



26th BSB wins Kalsu Super Bowl, Catch the Action, See Page 9B

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Serving the Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield communities (www.stewart.army.mil)

February 7, 2008



MWR recognized for Christmas programs, See Page 1B

Take the Family member Education Survey, See Page 2B

5/7 Cav watches town transform, See Page 13A



Pfc. Monica Smith

Chief Warrant Officer Steve Kuritko, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment conducts an inspection of a Chinook's avionics closet at the Combat Aviation Brigade flight line, Baghdad, Jan. 28.

Stewart-Hunter shares Covenant discussions

Special to the Frontline

Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield held a special Army Family Covenant Town Hall meeting Nov. 6, at Club Stewart with a video-teleconference to Hunter Army Airfield. Col. Todd Buchs, Stewart-Hunter garrison commander gathered a pannel of experts to help address issues and concerns.

Questions and answers derived from that meeting are included in this article and can

found on Page B4.

The next quarterly Town Hall meeting is 5:30 p.m., Feb. 12 at Club Stewart and Hunter Club. The meeting will also broadcast live on Marne TV and viewers may phone-in questions at 767-ROCK or 315-ROCK. For more information, call ACS at 767-1257 on Stewart and 315-6816 on Hunter. The command will gather subject matter experts from the installation agencies and address issues and concerns from community members.

See COVENANT

Page 12A

Night Stalker medic recognized for combat actions in Afghanistan

Kimberly T. Laudano
160th SOAR Public Affairs

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. - A Night Stalker recently received the Army Aviation Association of America's Dustoff Medic of the Year Award. Staff Sgt. Fred Osgood was recognized for his actions including one particular mission in June 2007 in Afghanistan.

At that time, intelligence indicated the Taliban and foreign fighters were planning attacks against U.S. and Coalition Forces.

Under the cover of darkness, U.S. special

operations forces boarded Army special operations helicopters and headed for objectives where the enemy was known to be located.

Osgood was the flight paramedic for this mission.

It was his job to develop a medical support package for the troops involved.

"As with most of our missions, time (was) not on our side, so being familiar with the region and the available medical assets is an essential part of our job and one of the first things you get briefed on and get to know quickly," Osgood said.

SEE SOAR

Page 7A

Tip brings in 10 detainees

2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq - A tip from an Iraqi on the location of a wanted insurgent led Coalition Forces to detain 10 suspects Feb. 4 in the Sayifiyah area.

Soldiers from Troop C, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted the intelligence-driven raid against one of the squadron's high-value targets.

The Soldiers discovered nine other individuals with the HVT at the site. All suspects were taken in for questioning.

The 5/7 Cav. Regt., operationally attached to the 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., continues to work aggressively with local citizens in gathering information about the detained individuals, said 1st Lt. David Cooper, 5/7 Cav. Regt. assistant squadron fire support officer.

See more stories From the Front on Page 5A.

Army Family covenant offers free child care

Dagmar Peguero-Olinger
CYS Coordinator

In accordance with the Army Family Covenant, Families of deployed Soldiers at Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield are authorized 16 hours of free hourly child care per month. This incentive began Feb. 1.

Hourly care may be used at the Child Development Centers, School Age Services, Newman and Tominac

Fitness Centers, and Short Term Alternative Child Care sessions.

Additional hours in excess of 16 hours per month, may be purchased for \$2 per hour.

Families of deployed Soldiers may use their 16 hours of free hourly care per month in any way they choose, to include, but not limited to the following:

- Doctor's appointments, shopping, personal time.

See CARE

Page 8A

Warriors in Transition dive into rehabilitation

Kaytrina Curtis
Hunter Public Affairs

Soldiers nervously awaited their turns to enter the water, each with his respective scuba gear.

The diving lessons, however, seemed to have a profound effect on the warriors; men who penetrated the water's glassy surface afraid and shaken, arose refreshed, renewed, and rejuvenated. This scenario played out several times over the course of three

days during the handicap scuba diving training class, with Soldiers of the Warriors in Transition Battalion.

Many WTB Soldiers and their Families had the opportunity to learn a new sport while rehabilitating. Col. Stefan Sherman, Officer in Charge, Dentac clinic number five, a handicap certified scuba diving trainer, instructed the three-day introductory handicap scuba diving class, which began Jan. 29 at the Tominac Fitness Center pool on Hunter Army Airfield.

