population hope and secondly, it's going to show the guerilla that his efforts to disrupt the elections are going to fail," he said.

On top of that, Olson wanted his 2nd BCT Soldiers to know that they will play a big part in Iraq's history.

"There are a very few guys who are going to be able to say when the nation really needed me to turn things around in Iraq, to see through successful elections, I was there," Olson said. "You guys are going to change history here on your watch."

Olson also said, "I am extremely proud of where you all have taken this mission over here in Iraq. And I am very confident and excited about the year we have ahead in the year 2005," Olson said.

Olson also traveled to Mosul to participate in a combat patch ceremony with Soldiers from the 1st Bde., 25th Inf. Div. (L).

OPINION & COMMENTARY

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.

Friday

A-2

January 7, 2005

'Frosty' shows up in Afghanistan!

Commentary

Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen
C/F Thunder Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ORGUN-E, Afghanistan – Before deploying to Afghanistan in March, the Soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division (Light) knew they were in for a change of climates.

For the next year, they would have to say good-bye to the tropical paradise of Hawaii and deal with the climate of this rugged country, including its famously harsh winters.

Old Man Winter must have thought it would be funny, so he dropped about a foot of snow on this base in Paktika Province that is home to several hundred Tropic Lightning Soldiers. The snow started the night of Dec. 27 and didn't stop until the morning of Dec. 29.

The snow was especially painful for Pfc. Noe Arce, a cannon crew member from 3rd Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Rgt. The Los Angeles native said he's never seen snow in his life.

"It's the first time I've ever been in snow," he said. "It's crazy." Arce said he and some fellow Soldiers started a snowball fight, but they got in trouble for it, so they stopped. Instead, they decided to build a snowman.

Instead of a cornucopia pipe, a button nose and two eyes made out of coal, this snowman was toting an M16 and had buttons made out of cookies pilfered from the chow hall.

Arce said he isn't looking forward to any more snow this winter.

"It'll just be tempting to throw snowballs, and we're not allowed to throw them any more," he said.

Spc. Andrew Whittenberg, a medic for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 27th Infantry Rgt., said he saw snow twice when he was a kid in Texas before joining the Army and being stationed at



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Soldiers from Btry. B, 3rd Bn., 7th FA Rgt. put the finishing touches on a snowman Dec. 29 at FOB Orgun-E, Afghanistan, after a foot of snow fell on the base within 36 hours.

Fort Carson, Colo.

But with an assignment to Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, he has been able to dodge snow for the past two years.

"I don't really mind the snow that much, it's just another day out here," Whittenberg said. "I wish it could have snowed on Christmas, though."

The snow not only brought a little holiday cheer to the base, it also introduced a new threat to personnel here: snowball snipers.

No one was safe from these bandits, who roamed the base in packs of up to five, and launched barrages of snowballs at unsuspecting pedestrians and then fled the scene.

Even journalists felt the wrath of these evil-doers, who were known to knock on hooch doors and wait for the occupants to open them before launching their stockpile of snowballs inside.

Whittenberg said he hasn't been ambushed by the snipers yet, but he knows it's just a matter of time.

"Fortunately, they haven't got me yet, but I have a feeling that my time is coming," he said.

A Soldier's story: Quiet week

Commentary

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

First I want to apologize to the people that count on my article for information about their friends and love ones. Last week I let being away from family get to me.

This week continued to stay fairly quiet. With the elections approaching, I believe our enemy is trying to make sure he is around to cause problems.

We have acted on intelligence leads and have managed to snatch up a few in the middle of the night.

I'm happy to report that out of the 46 personnel we arrested last week, over 30 will stay in jail at least through the elections.

Dec. 27, 5 a.m. – Just received word that three men were injured while emplacing a roadside bomb. Our interpreters started calling around to all the clinics and hospitals trying to locate them. The only lead we got was a man that was released from a hospital with injuries associated with explosives.

Two others were confirmed dead in another hospital's morgue. Hopefully our enemy will continue doing us all a favor by eliminating himself.

Dec. 30, 9:45 a.m. – A large explosion is heard right down the street from the patrol base. I went to the Company Operations Center to get the details.

By the time I got there the company commander, Capt. Derek Bird, Lynchburg, Va., was already on the radio. He informed me one of our engineer convoys had hit a roadside bomb. The quick reaction squad was alerted and the ambulance was ready to provide medical assistance.

Just as the squad was loading the vehicles the front gate guard opened the gate and a humvee with both driver side tires blown came driving into the patrol base. As soon the vehicle came to a stop the driver let everyone know he and an interpreter inside the vehicle were injured.

Immediately Soldiers removed the two of them from the vehicle

and started assessing wounds. I saw two Soldiers cutting a boot off of the injured Soldier because he was in some serious pain.

Two other Soldiers had the interpreter on the ground bandaging his leg. After their wounds were bandaged, the two of them were loaded in the ambulance. Sgt. 1st Class Austin Brown, Irvington, Ky. and 3rd Platoon provided the casualty evacuation or, CASEVAC, security escort to the Airfield where medical personnel were standing by.

Just as the CASEVAC was leaving, the rest of the engineers entered the patrol base. Immediately they were concerned about the injured.

I talked to the squad and platoon leaders and informed them of the extent of the injuries and assured them that they were being taken care of. They informed me that one more Soldier had been hit by fragments. After assessing, medics bandaged him up.

This time our Soldiers escaped with minor injuries. Both Soldiers and the interpreter are back to work. One of the Soldiers will have light duty until his foot heals. The vehicle sustained minor damages.

A few Alpha Soldiers helped change the two tires and the vehicle was fully mission capable again.

Jan. 1, 12:01 a.m. – it's 2005, no fireworks, hotdogs with sauerkraut or beer.

Jan. 1, 12:20 p.m. – The commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division, Maj. Gen. Eric T Olson, arrived at the patrol base. He took some time away from Afghanistan to visit the 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

After enjoying lunch with the Soldiers, he stood up and spoke about where the 25th Infantry Division and USARHAW were today, and where they are going in the future. He fielded questions and finished by telling all the Soldiers, "If 2004 was a year of sacrifice, because all Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan had sacrificed a lot this year, then 2005 is the year of change."

He was referring to the Stryker Brigade and the new realignment of the 25th Infantry Division.

Well 2005 is upon us and 2004

is gone. The last year was so full it would be hard for me to try and reflect on everything. The year started with the largest force the 25th Infantry had deployed since Vietnam; the Red Sox finally beat the Yankees; our Commander-in-Chief won a close election; and ended with probably the worst natural disaster in history.

What will 2005 bring us? I can only hope that it begins with a successful election and a safe redeployment for all the Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. I'll worry about the rest of the year when these two events are mission complete. Happy New Year to everyone.

This week meet Spc. Qi Zhu. He was born in Fujian, China but gained his U.S. Citizenship in December 2003 and calls New York City his home. Zhu is a M249 SAW Gunner in 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon. Zhu said that he really didn't want to deploy for a year, but understood that he signed up as a Soldier and it was his duty.

Zhu also said, "When we first got here and started doing patrols I was pretty nervous. I didn't know how I would react in an ambush or roadside bomb attack."

I asked him how he feels now when he goes on patrol. He said, "Every since my squad got blown up back in May, sometimes I'll get a sick feeling in my stomach when we do mounted patrols."

I don't mind dismounted patrols, but I'm always nervous on mounted." I asked Zhu to give me a positive event he experienced. He said, "We were parked in this little village when this little girl about 6- years-old came up and stood next to me. For some reason it reminded me of when my little sister was that age."

I don't know why, but I gave her a dollar and told her to go home. She came back with her little brother so I lifted them into the humvee. They were smiling because they thought they were getting special treatment."

Zhu finished his interview by saying hello to his mother, Sai Ying, father Li Gong, in New York and his little sister Xiao Hong now attending nursing school. "Don't worry about me mom, I'll be home soon."

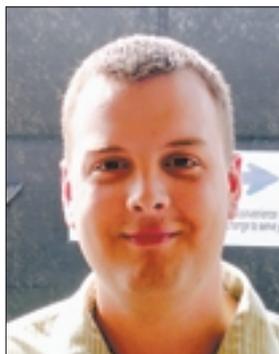
God Bless and Aloha.

Voices of Lightning

What is your New Year's resolution?



"I haven't really thought about it, but probably to quit smoking."



My resolution is to work out more and I am doing pretty good. I am hitting the gym here and will do it in Afghanistan, too.



"My resolution is to stop smoking ... I had one on New Year's Day and none since. I am stopping cold turkey."



"I would say it's probably to continue to have patience waiting for my husband's return and then, pick up with our family lives."



"My resolution is continuing to keep my finances in order, build better relationships with people, and to focus on being less stressed out."



"My resolution is to come back safe from my deployment to Afghanistan"

Pvt. Jacob Faber
Replacement
Detachment

Spc. Ted Kantorski
325th FSB

Cpl. Larry Thompson
1st Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt.

Yolanda Walton
Family Member

Patrick Delos Santos
Concessionaire

Sgt. 1st Class
Alexander Armendariz
2nd Bn., 5th Inf. Rgt.

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CG pulls guard duty as holiday gift for Soldiers

By Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen and Journalist 1st Class (SW/AW) Kristin Fitzsimmons

WAZA KHWA, Afghanistan – Service members stationed across Afghanistan celebrated the holiday season in a number of different ways, but Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76) Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, decided to give two Soldiers a very special holiday gift.

Olson left Bagram Airfield (BAF) to relieve two Soldiers of their daily duties for 24 hours, while the Soldiers flew to Bagram to enjoy some of the comforts they are generally not afforded.

“Waza Khwa is one of the more remote and less developed fire bases,” Olson said. “I thought if there were any Soldiers, who could use a good break by switching with me for a day in Bagram, Waza Khwa was a good place to find them.”

Spc. Freddy Barahona, 22 and Spc. Michael Hanes, 21, assigned to the 25th Infantry Division (Light) as infantrymen in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, briefly met and talked with Olson before departing



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

Maj. Gen. Eric T. Olson, commander of CJTF-76 talks to Soldiers of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. Rgt. Dec. 25 in Waza Khwa, Afghanistan, after a patrol through several nearby villages.

for Bagram.

“Burger King was our first stop when we arrived,” said Barahona, a native of Antioch, Calif. “It was great to be able to spend Christmas relaxing watching some football, picking up a few items at the PX and being able to eat something that reminds us of home.”

As junior Soldiers, Barahona and Hanes, who have both spent less than three years serving in the Army, have both recently reenlisted because they feel what they are doing is important and they enjoy their jobs.

“There are a lot of reasons why I chose to reenlist. A lot of it was pride

in what we are all doing out here,” said Hanes, a native of Cochranton, Pa., “It is sometimes really tough to deal with certain things on a daily basis out here in Afghanistan. But there are many rewards both big and small ... and Maj. Gen. Olson giving us the opportunity to enjoy some free time, talk to our families and relax was a big reward for the both of us.”

Olson spent his Christmas holiday by accompanying several Soldiers from Co. C on a patrol to two nearby villages following Christmas dinner and a brief tour of the base.

“It’s always good to get out, show presence in the local community, interact with some of the community leaders, and that’s exactly what these guys are doing,” Olson said. “There’s always risk when you do it, but these guys are absolutely unafraid of accepting that risk. They know it’s a job that they’ve got to do.”

While on the patrol, Olson accompanied the Soldiers by riding in the back of a cargo Humvee rather than being escorted in an up-armored version. He joked and talked with the Soldiers throughout the patrol and was con-

stantly waving to Afghan children, who gathered along the roads.

Spc. Eric Rigsby, an M240B gunner with Co. C, was the gunner on Olson’s Humvee and said Olson was talking and joking with the Soldiers throughout the mission. He said the fact Olson chose to spend the holiday at such a remote location says a lot since he came here even though he doesn’t have to.

“To show the guys he has done this before, to sit in a cav truck in one of the worst seats and ride with us, to come and pull guard with us, to sit here and eat chow with us – it really makes lower enlisted Soldiers like myself feel good about him as our leader,” Rigsby said.

Following the patrol, Olson gathered the Soldiers and told them all what a fine job they were doing and that he loved each and every one of them.

“The quality of Soldiers here is top notch, just like we see across (Afghanistan),” he said. “This is a great battalion, a great company in that battalion, and they’re just doing super things out here.”

Flu vaccination program expands

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – The Defense Department is expanding its flu vaccination program to include people as young as age 50 and those in close contact with those at high risk of getting the flu, according to the Pentagon’s top doctor.

Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said during a joint interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service Dec. 22 that the military medical system has enough flu vaccine on hand to expand the program by enlarging the eligibility categories for receiving the inactivated influenza vaccine this flu season.

According to a Tripler Army Medical Center news release, adults 50-65 years old, caregivers and household contacts of persons in “high-risk” categories can now receive the vaccination at Tripler and Schofield Barracks health clinics.

“Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May,” said Capt. Lisa Lute, head nurse of Tripler’s allergy and immunization clinic.

“According to the CDC, influenza activity has been low so far this season. However, it is still early, and the timing and the level of influenza activity are unpredictable. Therefore, it is important to receive the vaccination now,” Lute concluded.

Although Tripler has not received additional vaccines, Tripler Clinics have followed the initial prioritizing guidelines for vaccination and can now expand the program in accordance with the updated Centers of Disease Control and Prevention priority categories.

The initial priority group included all deployed and deploying service members and high-risk beneficiaries, people under age 1 and over age 65 and those with specified medical conditions.

“We wanted to make sure that we vaccinated all of those people first as a priority,” Winkenwerder said.

This effort was so successful, he said, that DoD still has some of its initial 2

million units of vaccine available to administer to people at lower risk of getting the flu.

The program could thus be expanded to include adults of 50 years and older as well as caregivers to high risk medical condition patients in the priority group to receive the vaccination.

Also, he said, DoD received additional doses from Aventis Pasteur, which manufactured most U.S.-administered vaccine this year.

Extra shipments of Flu Mist, a nasal spray flu vaccine, will be shipped to military recruiting stations “to make sure recruits coming in and living in close quarters get their vaccines,” Winkenwerder said. This newer vaccine has proven during clinical tests to work effectively on people between ages 5 and 50.

To help prevent spreading the flu, Winkenwerder encouraged people to take basic precautions: washing their hands frequently, covering their mouth when they cough or sneeze and using tissues. Hand sanitizers, while effective against bacterial infections, generally don’t work against viral infections, he said.

Moreover, the Center of Disease Control and Prevention suggested avoiding close contact with people who are at risk, and for those who are sick to keep distance from others to protect them from catching the illness.

Winkenwerder said these basic precautions can go a long way in protecting against the flu and preventing its spread. “We’re hoping we have a safe, flu-free winter,” he said.

For more information about the flu vaccination program and the updated guidelines and criteria, call the vaccination information line at 433-3357 or visit the Tripler Web site at www.tamc.amedd.army.mil.

Flu vaccinations can be received at the Tripler Allergy and Immunization Clinic 433-6334, at the Pediatric Clinic 433-6234, at the Tripler Family Practice Clinic 433-3300, and the Schofield Allergy and Immunization Clinic 433-8145.

(Editor’s Note: Rafi Grant contributed to this article.)

Golf

From A-1

Kalakaua Golf Course have been offered other positions within Directorate of Community Activities. We are hopeful that they will remain employed with the Army until the new Kalakaua course is built,” Iyoki said.

“I have been in golf for about thirteen years and at Kalakaua golf course for about 11. It is really nice to look at the people who come through the door. You become friends with them and they are all the same, no matter

what rank,” said Paul Gonzalez, the golf admin clerk at Kalakaua.

“I am effected by it and having to deal with it. When you’ve been around as long as many of us employees here have, it is a part of you.”

Kalakaua opened in 1918 and was built on the site of the royal hunting preserve of King David Kalakaua, the Merrie Monarch.

Although the original design has been altered many times in the past because of housing and recreational facility requirements, it’s small

greens and numerous trees challenge even the most accomplished golfers. It has been, along with Leilehua, the host site of the Army Open and Invitational golf tournament since 1957.

There was no formal closing ceremony, just golfers with mixed emotions trying to enjoy the last day on the course.

“AHFH has budgeted and planned for a new golf course to be built. Since this is still in its infancy stage, there is no timeline or site information available,” Iyoki added.

Homecoming

From A-1

“I feel happy it’s finally over,” she said. “He might go back, and he’s already been deployed twice ... but we’re just so happy to have him back here today.”

Soldiers were released from the ceremony formation as family and friends swarmed the Soldiers like fans charging a football field after the Super Bowl.

Tears, hugs and emotion could be seen throughout the crowd with an emotion that can only be experienced after being apart

from loved ones for lengths of time.

Children laughed, Soldiers who deployed together gave each other hugs and hearty handshakes for the camaraderie they could only experience in war. Families were reunited to the sound of “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” knowing their Soldier-heroes were home.

Spc. John Wheatly, administration specialist with the 40th Quartermaster Co., said being back was overwhelming.

“I’m very happy to be back,” Wheatly said. “The best part about being back is being in the United States again.”

Briefs

Deployment Town Hall Agenda – Deployment Town Hall is scheduled for Jan. 18, 6:30 p.m. at Sgt. Smith Theater, Schofield Barracks. The agenda will include: an operations update and picture slideshow featuring Soldiers downrange. RCI will discuss the construction schedule of new homes and a demolition of the older homes. Department of Public Works will give an overview of the schedule of post improvements for the New PX, Popeyes, Burger King, parking at the PX Aviation Brigade Headquarters, Clothing and Sales and more. Army Community Services will offer an update on Tropic Lightning Academy and Directorate of Community Activities will reveal the community calendar and upcoming events. Finance will go over the new BAH rates for FY 05 and Brig. Gen. Jacoby will highlight the progress being made in Afghanistan. A question and answer session and door prizes will also be offered.

An opportunity to ask Actus Lend Lease questions will also be available.

Wheeler Town Hall Meeting – Wheeler Middle School will host two community meetings Thursday, Jan. 20 at 9 a.m. in the school library and 6 p.m. in the cafeteria. The purpose is to inform the military community about the School Community Council and for everyone to get involved with school matters and concerns.

AMR Protestant Women of the Chapel Program – Minister Madell Breedlove will speak during a catered lunch with the theme entitled "Change My Heart O Lord" from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday. Child care is available with reservations. Call Tashawn Leo at 833-7050 by Monday for reservations.

Martin Luther King Prayer Luncheon – A guest speaker, entertainment, displays and food sampling will be available Jan. 21 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. for all Americans to "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not a Day Off to celebrate the birth, the life and the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the 9th Regional Readiness Command (RRC), building 1554, Fort Shafter Flats. Make reservations by calling Sonja Rice at 438-6834 or email sonja.rice@shafter.army.mil.

Introductory Risk Communication Workshop – U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine presents a workshop Feb. 8 - 10 from 8 to 4 p.m. at the Doubletree Alana Hotel Waikiki, 1956 Ala Moana Blvd. in Honolulu. Workshop is available to all defense agencies, uniformed services, and veteran services personnel that include: military, civilian, and Department of Defense contractor working on a DoD contract.