See WTU

Page 8A



Sgt. Timothy Kingston

Sp. Raquel Martinez, a combat medic with the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, takes a knee and scans the area during an operation in Al Duraiya, a small village near Salman Pak, Jan. 28. See story on Page 3A.

Marne 6 Sends

Reach out, help Soldiers, Families reintegrate

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
3rd Inf. Div. commanding general

Both the 92nd Engineer Battalion and the 260th Quartermaster Battalion have already successfully redeployed. This month, the 385th Military Police Battalion redeploy from Afghanistan, and next month the 1st Brigade Combat Team – the Raiders – begin to make their way back after 15 months in Iraq securing the Al Anbar province.

We are so excited for all of you. For the last many months, the Soldiers have been working hard to fight and win this war, and they all did an absolutely magnificent job. We are all very proud of them, and I know you are too.

Redeployment and reintegration can be a very stressful time. So much has

changed since you put your Soldier on a plane many months ago. Both of you have expectations for the upcoming months. You have made plans for leave, made plans to spend time with the Family, and you are looking forward to the future. Reunions after so much time apart can be very challenging, but Families in today's Army are resilient. If there is a population in America that can do anything – it's an Army Family. One of the reasons we are "Army Strong" is because of our selfless Families.

These days we have more resources than ever, and I encourage you to use



all of the services we have available at Fort Stewart. Our Army Community Services office is full of great men and women whose only purpose is to help you and your Family. Our Family Readiness Support Assistants are not only for the deployment period, but they can assist you through the redeployment period. Family readiness is not only important when the Soldiers are gone – we

have systems in place to help you all the time.

And I want you to know, that once your Soldiers come home, that I am implementing strict training guidance

that does not allow any more than individual training for the first 180 days. During that time I want the Soldiers to reintegrate, take block leave and administrative leave, and to focus on themselves and their Families. I am not allowing the duty day to extend past 5 p.m. or for any weekend training. You have been apart long enough – the next few months will be about Family time.

The next few weeks are going to be very busy, and we are so excited for you. But remember, seeking help when you need it is a sign of strength; and reaching out to others only makes you stronger. Our nation's most precious resource is our Soldiers and their Families, and we want you to know that we are here to help.

Rock of the Marne!



2nd BCT Soldier opts to stay 'Army Strong'

Courtesy photo

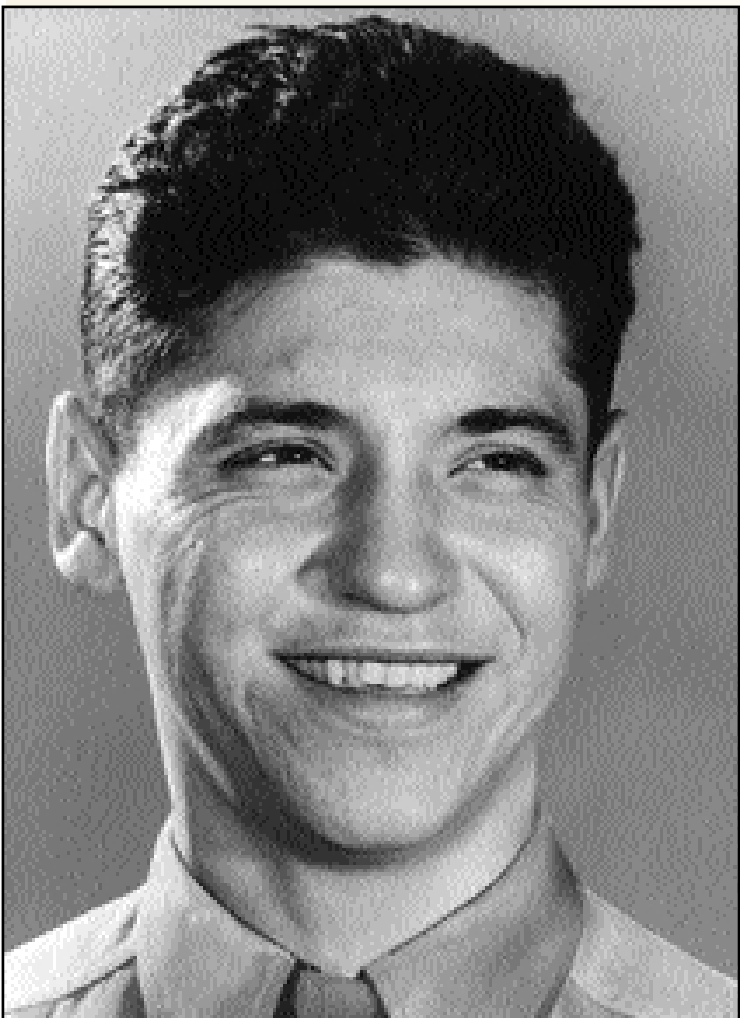
Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commander of the 18th Airborne Corps, reenlists Staff Sgt. Casey Wilcox, brigade targeting noncommissioned officer, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division at Forward Operating Base Kalsu Feb 1. Wilcox, a native of Adel, Ga., is in the middle of his third tour with the 2nd BCT and rose to the rank of staff sergeant in six years.