Our workshops benefit personnel who interact and communicate with internal and external stakeholders in challenging situations related to health, environmental, safety, deployment, homeland security, encroachment and sustainability. There is no registration fee to attend; individuals are responsible for all travel costs. No food or beverages are provided. This workshop will help anticipate, analyze, and address issues that could affect missions.

This workshop applies the use of lectures with interactive discussions, individual work, group work, use of numerous videos to demonstrate points,

A Soldier Santa?



Spc. Johnny R. Aragon

Coalition forces from Task Force Pirate celebrate Christmas with local nationals in Jagdalek, Afghanistan Dec. 24. More than 200 troops celebrated the Ramadan season with 600-plus citizens of Jagdalek in November, and in turn they wanted to share Christmas with the villagers as a cultural exchange of sorts. The service members spent five hours with the people of Jagdalek, which is the longest of time they have been able to remain on the ground on any of the previous visits. This provided enough time for the villagers to prepare some of their own food for a meal, something they have wanted to share with the Soldiers since the relationship began.

and exercises including what to take back to work from the workshop. The training includes how to develop a risk communication strategy and plan for any issue for both internal and external stakeholders. This workshop also provides tools on how to respond to different emotional levels; handle agendas such as personal, economic, political, social, cultural and historical; change risk perception in stakeholders; deliver "bad news;" and deal with various types of activists.

A hands-on exercise on handling difficult questions in challenging situations is also included. Parking is \$12 per day. For reservations call 941-7275 or (800) 228-8733. Register online at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/risk>, click "Training," and then scroll to "Introductory and Advanced Health Risk Communication Workshops."

Hui O' Na Wahine Welfare Grant – Committee will be accepting requests for funds from community organizations. Include organization name and point of contact with a phone number, the amount of funds requested, specific project the funds will be used and how this project and use of funds will benefit the community. The deadline for requests postmarked by April 9, 2005. Funds will be distributed in May. Send requests to Hui O' Na Wahine, Attention Welfare Committee P.O. Box 861305, Wahiawa, HI 96786. For more information call Robin Orner at 624-6979.

The Hui O' Na Wahine Monthly Luncheon – The Schofield Barracks Hui will hold its monthly luncheon on Thursday, Jan. 20, at the Nehelani. This month's program will be educational. Guest speaker, Nancy Weyland-Hart, will speak about Whales Tales. Join us as we learn more about whales and the opportunity to whale watch on the islands. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. for shopping and lunch is at 11 a.m. The cost for lunch is \$12. If you are interested in becoming a vendor, call Amy Snyder at 624-4989. For reservations call Judi Rossi at 778-3704.

Limited on site child care will be provided. Call central registration at 655-3929 or 655-5314 to make a reservation.

Hickam GSA Customer Supply Center Closure – Will be closed for inventory Jan. 31 – Feb. 4 and will reopen on Feb. 7. The GSA store located on Schofield Barracks will be open during this time. For more information contact Teresa DeMello at 448-8937.

Gospel Winter Revival at AMR Chapel – AMR Gospel Service is conducting a Winter Revival at AMR chapel Jan. 9 – 12. Pastor Roger Breedlove of Rochester, N.Y., will be the guest speaker. Breedlove and his wife, Madell, founded In Christ New Hope Ministries, Inc. which has outreach ministries including ministries for youth to outreach services for drug and alcohol addicts. His mission focus is "To equip believers with the inspired Word of God, to have a solid foundation in the Living Word of God with signs following, with the assurance that God is not a respecter of persons; to help those in the body of Christ to find and fulfill their place in the ministry. The revival schedule begins this Sunday 12:15 - 1:45 p.m. and continues Jan. 10 – 12 from 7 – 8:45 p.m. Call Chaplain (Maj.) Norman W. Jones, Fort Shafter Community Family Life Chaplain at 836-4599 or 833-6831 for more information.

Adult and Infant CPR Class – The American Red Cross Schofield Barracks Service Center is holding a class for Standard First Aid and Adult CPR Plus Child and Infant CPR. The classes are Jan. 24, 26, and 27, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. The cost is \$39 and includes the book. Call 655-4927 to register.

Hawaii Army Weekly Seeks "Awesome Army Brats" – This is a periodic column featuring exceptional military youth and their stories. If you know someone to feature, contact the Hawaii Army Weekly at 655-4816 or email editor@hawaiiarmy-weekly.com.

Thrift Store Job Opening – The Hui is now accepting applications for a bookkeeper. Interested candi-

dates should have accounting and computer experience. The job is for approximately 40 hours per month. For more information or to get an application, visit the Thrift Shop, building 2107 on Schofield Barracks, behind the ACS building.

Surf Competition – Attention surf enthusiasts: If you know how to surf, are on active duty, and want to prove yourself and represent your unit, come compete for Army Hawaii in an inter-service Surf Meet, contact Peter Burke at the USAG-HI Sports Office at 655-9914 or burkep@shafter.army.mil. Surf Meet dates are Jan. 22 – 23 at Army Pililau Recreation Center in Waianae. Burke surfs at the White Plains Beach, Barber's Point every Saturday and Sunday and can meet anyone at 9:30 a.m. through January at the stage.

Free Basic Skills Courses – Classes are offered in reading and mathematics each quarter at the 9th Regional Readiness Command Army Reserve Center, located at Fort Shafter Flats. It is open to all military personnel, family members, civilians and others in the community who want an academic review before taking military tests, college placement exams or GT retest. The next courses are Feb. 24 and March 10. All class sessions are held on Tuesday and Thursday, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Classes take place at building 1554 on Pass Street, Rooms 104 and 105, Fort Shafter. Call 438-1600 ext. 3293 or 3298 for details.

Keiki Resources Fair at Blaisdell – Jan. 22-23, at the Neal S. Blaisdell Exhibition Hall, in Honolulu. Learn about organizations and providers of children's programs, services, and products.

The fair will feature programs from academic enrichment to special needs, sports to the arts, schools and camps to music lessons, health care and health insurance to financial planning for college, plus many retail items. Expect 200 exhibitors and entertainers to provide face-to-face informa-

tion, hands on exploration activities, games of skill and chance, inflatable to jump on, and ponies to ride. Fairgoers will be entertained, and educated by Abracadabra, Jeff Gere, Mad Science, Mardene, James McCarthy, Mr. Dan the Magic Man, and more with music, magic, songs, stories, and juggling, some from atop a unicycle.

For more information, call 521-KIDS, or visit www.childhoodresources.org.

Protestant Women of the Chapel Meetings – PWOC welcomes all military spouses to their weekly Bible study and time of fellowship. Meetings are held each Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. in the sanctuary of the Schofield Barracks Main Post Chapel. Pre-arranged onsite child care is provided. A supervised homeschool room is also provided. For more information contact Effie at 624-8251. For child care contact Sonya at 455-4011.

Smoking Cessation Course Now Available – What happens when you quit taking in nicotine from smoking and chewing tobacco? – Within 30 minutes of quitting, the pulse slows down and blood pressure drops towards normal rates. Within eight hours, the level of carbon monoxide in the blood drops, enabling it to carry more oxygen. Within 48 hours, the nerve endings begin to recover and sense of smell and taste begin to return. Within 72 hours, the bronchial tubes of the lungs expand and the lung volume increases.

Within a month, shortness of breath diminishes. Within a year, risk for a heart attack attributed to smoking declines. After two to three years, the risk of heart attack is virtually gone. After 10 years, the risk for developing cancer is about the same as for non-smokers. Don't let nicotine control you.

Course now available at Community Health Nursing in building 673 2nd floor, Schofield Barracks. Call 433-8675 for more information.

Hui O' Wahine Scholarships Available – The spouses' club serving Fort Shafter, Tripler Army Medical Center and Camp Smith, is offering three scholarships during 2005. Applications are available at the Fort Shafter Thrift Shop and Fort Shafter Library.

The following scholarships are available: one scholarship up to \$1,000 for a high school senior who is a child of a current club member, one scholarship up to \$1,000 for a high school senior who is a child of

an Army (active duty, Reserve, Guard, or retired) service member living in Hawaii, and one continuing education scholarship up to \$1,000 for a current club member. The scholarships are for the 2005-2006 academic year.

Rules and applications can be picked up at the Fort Shafter Thrift Shop on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and at the Fort Shafter Library.

Completed applications are due Feb. 15. For more information contact Barbara Davis at 845-2036 or barbdavis@verizon.net.

Ten Steps To Federal Employment Workshop – Interested in obtaining Federal employment? Learn about understanding job vacancy announcements, writing your federal and electronic resumes and tracking your applications. This workshop will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 12 at ACS, Fort Shafter, and on Thursday, Jan. 13 at ACS, building 2091, Schofield Barracks.

Both workshops are 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. To register, call Fort Shafter at 438-2395 or Schofield Barracks at 655-2400.

The University of Oklahoma Offers a Master of Arts in Managerial Economics and a Master of Public Administration – Non-thesis programs can be completed in about 18 months. One week classes are very TDY friendly. Contact OU at 449-6364 or aphickam@ou.edu for more information or visit their Web site at www.gouu.ou.edu.

Blood Donations Needed – The Tripler Army Medical Center Blood Donor Center is located on the hospital's second floor, Oceanside and is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 433-6148.

Free Money for College – The Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Fund helps Army families with the costs of undergraduate level education, vocational training, and preparation for acceptance by service academies for dependent children.

Funds can be used for tuition, fees, books, supplies, and on or off campus housing. Eligibility: Applicants must be dependent children of Soldiers on active duty, retired or deceased while on active duty or after retirement. Deadline is Mar. 1.

For more specific information about deadlines and documentation visit Army Emergency Relief on the Web at www.aerhq.org. Call (703) 428-0035 or e-mail



Spc. Charles Hayes

Soldiers of the 7th Dive Detachment, 29th Engineer Battalion from Fort Shafter perform an underwater change of command ceremony in Richardson Pool at Pearl Harbor Dec. 15.

Underwater change of command?

By Spc. Charles Hayes
Staff Writer

Most Soldiers will experience a change of command ceremony during their military career.

However, few will have the opportunity to experience it underwater.

Soldiers of the 7th Dive Detachment, 29th Engineer Battalion, Fort Shafter had the chance to experience that for the second time Dec. 15.

Outgoing commander Capt. Scott Miller submersed himself in Richardson Pool with incoming commander Capt. George Mitroka, 1st Sgt. Rodney R. Heikkinen and the 29th Engineer Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Steven R. Miles.

Twelve other divers were fitted with scuba gear and submerged in formation

to witness the event. Attendees outside the pool where able to see the event from an underwater camera connected to two television sets. The audience heard key personnel on loud speakers because of microphones in their helmets.

"Captain Miller, I personally thank you for your tireless work and commitment in preparing your dive Soldiers for combat.

"I am confident you will succeed in your next assignment and I wish you God's speed as you take your next challenge in Iraq," Miles said.

"Captain Mitroka, I want to thank you in advance for all of the things that you are going to do with the 7th Dive Det."

"This day marks the second time an underwater change of command ceremony has been done in the U.S. Army

Pacific.

This day also marks the end of my tour here in Hawaii as well as my military diving career," Miller said.

"I am truly honored and privileged, proud to be standing before you today. As I look in front of me, I see the Soldiers of the 7th Dive.

"You're the best at what you do, and that is engineer diving and dive support," said Miller.

"I only hope to be able to maintain the excellence that I see before me," said incoming commander Mitroka.

"And to the divers, I challenge you to stay committed to the dive detachment and the traditions of the dive attitude.

"Maintain the hard work and ethics in everything you do. Stay proficient in your dive tasks.

"And lastly, have fun," Mitroka said.



ArmyOnline www.25idl.army.mil

25th Infantry Division (Light) & United States Army, Hawaii



Soldiers earn recently activated Sapper tabs

Sgt. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq – Sixteen Sappers from Company B, 65th Engineer Battalion were awarded their long awaited Sapper tabs in a ceremony held here on Dec. 11. Army Chief of Staff General Peter Schoomaker granted the wear of the tab last June to Sappers who have completed the 28-day Sapper Leaders Course as part of the U.S. Army Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

"It's been a battle since the course was made to get recognition for the strenuous activity and leadership challenges that exist in that course," Col. William Haight, commander of the Engineer Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, said while speaking at the award ceremony.

Now that has finally happened with the activation of the Sapper tab across the Army that recognizes those who have performed and succeeded in that very rigorous course, Haight said.

"The graduates today that we recognized by the ordering of the tab proves that they have the toughness, the guts and the persistence to make it through that course successful-



Co. B, 65th Eng. Bn. Soldiers stand in formation with new Sapper tabs pinned to their shoulders during a ceremony Dec. 11 on Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq.

ly. "These graduates rose to that challenge and beyond. They have reached the pinnacle of the tactical engineer training that you will ever receive anywhere in this entire world," Haight said.

The Sapper Leaders Course is a fast paced 28-day course designed to take a company's

leadership and give the commander an assessment of how the leaders of the company perform in small unit tactics, leadership skills, and war fighter tactics as part of a combined arms team in a contemporary operating environment.

The course is open to enlistees in the grade of specialist and above and engineer

officers captain and below. The Sapper Tab is retroactive back to the graduates of the first Sapper Leaders Course on June 14, 1985.

"It's been a long time, now I finally get to wear it," said Spc. Harvey Bubier, a combat engineer who graduated from the course in 2001 and 2002.

"We as Sappers finally get

the recognition we deserve. It's something that will signify us from other Soldiers," Bubier added.

The Sapper tab, worn above the unit patch on the left shoulder, joins only three other tabs that are authorized for wear on the Army uniform – the Ranger tab, Special Forces tab and Airborne tab.

"The Sapper tab is now among some pretty proud and honorable company, as one of the only four tabs authorized for wear on the sleeve of the uniform in recognition of special capabilities and special training," Haight said.

All of these courses recognize that every human individual has a limit that he or she thinks they have, Haight said.

"These schools push you beyond that limit and teach you that you have a lot more in you than you think you did," he said.

Also, two de Fleury medals for lifetime achievement in the engineer world were presented during the award ceremony.

"This is not an Army award, it is an Engineer Regiment award," Haight said. "It is by, for or owned by us in the Engineer Regiment."

Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Marsh and Timothy Hargrave were the ones honored with

the de Fleury medal.

"The application process is very rigorous. They look for a life-long commitment to excellence to the very best qualities of an engineer – competence, professionalism, self-less service, leadership, pervasive unquenchable thirst for knowledge and the instinctive ability to solve problems," Haight said.

The de Fleury medal is named after Lt. Col. Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury, who in the Revolutionary War played a vital role in the recapturing of Stony Point, N.Y.

In October 1779, de Fleury stood before the Continental Congress to be praised for his valor at Stony Point by the men who had penned the Declaration of Independence and would later sign the Constitution. For his intrepid behavior, the Continental Congress awarded a medal in his honor.

The Engineer Regiment adopted the de Fleury Medal as an award because of the values demonstrated by the men for whom it was struck – values of special meaning to engineer Soldiers. It is understood that the de Fleury Medal was the first Congressional Medal struck, if not the first medal authorized.

Army offers warfighters free LASIK eye surgery

by Leslie Ozawa
Tripler Army Medical Center
Public Affairs

Boxers do it; NFL football players do it; and since 1998, courtesy of the Army, thousands of Soldiers have undergone refractive eye surgery to improve their vision. Only a few years ago, local television and newspapers advertised photorefractive keratectomy, or PRK, and laser in situ keratomileusis, also known as LASIK surgery for \$2,000 per eye. Today, improved surgical techniques have made the operation safer and cheaper. It's still expensive, but more affordable, even if not covered by medical insurance.

For active duty Soldiers, however, especially those in combat arms, the surgery is free.

Why does the Army, as well as the other armed services, offer this surgery to service members? It's simple – it increases personnel safety and mission success. Being able to see clearly – through mud, dirt and damp, between explosions and concussions – can mean the difference between life and death. Ballistic eye protection from dust and debris is still needed in combat situations, but for the Soldier, 20/20 vision means no more cleaning or replacing contact lens and glasses, no longer handling prescription inserts for gas masks and night vision goggles while under fire.

Today, through the Warfighters Refractive Eye Surgery Program, or WRESP, PRK and LASIK are available at eight Army hospitals

around the world, including Tripler Army Medical Center. Surgery candidates don't need to be referred by their primary health-care managers, but they do need their command's approval, as part of the application process.

All the armed services have agreements with Tripler to provide this surgery for their active-duty members, said Maj. (Dr.) Ronald Allen, who heads the program here. The Air Force allows 30 Airmen a month to receive this operation, and the Coast Guard recently signed on to send 10 Coast Guardsmen a month. The Navy previously allowed a monthly quota of 30 of its Sailors and Marines, but because of anticipated deployments, it recently increased its budget for this program next year. The Army itself has no actual number limitation, said Allen.

Over the past three years, Tripler's refractive eye surgery center performed PRK or LASIK surgery on more than 3,000 patients. "We did a lot of 25th Infantry Division Soldiers before they left for Iraq," said Allen. The center aims to treat 2,000 patients in 2005.

Tripler's four ophthalmologists, all certified to perform this delicate surgery, take their turn in the operating room near Tripler's second-floor eye clinic. Operations are usually done three days a week, with about 15 patients scheduled per day.

The surgery itself is quick: usually about five minutes per eye for PRK and eight to 10 minutes per

eye for LASIK, all done with local anesthesia. Allen cautioned, however, that patients do have to allow time for pre- and post-surgery procedures. Patients also must make about five appointments before and another six to eight visits after the surgery, spaced over several months.

Like any optional medical procedure, PRK and LASIK are not for everyone. Service members should also note that this surgery is not covered by TriCare health insurance.

Active-duty service members interested in this surgery should pick up a WRESP information packet at their command's personnel center or at the Tripler eye clinic. The packet explains the procedure and includes a form letter (to obtain their commander's approval) and an application form. Applicants must present these documents, as well as a prescription for glasses or contact lenses less than a year old, to attend a WRESP briefing.

The briefings are usually held about midday on the first and third Friday of every month. They are held at various locations, including Tripler, Hickam Air Force Base, Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter. About 100 people attend each briefing, so those interested should allow enough time to have their applications screened before the briefing begins. For more information, call the Tripler eye clinic at 433-3089 or 433-1564.

PRK or LASIK – Which is Better?

Both procedures are explained

and compared during the WRESP briefing, including the advantages and disadvantages of both. Basically, PRK uses laser technology to sculpt the cornea to become flatter to obtain clearer vision. LASIK involves an extra step for patients with cornea of sufficient thickness. A suction ring stabilizes the cornea, and the surgeon then cuts a thin flap from the surface of the cornea and flips it over, allowing the underlying corneal tissue to be sculpted by laser, as in the PRK procedure.

The flap is then pulled back over the cornea. The flap is permanent, however, and may be displaced by accident, one of the disadvantages of LASIK. If further vision enhancement surgery is required, however, a surgeon can uncover the flap to work on the cornea again.

More information is also available on the three Web sites listed below. The first is from Walter Reed Army Medical Center and explains the Army program. The other two Web sites are provided by private health organizations. The last site listed, the American Academy of Ophthalmology Web site, is designed for medical professionals but does provide in-depth information.