A moment in Marne History: Knappenberger, Peden receive MOH

Sasha McBrayer
Fort Stewart Museum

During World War II a number of Soldiers distinguished themselves, going above and beyond the call of duty. Several of them earned the Army's highest honor, the Medal of Honor. Two such men serving the 3rd Infantry Division were Pfc. Alton Knappenberger, and Technician 5th Grade Forrest Peden.

Pfc. Alton Knappenberger, Company C, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, born in Cooperstown, Pa., distinguished himself near the town of Cisterna di Littoria, Italy on Feb. 1, 1944. His citations said the medal was awarded for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life



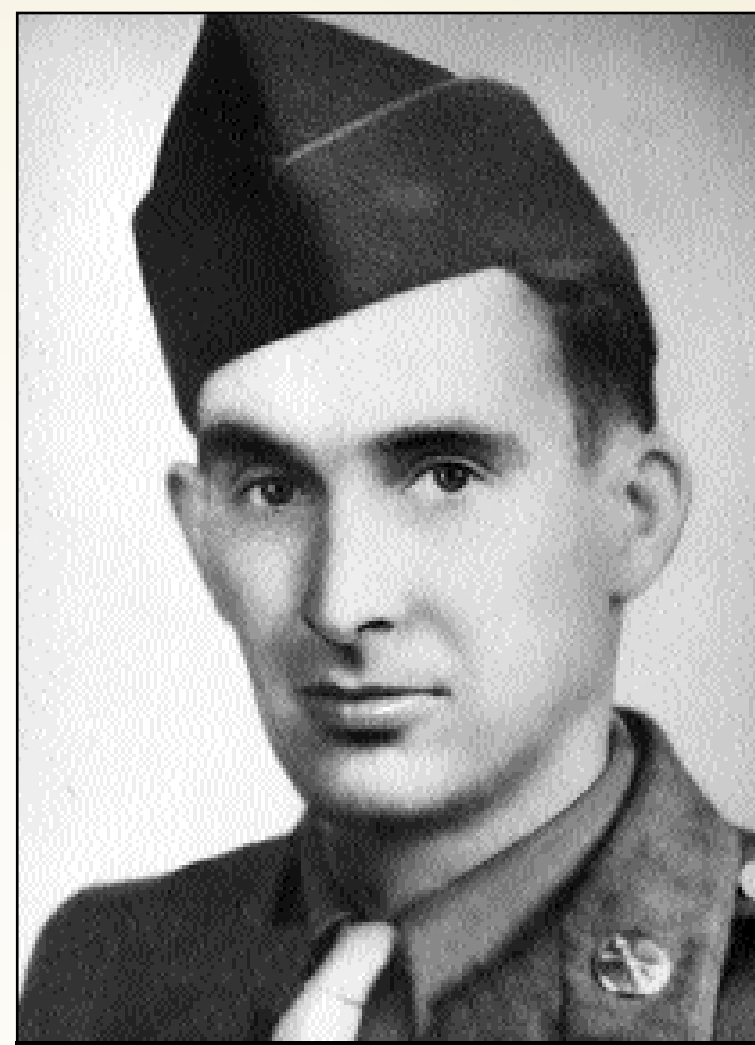
Pfc. Alton Knappenberger

above and beyond the call of duty in action involving actual conflict with the enemy. The citation said when a heavy German counterattack was launched against his battalion, Pfc. Knappenberger crawled to an exposed knoll and went into position with his automatic rifle. An enemy machinegun 85 yards away opened fire, and bullets struck within six inches of him. Rising to a kneeling position, Knappenberger opened fire on the hostile crew, knocked out the gun, and killed two members of the crew, wounding the third crewman. While he fired at this hostile position, two Germans crawled to a point within 20 yards of the knoll and threw potato-masher grenades at him, but Knappenberger killed them both with one burst from his automatic rifle.