The information, products or services contained on the Web sites and the listing of the Web sites themselves do not constitute endorsement by the government. Visit: www.wramc.army.mil/departments/ophthalmology/refractive/surgery/surgeryv2/index.htm www.lasikinstitute.com, www.aaao.org



Les Ozawa

TAMC's Maj. (Dr.) Ronald Allen, director of Tripler Army Medical Center's Warfighters Refractive Eye Surgery Program, adjusts the lenses for the laser machine used to sculpt a patient's cornea. The patient lies on a platform below the machine, while his head is aligned directly below the machine. About 96 percent of patients achieve 20/25 vision or better in the Tripler program.



Big Island Adventure



Akaka Falls thunders 400 feet into the fresh water spring below. Follow a paved path to Rainbow Falls.



Staff Sgt. Bradley Rhen

These lava stone cottages were once enlisted housing when active duty Soldiers were assigned to Kilauea Military Camp.

Story and photos by
Sharee Moore
Editor

Just a 15-minute walk from the top of an active volcano lies Kilauea Military Camp, a resort-style joint services recreation facility available at a discount.

Some of the onsite luxuries include Jacuzzis, kitchens, and fireplaces that are perfect for the cooler temperatures. A convenience store, grill and snack bar, and dining facility offer a variety of meal options all in quaint, historically preserved settings.

KMC is a more tranquil alternative to Oahu's Waikiki and at \$52 - \$133, a more affordable vacation spot than most places in Hawaii. The center offers discounted aerial and ground tours around the volcano, island and neighboring cities, too.

In addition, the recreation areas promote family-focused fun with bowling, table hockey and tennis, arcade games, a fitness center, mini-movie theater and evening entertainment.

A little known fact is that the camp is nestled in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, hailed as one of the most unique places on the planet. Most tourists have already heard about Kilauea Volcano with its Trail of Devastation, Jagger Museum and of the goddess Pele and her fiery legacy.

But, how many know that 90 percent of the plants found in the 333,000 acre park cannot be found anywhere else in the world? And 11 of the 13 climactic zones in the world are located there, too?

Another unusual fact is the thriving plant population has adapted to life without predators, so raspberries and other plants don't have thorns and thistles. The volcano creates 30 to 40 acres of new ground every year, so the island has the newest land on the planet, too.

Circle the park on an 11-mile tour of Crater Rim Drive for a candid look at Madam Pele's handiwork. Along the way, stop off at the Thurston Lava Tube.

The 300-meter tube formed when the top of a lava river hardened while the underground flow continued its downhill surge. When the lava drained, it left a cavernous hull now named after its discoverer, Lorrin Thurston.

Visitors who don't mind a strenuous two to three-mile hike can get close to the lava. Park rangers aren't just saying this hike is difficult to discourage the curious - it is a



Carlton and Joy Gillis take in the magnificent Big Isle views Christmas Day while on vacation from the frigid temperatures in Pottstown, Pa.

hot hike - and often a hop - across rough, uneven terrain. Carry a quality flashlight and bring plenty of water.

Outside the park, a 40-minute drive to the North leads to the sleepy town of Hilo best known for its rainfall and macadamia nut cookie factory. Drive another 30-minutes and visit Akaka Falls. A short hike along a paved path is worth the view of the 400-foot waterfall.

Ninety-five miles west of Volcanoes National Park is the oldest part of the Big Island - and one of the most beautiful.

Kailua-Kona, where sunny skies and deep blue waters are served on a warm plate, contrasts the more chilly Hilo.

Nearby, the tiny town of Cook boasts some of the best snorkeling on the island. If you are up for a scenic drive, head 50 miles to South Point Road, go 11-miles more, park (at your own risk) and hike three-miles to a green sand beach at Mahana Beach Park. A swim in its aquamarine waters are worth the effort.

For an affordable escape, try the Big Island with its resort-style accommodations,

black, green and golden sand beaches, an abundance of wildlife, five volcanoes, shopping and unmatched tranquility - it's more than a vacation.

(Editor's Note: KMC is offering a discounted package for Soldiers on R&R or who have recently deployed to a theater of war, call KMC at 438-6707 for details.)



A green turtle basks in the afternoon sun at Punalu'u Black Sand Beach Park.



A visitor peers over the rail of a bridge leading into Thurston Lava Tube in the volcanoes national park.



Jessica Avery pouts when beckoned by mom, McKella Akana, who tells the youngster to leave the black sand beach and hit the showers.



Photo Courtesy USGS

Lava oozes into the ocean from Kilauea Volcano. Although the lava isn't surging into the water now, it is still visible at sunset. Take a strenuous three-mile hike for a closer look.

A three-mile hike reveals a spectacular view overlooking the secluded green sand beach at Mahana Beach Park. The sand's greenish tint is caused by an accumulation of olivine that forms in volcanic eruptions.





Sgt. Smith Theater

Today
Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason
 7 p.m. (R)

Saturday Jan. 8
Alexander
 7 p.m. (R)

Sunday Jan. 9
Alexander
 7 p.m. (R)

Monday Jan. 10
Closed

Tuesday Jan. 11
Closed

Wednesday Jan. 12
Closed

Thursday Jan. 13
Closed

Hickam AFB Movie Schedule

Today
Woman Thou Art Looser
 7 p.m. (R)

Saturday Jan. 8
Woman Thou Art Looser
 2 p.m. (G)

Sunday Jan. 9
Woman Thou Art Looser
 2 p.m. (G)

Wednesday Jan. 12
The Incredibles
 7 p.m. (PG13)

Thursday Jan. 13
The Incredibles
 7 p.m. (PG13)

Paniolo Bar-B-Que - Listen to southern rock, country and blues while enjoying a free BBQ picnic at the Nehelani on Schofield Barracks Jan. 30, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Eat free hot-dogs, BBQ chicken, beans, chips, corn on the cob, ice cream, juice (while supplies

last), and entertainment provided by the Nate Pearce Band. Craft activities, inflatables, hayrides and other entertainment are available. Call Leisure Activities at 656-0110, 656-0111, or 656-0112 for information.

Seven Habits of Highly

Effective Families Workshop - Join Army Community Service on Jan. 28, 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Army Community Service building for this workshop designed specifically for Army families. Workshop is based on the book, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families" by Stephen Covey.

Develop skills that will increase communication skills, increase families' ability to deal with challenges, improve parenting abilities, strengthen family relationships, and help one find new ways to strike a healthier balance between work and family life. Obtain tools necessary to keep a family on track. This workshop is free and all of the materials will be provided. Call 655-2400 for reservations.

Spouse's Night Out, Wellness Expo - Come out on Jan. 27 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Tropics on Schofield Barracks for a special edition of Spouse's Night Out. Learn make-up and beauty tips, hair styling tips, selecting the right wardrobe, product demonstrations, massages, and general wellness information.

On Jan. 13, at Army Community Service enjoy Game Night. Brought back by popular demand, prizes will be awarded. Learn to Use a Web Camera and Quilting. At Tropics beginning at 7 p.m., watch and participate in a product demonstration.

Supervised children are invited. MWR Blue Star Card holders receive free child care from 6 - 9 p.m. by reservation only at Peterson Child Care Center. Call 655-3929 by noon of the Tuesday before each Thursday

event to make child care reservations. Child care reservations can be made two weeks in advance. Call 655-0002 for more information.

Spinning Class Now Available - The newest group exercise class, Spinning, is now available at the Health and Fitness Center on Schofield Barracks. Use deluxe "Revmaster" stationary bikes expertly guided by certified instructors and use guided imagery to "climb hills," sprint or take in the "scenery," you'll get a most challenging and fun workout. Call 655-8007 for more information.

Foster Botanical Garden Tour - Join us for a guided tour of the home to a collection of rare and beautiful plants from the tropical regions of the world Jan. 22. The guided tour begins at 10 a.m., followed by exploration on your own and a brown bag lunch on the lawn. Coolers will be provided to store bag lunches. Free transportation from the Schofield Barracks Commissary parking lot. Bus will depart at 9 a.m. and return by 3 p.m. Admission is free with proper identification. Deadline to register is Jan. 20. Restrictions may apply, call 655-0111 or 655-0112.

Chinese New Year - Celebrate the Chinese New Year with stories and a craft activity Jan. 26, 3 p.m. at the Sgt. Yano Library on Schofield Barracks. 655-0145.

Winnie the Pooh Party - Make and take crafts, play games and listen to a Winnie the Pooh story on Jan. 18, 3 - 5 p.m. Cost is \$1. Call 655-0002.

Okinawan Kenpo Karate Classes - Classes are designed for ages 5 through adult for the development of the mind, body and spirit through physical fitness, self-defense, and self-discipline. Classes are available at Bennett Youth Center on Schofield Barracks, Aliamanu Youth Gym, Fort Shafter and Heleman Physical Fitness Centers. Class days and times differ. Cost per month per person are as follows: Individual, \$35; family of two, \$25; family of three, \$20. Register today at the nearest Army Youth Center or call 833-5393 for more information.

January Food Special at Tropics - For that New Year's Resolution, enjoy carb-reduced wraps. Your choice of turkey and sun-dried tomato wrap or turkey and spinach wrap. Each comes with a side salad for only \$2.75. Stufferz Pizza Pockets, supreme or three meat also available for \$2.75, or two slices of cheese or pepperoni pizza with a soda for \$5, or one large one topping pizza with a pitcher of soda for \$11.99.

Mongolian BBQ - Offering a large variety of meats and

vegetables, you select them, and we grill them, Jan. 12, 5 - 8 p.m. at the Nehelani, Schofield Barracks. Seating at Reggie's. Cost is \$4 for the first four ounces and \$.65 each ounce after. Reservations required; call 655-0660.