Later, a second machinegun opened fire upon his exposed position from a distance of 100 yards, and this weapon also was silenced by his well-aimed shots. Shortly thereafter, an enemy 20mm. antiaircraft gun directed fire at him, and again Knappenberger returned fire to wound one member of the hostile crew. Under tank and artillery shellfire, with shells bursting within 15 yards of him, he held his precarious position and fired at all enemy infantrymen armed with machine pistols and machine-guns that he could locate. When his ammunition supply became exhausted, he crawled 15 yards forward through steady machinegun fire, removed rifle clips from the belt of a casualty, returned to his position and resumed firing to repel an assaulting German platoon armed with automatic weapons. Finally, his ammunition supply being completely exhausted, he rejoined his company. Knappenberger's intrepid action disrupted the enemy attack for over two hours.

Technician 5th Grade Forrest Peden, Battery C, 10th Field Artillery Battalion, born in Saint Joseph, Montana earn the medal of honor for distinguishing himself near the town of Biesheim, France, Feb. 3, 1945. His citation said he was a forward artillery observer when the group of about 45 infantrymen with whom he was advancing was ambushed in the uncertain light of a waning moon. Enemy forces outnumbering the Americans by four to one poured withering artillery, mortar, machinegun, and small-arms fire into the stricken unit from the flanks. The fire forced the men to seek the cover of a ditch, which they found already occupied by enemy foot troops.

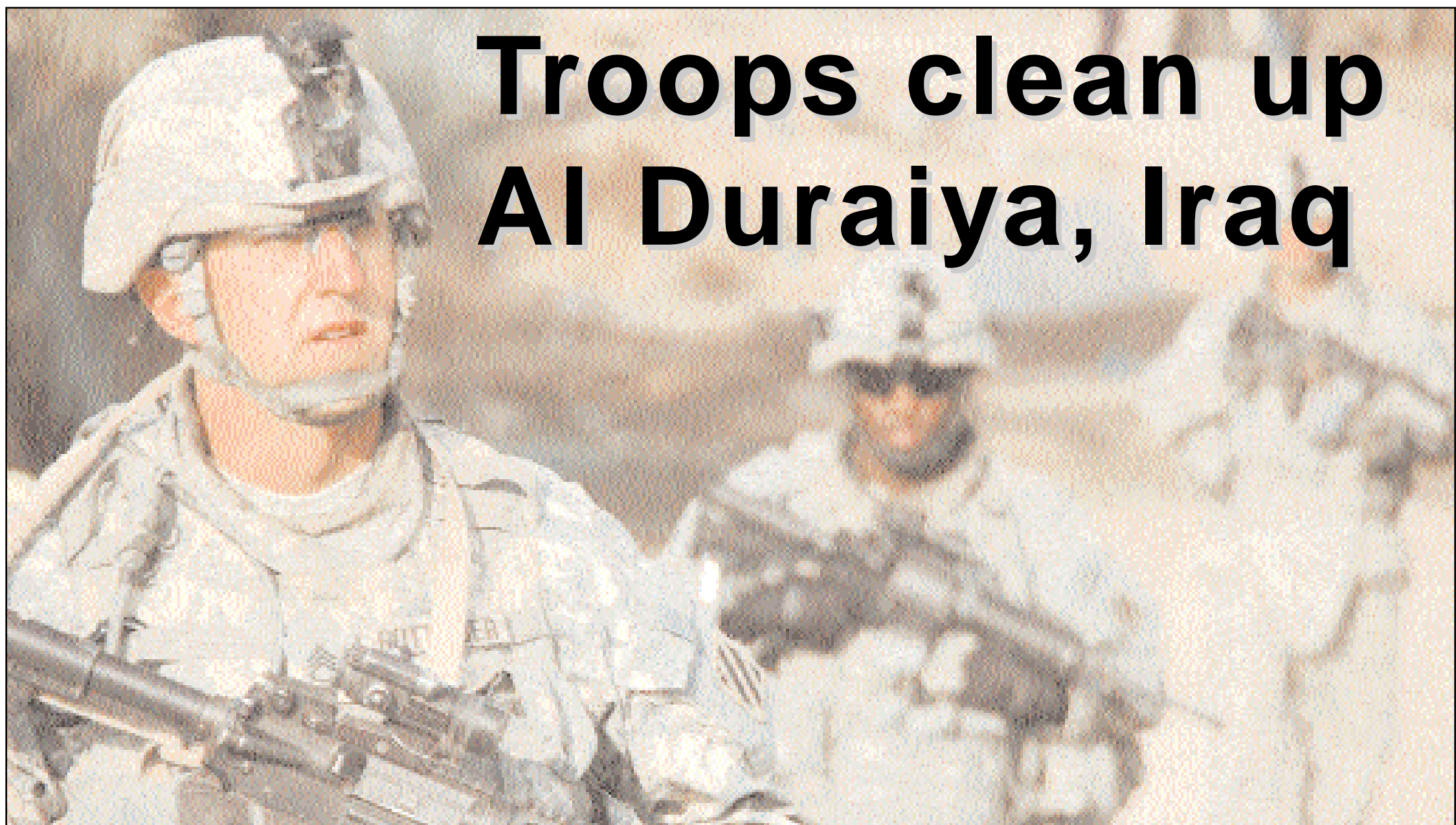
As the opposing infantrymen struggled in hand-to-hand combat, Technician Peden courageously went to the assistance of two wounded Soldiers and rendered first aid under heavy fire. With radio communications inoperative, he realized that the unit would be wiped out unless help could be secured from the rear. On his own initiative, he



Technician 5th Grade Forrest Peden

ran 800 yards to the battalion command post through a hail of bullets, which pierced his jacket, and there secured two light tanks to go to the relief of his hard-pressed comrades. Knowing the terrible risk involved, he climbed upon the hull of the lead tank and guided it into battle. Through a murderous concentration of fire, the tank lumbered onward, bullets and shell fragments ricocheting from its steel armor within inches of the completely exposed rider, until it reached the ditch. As it was about to go into action, it was turned into a flaming pyre by a direct hit, which killed Technician Peden. However, his intrepidity and gallant sacrifice was not in vain. Attracted by the light from the burning tank, reinforcements found the beleaguered Americans and drove off the enemy.

Troops clean up Al Duraiya, Iraq



Photos by Sgt. Timothy Kingston

Master Sgt. Heath Potteiger, an infantryman in the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, scans for enemy personnel while conducting an operation in Al Duraiya, a small village near Salman Pak, Jan. 28.

Spc. Ben Hutto
3rd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq – Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment conducted a two-day joint operation with the 1st Brigade, 1st National Police Division to set up Concerned Local Citizen checkpoints, and disrupt insurgent networks operating near Al Duraiya, a small village near Salman Pak, Jan. 28 and 29.

During the operation, 1/15th Inf. Regt. found seven improvised explosive devices and a weapons cache.

Soldiers from the 789th Ordnance Company, from Fort Benning, secured the cache and transported it to another site for disposal.

The cache contained 10 hand grenades, 260 machine gun rounds, 150 rounds of small arms ammunition, 50 high explosive rounds, a can of homemade explosives, a Russian air force bomb converted into an IED and the base of an explosive formed projectile.

First Lt. Ross Pixler, from Phoenix, Ariz., a platoon leader in Company A, 1/15 Inf. Regt., said the operation was meeting its objective.

“We have been pushing insurgents out of the area and securing Salman Pak,” Pixler said. “So far, we have been very successful and hopefully it will continue to be that way.”

The CLCs have been instrumental in helping find insurgents and weapons caches by providing information and monitoring roadside checkpoints.

“I joined with them to rescue my neighborhood because it had been attacked by terrorists,” said a member of the CLCs through an interpreter. “At first, they (the insurgents) said what they were doing was jihad, but then they acted like insurgents. That is why we put our trust in God. Our religion says that if we ask for peace, we will go in peace.”

Pixler said most CLCs join with similar hopes of helping secure their neighborhoods.

“The fact that they are willing to sign up and get their picture and finger prints taken shows they are going down the right path and they are willing to work with us,” Pixler said.

Registration is a minor inconvenience for those who sign up.

“If some people don’t want peace, then you need to find the people who do,” said the CLC. “You must take care of your neighborhood and fight against those who want harm against it.”