Wine and Dine - Jan. 19, Nehelani, Schofield Barracks an evening of wine and a 4-course gourmet dinner, including soup and salad, appetizer, entrée, and dessert. Each course served with a selected wine. Dinner starts at 6 p.m. Reservations required, limited seating. Cost is \$29 for adults. Call 655-0660.

Parents' Night Out - Jan. 15, 6 - 11 p.m., drop off the kids at Child and Youth Services and enjoy an evening out. If your child is not registered with CYS, a \$15 registration fee applies. Parent's Night Out fees are for E-5 and below, \$15 for one child and \$5 each additional child, for E-6 and above, \$20 for one child and \$5 for each additional child. Reservations are first come, first serve. Call the Registration and Referral office for information at Schofield Barracks, 655-5314 or AMR at 833-5393.

Commissary Dash N' Grab - Enter for a chance to win the next Commissary Dash N' Grab event scheduled for Jan. 27 at 7:30 a.m. Entry boxes located at the Schofield Barracks Commissary, Army Community Service, and the Tropics. Three finalists will be chosen at the Jan. 18 Town Hall Meeting. MWR Blue Star Card Members automatically entered to win. Finalists will be notified. Open to active duty military and their families. This event is held quarterly.

Yu-Gi-Oh Tournament - Join us for a duel at the Tropics, Schofield Barracks Jan. 8, registration at 1 p.m., tournament at 2 p.m. Cost is \$6 and includes Yu-Gi-Oh merchandise. Prizes awarded, all ages welcome. Call 655-8522.

Lighten Up! Tighten Up! - Eat healthy and win prizes. Pick up a "Healthy" stamp card at the Schofield Bowling Center Snack bar or at the Hale Ikenaka on Fort Shafter. Every "healthy" meal purchased earns one stamp. Collect 10 "healthy menu" item stamps and receive a prize. Enter completed stamp cards for the grand prize drawing. For information, call 655-0573 or 438-1974.

Information, Ticketing and Registration New Location - The Schofield Barracks ITR office is now located at the Flagview Mall. The new office is open seven days a week, Mon - Fri, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sat and Sun, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Online information is available at www.mwrarmyhawaii.com.

Commentary

THE CHOPPIN' BLOCK
 By Spc. Daniel P. Kelly

"Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events"
 ★★☆☆

creet bite marks. (yawn-yawn-yawn)

This movie didn't work for me. Brad Siberling, the director (also of "City of Angels," and you know how happy that movie was) tries to use the good old "Harry Potter" mystique to ruse people into believing this will be a "magical" journey filled with adventure.

No. This movie was unfortunate, in that its actors played poorly, the writing was bad, the plot was bad, the music sounded more like the theme to "American Beauty" and less like a fantasy or children's movie, the directing was poor and they try to shove a happy ending in at the last second. The only thing the movie did have going for it was the great sets, make-up, Jim Carrey, Meryl Streep and Jude Law.

Overall, I really didn't like this movie, but I will only chop off two stars on account it definitely has the potential to please children between the ages of 10 to 12 ... maybe more, maybe less.

HACN TV2 Schedule Jan. 7 - 13

Morning		3:45	OIF Photo Montage 5
6:00	Sign on	3:51	Volunteers
6:30	Fit for Life	4:00	Pentagon Channel
7:00	Bulletin Board		
7:30	SHAMU-Wild Babies		
7:54	Dash and Grab	6:00	Community Focus
8:00	Pentagon Channel	6:15	Bulletin Board
9:00	Pentagon Channel	6:44	Army Values - Respect
10:00	ASAP-Drugs	6:50	OIF Photo Montage 3
10:30	OIF Photo Montage 7	6:54	Jake Shimabukuro
10:46	Bulletin Board	7:00	NFL-Tight on the Spiral
11:30	Hawaii Hidden Beauty, Danger	8:00	Bulletin Board
11:50	OIF Photo Montage 6	8:47	History of JAG
12:00	Pentagon Channel	9:00	Anti Terrorism FP
		9:24	Oakland Army Base
	Afternoon	10:00	Youth Protection
2:02	Hurricane Safety	11:00	NFL-'58 Championship Game
2:25	OIF Photo Montage 2	12:17	Bulletin Board
2:30	SHAMU-The Manatee Story		
3:00	SHAMU-The Sea Turtle Story		
3:35	OAHU-Aloha Begins		
		Overnight	
		12:51	Pentagon Channel

MPs aid injured Afghan family

By Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons
17th Public Affairs Detachment

WARDAK PROVINCE, Afghanistan — The radio in the vehicle crackled to life.

“Warlord One, this is Warlord Six, over.”

“Six, this is One, over.”

“Turn around. Did you see that truck in the ditch? Let’s see what we can do.”

“Roger.”

The Soldiers, on their way to the Ghazni Provincial Reconstruction Team in central Afghanistan after a mission in Wardak province, called the tactical operations center at the PRT to inform their leaders they were turning around. The Soldiers on the convoy had spotted a family of Afghans stranded on the side of the road beside their totaled pickup.

The truck had been speeding, blew a tire and rolled off the road, injuring the occupants and destroying the truck, said Staff Sgt. Stephan Mudge, 25th Military Police Company.

Seeing the damaged vehicle and the family next to it, the Soldiers, who were qualified as combat lifesavers, thought they could help and stopped to lend a hand.

“One of the people had already been taken to the hospital with some pretty severe injuries,” said Spc. Paul Lamb, 25th MP Co. “The other family members who just had small cuts and bruises were still sitting beside the vehicle.”

Although the most seriously injured was already being taken care of, the people with less severe injuries still needed help.

“We cleaned up a few cuts and put bandages on the little boy, and the man and woman,” said Lamb.

Due to cultural concerns, the MPs were glad a female Soldier was on the patrol to assist the female Afghan.

“Culturally, it’s important for men not to have too much con-



Sgt. Jennifer S. Emmons

Staff Sgt. Stephan Mudge (left) and Spc. Paul Lamb, both of the 25th MP Co., render aid to an Afghan family after the family had a vehicle accident in Wardak province.

tact with women,” said Mudge. “Fortunately, we had a female Soldier with us to do a more thorough exam to make sure there were no serious neck injuries.”

The Soldiers also flagged down a passing ambulance near the scene of the accident.

“The person driving the ambulance happened to be the minister of health for Ghazni province, so he was able to help move the people to the doctor,” said Mudge.

The MPs who responded to the accident provided yet another benefit to the Afghans.

“All the Soldiers in the platoon are combat lifesaver qualified,” he said.

The Soldiers knew what they were doing and made a significant impact.

More than the aid the Soldiers provided, they gave the family a good view of the Coalition.

“I think it gave them a positive impression of us,” said Mudge. “It lets them know that we are here to help them. We’re here to help the people in any way we can, by training the police, helping the government,

or providing assistance if there is a traffic accident.”

Assisting people like the Afghan family also benefits the Soldiers.

“Assisting whenever we can helps us in our mission,” said Mudge. “These people that we helped will pass on the word that we helped and that we are here to help. It makes it easier to deal with the community. It also sets a good example for the police.”

This situation also brought home another message to the Soldiers, he said.

“This brought back the importance of situational awareness. We always keep our eyes open for possible attacks and (improvised explosive devices). You never know when there might be something we can do to help the people around us.”

The family will recover from their bumps and bruises. And they will remember how Coalition forces took the time to help them when they were in need.

“That wasn’t our mission that day,” said Lamb. “But we were able to help them. It’s good to be able to do things like that.”

Cub Scout Schofield Days

By Lt. Col. Bob Hoelscher
Contributing Writer

Teaching young boys the value of courage, trust, self-confidence, and physical fitness are some of the purposes of Cub Scouting.

This past week those values were reinforced for 70 boys from Cub Scout Packs 197 and 297 at the 36th Annual “Schofield Days” held in the mountains above Wahiawa at the 25th Infantry Division’s Air Assault School Dec. 29.

The 70 scouts based out of Hickam Air Force Base, ranging from 7 to 11-years-old, had the opportunity to build character, learn about the Army, and share an exciting and fun experience with 1,000 other Oahu-based Cub Scouts.

Supported by volunteers from the 29th Corps Support Group, the Air Assault School, and the U.S. Coast Guard, the Scouts spent part of the morning learning the basics of rappelling.

This included some of the more technical skills such as tying their own Swiss seats, attaching the carabiner, and adjusting their rate of descent down a 25-foot, 45-degree wall.

Later in the morning, the Soldiers taught the boys how to cross a 50-foot long, one-rope bridge suspended over a streambed. This challenge required the scouts to pull themselves along the rope hand over hand either while hanging underneath the rope or balancing on top of the rope – ranger style!

The Scouts were also able to learn about and handle numerous military weapons ranging from M4



Lt. Col. Bob Hoelscher

Nicholas Johnson, 8, debates whether or not to maneuver down the 25-foot wall during Schofield Days Dec. 29. Nicholas’ dad, Sgt. 1st Class Jack Johnson is assigned to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command at Hickam Air Force Base.

carbines, to M-249 squad automatic weapons, and even an M-2 tripod-mounted .50 caliber machine gun.

For the Scouts whose parents are deployed, this experience provided a unique opportunity to see some of the tools their parents use as service members serving their nation in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The Soldiers also taught the scouts how to camouflage themselves; an event

every scout took great advantage of! They looked like walking trees.

To top off the morning, the scouts enjoyed the not-so-luxurious ride of the Army’s newest cargo truck, the LMTV or Light and Medium Tactical Vehicle.

The Soldiers were nice enough to drive through every mud puddle, rut, and hole along the dirt road. The boys truly enjoyed that ride!