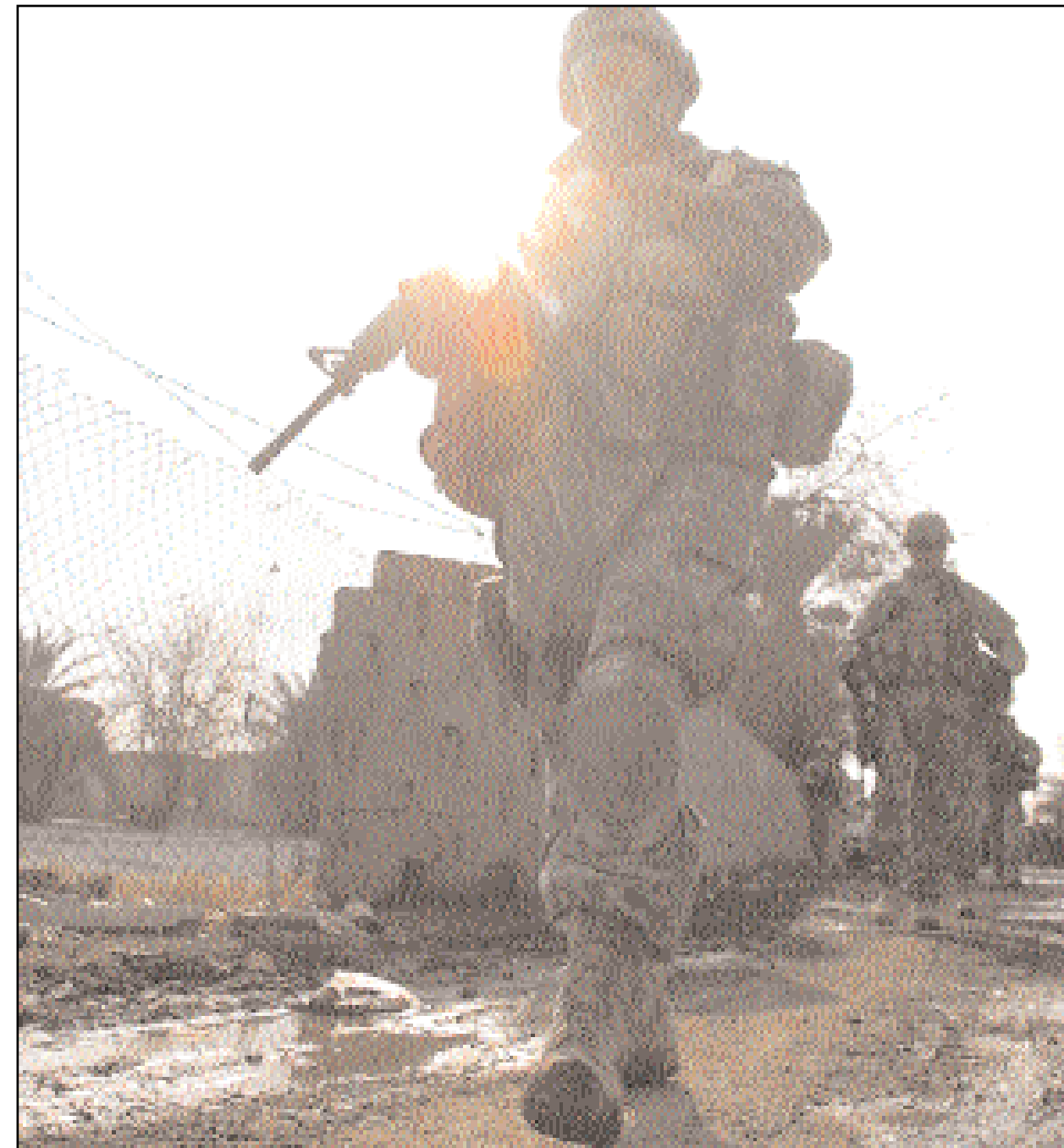
The 1/15th Inf. Regt is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Benning, and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.



Maj. John Cushing (left), operations officer for the 1/15th Inf., talks with Lt. Col. Jack Marr, commander of the 1-15 Inf. Regt., while keeping an eye out for enemy personnel during an operation in Al Duraiya.



Sgt. Adam Hedrick, 1/15th Infantry, scans for enemy personnel while conducting an operation in Al Duraiya, a small village near Salman Pak, Jan. 28.



A 1/15 Inf. Soldier patrols during a joint operation in Al Duraiya, Iraq. The operation led to the finding of seven IEDs and a weapons cache in 1/15 Infantry’s effort to make the neighborhood of Al Duraiya a safer place to live.