Military Culture Course opens eyes of Hawaii educators

By Joy Boisselle
Staff Writer

A military culture course designed to teach Hawaii public school educators about military concerns like transition challenges and the affects of local culture on students concluded Dec. 14.

Thirty-two educators from Leilehua High School, Solomon, Helemano, Hale Kula Elementary and Wheeler Middle school joined more than 200 of their peers as they completed the six-week course held at the Leilehua High School Library. According to Kristina Noriega-Artis, Army school liaison officer and one of the course facilitators, the course provided teachers with a detailed snapshot of what military life is about.

"Our goal is to educate the teachers and help them understand the military lifestyle," she said, "And, ultimately improve the lives of military kids."

Course attendees learn in a fluid environment, which includes classroom instruction, panel discussions with Soldiers, parents, and students, and field trips to various post activities and locations of interest. A priority of the course is easing transition worries of new military students and their parents.

To that end, attendees divided into school-affiliated groups to present an end-of-course project. Each project focused on an issue discussed during the course.

Hale Kula Elementary educators designed an Aloha Passport both for incoming and outgoing students. The incoming passport provides tips for getting acquainted with the school, while the exit passport provides closure for departing students.

Laura Nakasone, a Hale Kula Elementary educator said, "Our school is 98 percent military and it behooves us to know as much as we can to help students and parents as they transition to our school."

Jessica Nie, another Hale Kula teacher, explained how valuable the post field trip was to the course. "Even though I work on post, I don't know what goes on here," she said.

Barbara Towle, also of Hale Kula Elementary, said, "I thought the panel discussions particularly with parents and students was very



Joy Boisselle

Hale Kula Elementary teachers brief Military Culture Course facilitators on their Aloha Passport project. Seated left to right are Teresa Cramer, Jessica Nie, Kristina Noriega-Artis, and Wayne Yoshino. Noriega-Artis and Yoshino are Army School Liaison officers.

effective, emotional, and thought provoking. I didn't understand the amount of moves military families make."

One panel member, Shannon Killian, a Leilehua High School senior, touched attendees by recounting her experiences at four different high schools.

Nakasone said, "I knew military life was difficult, I just didn't know how difficult. Sometimes, we (civilians) take things for granted."

Noriega-Artis commented that all the teachers had gained much more than the two professional development credits earned for course completion.

Among other things, she said, "Teachers learned first hand how hard it is to be a kid with a deployed parent, where their students go after school, what their housing looks like, and what facilities and programs are available to them."

She added that teachers provided feedback for all aspects of the course and that feedback helps shape future courses.

One project that received much praise was a welcome video designed by educators from Leilehua High School. The project focused on lessening the shock of

attending a new school by allowing transitioning students a peek at daily life at Leilehua. Cameos by administrators, teachers, students, and military leaders helped explain the school's daily routine, including what kinds of clothes are worn, what kinds of kids attend the school, and classes available.

Leilehua teacher, Len Nakasone, spoke of what he had learned during his group's out brief to facilitators. "I have a better awareness of what the military is like. You see Iraq and other places on TV, but you don't make the connection that our kids' parents are there and some are dying," he reflected.

On the importance of the military culture course, Noriega-Artis said, "This is not an 'us versus them' situation. This course promotes an awareness of the unique culture and lifestyle of the military. And, teachers who attend will connect better on a day to day basis and have an appreciation for what their military students lives are like."

(Editor's Note: Since 2001, the Military Culture Course, sponsored by the Joint Venture Education Forum, has been providing hands on training for educators at high military volume schools.)

New TriCare West Region up and running, despite "bumps"

TriCare News Release

With the transition of the West Region TriCare military health program completed Oct. 1, some beneficiaries felt the "bumps" resulting from the new systems and procedures for accessing health care. Although military health care services leadership including the commanders of Military Treatment Facilities are active in ensuring optimal care and customer service, the transition "bump" causes have been beyond their control.

"The bumps in the road of this massive transition are being addressed as quickly as we can," said David McIntyre, president and chief executive officer of TriWest Healthcare Alliance. Tricare West region consists of 2.7 million beneficiaries in 21 states stretching from Mississippi to Hawaii.

As provider networks grew during transition, some bumps included beneficiaries having to choose new providers and experiencing long telephone waits. For health care leaders, even one dissatisfied beneficiary is unacceptable.

"We recognize the problems, we have the systems in place to resolve the issues and we're making progress," McIntyre said.

To that end, TriWest Healthcare Alliance has doubled its workforce. New customer service representatives have undergone significant training so they can provide prompt, accurate information, the first time, McIntyre added.

With such rapid growth, telephone volumes skyrocketed causing longer waiting times. By adding more telephone lines and customer service representatives, waiting times are less. During peak hours, however, longer than acceptable wait times continue to occur. Calling on Thursday and Friday afternoons may reduce hold times.

"Our answer rates continue to improve every week and are nearly within standards. While we have more work to do, I believe that we are closing the gap," McIntyre said.

TriWest also put significant efforts into growing the provider network. Since June, nearly 72,000 providers are under contract and efforts to provide a truly compre-

hensive provider network in the West Region continue.

Noting that nearly 50 percent of TriWest employees are retired military or military family members, McIntyre said, "We feel privileged to serve America's military family and are committed to doing whatever it takes to serve those in the entire West Region. While it is difficult to bear with a period of transition, the result will be a stronger, better, more efficient TriCare program."

Editor's Note: Questions or problems? Call TriWest toll-free at 1-888-TRIWEST (874-9378) or visit the web site at www.triwest.com.

TRICARE at a glance

• Provider Referrals

Visit a Primary Care Manager (PCM) in either the MTF or network. If necessary, the PCM will write a referral for specialist care. PCM forwards the referral to the TriWest Hub. TriWest processes the referral for authorization. A letter of authorization is sent to the beneficiary with contact information for the MTF or the name of a suggested network provider. For network referrals, the beneficiary has two options: Accept the suggested provider or select another network provider.

• Prescription Medications

Beneficiaries have three pharmacy options: the MTF, TriCare Mail Order Pharmacy, and TRICARE Retail Pharmacy Network (TRRx). To order by mail or locate a network pharmacy near you, visit www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE or call 866-363-8779.

• Enrollment Fees

TriCare Prime enrollment fees can be paid by allotment or by electronic funds transfer system from a financial institution. Department of Defense allotment forms are available at TriWest.com or from the TriCare Service Center

• Permanent Change of Station

When transferring from one duty station to another in the TriCare West Region, beneficiaries must submit a change of Primary Care Manager request by calling 1-888-TriWest and submit an address change in DEERS. Within the TriCare West Region, online enrollment is accessible at www.triwest.com.

Spouses left behind have many reasons to be proud

By Nadja Gassert-Depape
Contributing Writer

(Part Two of Two)

Soldiers are not returning from Iraq or Afghanistan as soon as initially expected and disappointment overshadows this holiday season for many. As plans for reunion are postponed, looking back and noting accomplishments is likely the last thing on the minds of spouses and loved one left behind.

That is unfortunate, because there is much to be proud of. Our Soldiers aren't the only heroes. Countless spouses, family members and loved ones were left behind to manage life on their own.

Many found support, friendship and the opportunity to become involved in their military community with their Family Readiness Groups.

Susan Davis's life is firmly devoted to her FRG work. She is a passionate and eager leader and there was no question about giving up hula lessons when her FRG commitment became too demanding.

"It's about creating a positive learning environment for the senior leadership of the Aviation Brigade, to include FRG leaders and Rear Detachment," she said. "It's a full-time job to motivate and mentor our future leaders." And she loves it. Her husband is in Afghanistan.

Lisa Davis whose husband is in Iraq also worked with her FRG.

"Supporting and helping other wives and families, contributing to my community and creating this unique sisterhood made me a better person," she said.

Lynn Curry understands. She and a few friends lead an



FRG. "We did outings and picnics and were there for each other." Curry's husband is deployed to Afghanistan.

Veronica Lile whose husband won't have to go on his 12-month deployment until later in the year, but already spends months at a time in Kuwait, didn't rely on her FRG as much as on her friends. "We would have meetings on the weekends. It wasn't about going out, but rather casual evenings and a chance for us to get together."

Being there for others was also something Bridget Hall did. "One of my best friends

got married and I was a part of that. Another had a baby and I was there for that, too. Given the nature of my situation, with my husband gone to war, it helped me to be able to experience other people's joy." Hall's husband is in Iraq.

Many spouses had a unique opportunity of a different kind.

"We [wives of deployed husbands] realize now how involved our husbands were and how big their contributions to our families were," commented Judy Rossi, a mother of four boys, ages 5, 7, 13 and 15. With her husband

in Afghanistan, she had to fill in for him and that made her uncomfortable at times when her boys needed a father not a mother to talk to. "That was tough. On my boys and on me."

Rossi also took care of the family cars and finances, something she usually avoided when her husband was home.

Like many military spouses, Rossi didn't do one great big, unusual thing, but she did many small everyday things that seem unimportant, even trivial, but she took good care of her family and has much to be proud of when her husband returns.

Maureen McGinn who is the sister-in-law of a Soldier deployed to Afghanistan summed it all up perfectly. "It's amazing."

McGinn had the chance to experience all a military

spouse deals with when she came to Hawaii to support her sister. "I am amazed. There is so much to do ... just fixing things around the house, taking care of the kids, defragmenting the computer. It's overwhelming without a spouse, but military wives do it all. And survive."

Amazing indeed.

Though spouses, family members and loved ones wear no uniforms, have no rank and do not give salutes, they are as much a part of the military as their wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, aunts, uncles, sisters, brothers and lovers. They are the silent ranks.

And they deserve our thanks and our salutes for the daily challenges they overcome, for the struggles they face and for the accomplishments they achieve while left behind.

Are you ready for reunion? How the 'Grinch' stole reunion

By Michele Adams-Thompson
Contributing Writer

Resisting the inevitable takes so much energy, but we do it anyway.

For example, two trips to the convenience store in order to avoid a big trip to the commissary doesn't make sense, but I confess sometimes I do it. I know the big trip is unavoidable, but I still resist it. This resistance costs me both time and money, but in the scheme of things it's a small expense.

Under certain circumstances, resisting the inevitable can cost much more. Putting off a trip to the doctor when you sense something might really be wrong, now that can

be expensive. Here's another one – resisting change, the kind of change we know is inevitable in our Soldier or ourselves over the course of a year.

If recent research on military families and deployments tells us anything, it tells us this – every one of us and every one of our Soldiers has changed during the deployment. I think we resist accepting the implications of this for lots of reasons, but one of the big ones has to be that we want things to be like they were when our Soldier left.

We want him or her home and we want to get back to normal. If we have to factor in how we've all changed, we just don't know what

to make of the picture so we resist this idea somewhat.

But we resist a "straw man" here. Humans respond and adapt to what's going on around them. Change by itself isn't the enemy to watch out for, but unrealistic expectations might be. If we indulge them or even if we just allow them to go unchecked and unexamined, they can rob us of a healthy, happy reunion the way the Grinch stole Christmas.

Along with developing realistic expectations, military families who've been through reunion after a long deployment have two other recommendations for us: 1. Take the process slow. 2. Determine to be

patient. This isn't too hard I'm thinking. After all, I'm fine on patience just as long as I have time for it! And I can take things slowly if I have to, just as long as things are going my way!

Ok, so maybe I'll have to give all this a little more thought and practice. Do any of us have the wisdom to keep expectations realistic, the maturity to take reunion slowly or all the restraint required for being patient? Probably not. But it helps to know what we should be aiming for and to get started in the right direction as soon as possible.

Our Soldiers will be attending Tropic Lightning Academy after they return from block leave.

Tropic Lightning Academy is designed to take maximum advantage of the things other reunited military families have learned and put that information in the hands of our Soldiers to use in their own lives and with their families.

Not only that, spouses of Soldiers can attend free. Soldiers will register through their units and spouses can register with them. Why would anyone miss information that can make such a difference in reunion? We can keep the Grinch from stealing a happy reunion from our families. If you have any questions, call the Tropic Lightning Academy office at 655-8382 or ACS at 655-2400.

The Engineer Equipment Platoon in Iraq

By Capt. Marty Lewton,
84th Engineer Combat Battalion
(Heavy)

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq – Equipment Platoon of HSC, 84th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) is a unique support platoon of the battalion, with 45 Soldiers and more than 80 pieces of equipment. It has traveled more than 5,000 miles in Iraq – a feat unmatched by any other platoon in the battalion.

It is the largest platoon and has more engineer equipment than most companies in the battalion. Because of its unique composition, three distinct sections (Concrete and Asphalt, Dump, and Equipment), the platoon has been involved in nearly every major mission that the 84th ECB(H) has undertaken while in support of OIF II.

However, since its home is in a headquarters company, most Soldiers do not realize the importance of the EQ platoon and cast it aside as a “rental agency” set-up for the line companies, when in fact, EQ is much more than a mere support unit.

Frequent convoys and amassing miles aren't the goal of the platoon since convoys are merely a means to arrive at the project site in order to execute missions. The concrete section has placed more than 3,000 cubic yards of concrete in support of OIF II.

Whether constructing a helipad at CEA Buckmaster, providing concrete for a Forward Arming and Refueling Point on the LSA Anaconda airfield, or placing bridge abutments for marines near the Tigris River, the concrete and asphalt section has consistently provided others with quality concrete.

The section takes care of all concrete matters, including estimating how much sand, gravel, and water will be required to



Courtesy photo

Equipment Platoon Soldiers work the borrow pit on LSA Anaconda in Iraq in 2004.

accomplish the mission. The section has also been involved with hauling materials to project sites.

This is due to the acquisition of the Engineer Mobile Modules that are part of the Palletized Load System truck (a Concrete Mobile Module, Dump Module, and Flat rack). The diversity of the PLS truck makes the Concrete and Asphalt section's mission more diverse.

The Dump section for EQ hauled more than 56,700 cubic yards of material moved throughout Iraq during more than 57 missions, whether a helipad at CEA Buckmaster, hauling trash and debris from the BCCF to improve the quality of life for Soldiers, or hauling gravel for bridge sites, the dump section has always been ready for whatever missions came its way.

The Equipment sections of EQ have been called on for the most diverse missions, from picking up Iraqi security force equipment from Jordan, leveling land near the Tigris River for agriculture, to manning the LSA Anaconda Landfill, which has been operated by the Equipment platoon every day of the deployment to Iraq.

The EQ has transformed what was a place to burn trash into a



Courtesy photo

Soldiers from the 84th Eng. Bn. (H) remove a berm in Iraq. Equipment Platoon has removed more than 63,000 cubic yards of berms in 2004.

functional landfill. The trash and rubble inside the base camp has been burned, piled, and organized in the largest, longest undertaking the battalion has had while deployed to OIF II.

Noncommissioned officers in the platoon created standard operating procedures, hours of operations were established, and dumping guidelines were provided to the units in LSA Anaconda (home to thousands of Soldiers).

If the burn pit were to be closed for just one day, the effect would be felt by the entire base camp.

Recently, the Equipment sections removed more than 63,000 cubic yards of berms lining the perimeter of the base camp to eliminate possible enemy mortar positions. In addition, the removal of the berms provided the Iraqi population in the area with more land to farm.

While the glory of mission

accomplishment is always given to the line companies, EQ consistently demonstrates that it can be called upon 24/7, often times executing missions with less than a day's notice.

The Soldiers' unseen and unheard efforts are what make EQ a fantastic example of what an engineer platoon can do in support of the force and what motivated and unselfish soldiering can do for a team.

Soldiers get thrashed by Iraqi police in friendly soccer game

Sgt. Sean Kimmons
25th ID (L) Public Affairs

BULL BASE, Iraq – To build camaraderie with the Iraqi Security Forces in Kirkuk, Company B, Task Force 1-21 Infantry, occasionally hosts soccer games with the ISF at their patrol base here.

Since soccer is the most popular sport in this country and many Iraqis play it frequently, Co. B Soldiers were trounced by their first two opponents, Turkomen Front and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, by a combined score of 13-1.

But once again, the Soldiers braved another probable defeat and competed against the Kirkuk Iraqi Police Dec. 19.

Temperatures were in the 30s and the sunshine was blocked by thick gray clouds when players from both teams stepped onto the soccer field mid-afternoon.

Co. B Soldiers playing in the soccer game may have known something wasn't quite right when they came out to the field wearing PT shorts, brown undershirts, running shoes whereas most of the Iraqi Police officers wore complete soccer uniforms and cleats.

The uniform difference didn't intimidate the Soldiers too much as their defense held the Iraqi Police to only one goal in the first half of play. The Soldiers even had some looks at scoring too, but many of the kicks soared over the goal net.

In the second half, the Iraqi Police scored again to jump out to a 2-0 lead. And with less than



Sgt. Sean Kimmons

John Salas (middle), an infantryman with Bravo Co., smiles for a photo with some Iraqi Police soccer players following the game Dec. 19 on Bull Base within Kirkuk, Iraq. Bravo Co. lost 2-1 to the Kirkuk Iraqi Police officers.

a minute before the end of the game, a Soldier nailed a goal to escape the shutout.

Even though the Soldiers lost the game, it didn't seem to get them down as the objective of the soccer games is to build friendship not to win.

"It's definitely about building a relationship between the Iraqi Security Forces," said Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Clayborn, a platoon sergeant with Co. B, TF 1-21 Inf.

"We play to win. We don't give them anything, but we know when we go out there, they are probably going to beat us. It's really just to have fun and hang out with them," Clayborn said.

The games give Soldiers the chance to open up to the ISF members while they share the

same passion for soccer, Clayborn said.

"We are also people they can talk to, [and] hopefully they can see that we do things besides patrols in the city," Clayborn said.

Spc. Jeremiah Dycus, a M249 squad automatic weapon gunner with Co. B, TF 1-21 Inf., watched the game on the sidelines and related to the Iraqi Police in a non-competitive way.

"I like to interact with the police on a different level. I talk to them and try to learn their language," Dycus said. "It helps bring unity between all of us and lets us know that we are all on the same team."

Co. B will continue to host soccer games with other ISF groups until they redeploy to Hawaii.



Sgt. Sean Kimmons

Christopher Burnham (middle), an infantryman with Co. B, uses his head to hit a soccer ball toward his teammates during a soccer game against Iraqi Police officers.

Sports Briefs

Great Aloha Run Registration – Get ready to run in the 2005 Great Aloha Run on Monday, Feb. 21. Entry forms are

available at all military fitness centers or online at www.active.com. Select the military form and \$1 from each entry is returned to Army programs. Entry fee is \$20 until Jan. 21. Call 555-8789 for information.

Quarter Mania Bowling – Only two quarters per game and two quarters for shoes, Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. at the Wheeler Army Air Field Bowling Center. Call 656-1745.

Pro Bowl Tickets on Sale –

Visit the nearest Information, Ticketing and Registration office to purchase Pro Bowl tickets. Tickets available in the following sections: Makai and Mauka Orange, Makai Yellow, and North Endzone Orange. Call 438-1985 or

655-9971 for more information.

American Hero's Bowling League – Join the league, bowl 18 sessions and earn one of six Viz-A-Ball bowling balls celebrating America and the Armed Services. Call 655-0573.