Installation Safety offers rainy day driving advice

Special to the Frontline

Losing control of your car on wet pavement is a frightening experience. Unfortunately, it can happen unless you take preventive measures. You can prevent skids by driving slowly and carefully, especially on curves.

Steer and brake with a light touch. When you need to stop or slow down, do not brake hard or lock the wheels and risk a skid. Maintain mild pressure on the brake pedal.

If you do find yourself in a skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas, and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. For cars without anti-lock brakes avoid using your brakes.

This procedure, known as "steering into the skid," will bring the back end of your car in line with the front. If your car has ABS, brake firmly as you "steer into the skid."

While skids on wet pavement may be frightening, hydroplaning is completely nerve-wracking. Hydroplaning happens when the water in front of your tires builds up faster than your car's weight can push it out of the way. The water pressure causes your car to rise up and slide on a thin layer of water between your tires and the road. At this point, your car can be completely out of contact with the road, and you are in danger of skidding or drifting out of your lane, or even off the road.

To avoid hydroplaning, keep your tires properly inflated,

maintain good tread on your tires and replace them when necessary, slow down when roads are wet, and stay away from puddles. Try to drive in the tire tracks left by the cars in front of you.

If you find yourself hydroplaning, do not brake or turn suddenly. This could throw your car into a skid. Ease your foot off the gas until the car slows and you can feel the road again. If you need to brake, do it gently with light pumping actions. If your car has anti-lock brakes, then brake normally; the car's computer will mimic a pumping action when necessary.

A defensive driver adjusts his or her speed to the wet road conditions in time to avoid having to use any of these measures.

Information forum explains future plans

Jennifer Scales
Public Affairs Specialist

The Regional Information Sharing Forum of Jan. 30 at Club Stewart provided a range of information for Stewart-Hunter local and community leaders of the surrounding area.

Col. Todd Buchs, garrison commander for Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield, emphasized the great feedback that is coming in from the Army. "We are truly leading the way in the Army in terms of our community relations and support to our Soldiers and Families," said Buchs. "I cannot tell you enough how your actions back here are directly related to the success of the Soldiers forward."

Buchs said the community relations program in place at Stewart-Hunter was the benchmark for the Army.

He said there were many more changes in store for the installation that will occur within the coming months and years. The Army Family Covenant, signed Nov. 2007, acknowledged the sacrifices that Soldiers and Families make. It formally laid out the Army plan that will be committed to help Families and those who provide the services and programs commensurate to the service they are giving to our nation and Army.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren is now expanding the Army Family program. "The idea is to do an extension of the Army Family Covenant and make it a community covenant where we all stand together in a ceremony and formally show our commitment to our Soldiers and Families," Buchs said. This formal ceremony and signing is expected to occur in the April timeframe, which will also be in conjunction with a community showcase held around the same time. More details can be expected on this anticipated event.

The 76th BCT has accomplished over half their training, Buchs said, and will be taking some well-deserved breaks at the end of the month and in early March. These breaks will definitely impact the local economy as anywhere from 5000 to 10,000 Family members may arrive between Feb. 26-March 5 to spend downtime with their Soldiers before their deployment to Iraq. The red carpets of the Stewart-Hunter area should be rolled out for these Families as they look to the locals to provide lodging and travel information when they come into our area, Buchs said.

Another point of interest to those present was the impact plans of the Grow the Army Initiative announced Dec. 19, 2007. Fort Stewart can expect an increase in growth as early as the summer of 2010, even though unit arrival is not expected until October. "This would be due to the Family members who come in during the summer months getting ready for the school season," said Buchs.

New facilities will have to be built. The current cantonment area at Stewart is at its max; therefore, the north side of Highway 144 will have a new cantonment with many quality of life additions such as a fitness center, child-care and school age services, homes, shopettes, gas stations, mini malls, and more.

Not to be left out of the growth equation, Hunter will experience a small population spurt as the current heavy combat aviation brigade will convert to a medium one and a new criminal investigation division headquarters will be located there. Hunter construction will also include a medium-sized chapel, youth center, and education center.

"These are not vision numbers", Buchs said. "These are reality and will be on our doorsteps."

"The 4th Brigade moved out in November with a very successful deployment," said Lt. Col. Brian Gale, division rear detachment commander. Gale then brought the attendees up to date on current division operations and redeployment timelines.

One of the big events mentioned was the casing of the colors tentatively scheduled for June 12 in conjunction with the grand opening of the new division headquarters building.

A travel show is scheduled for March 5 at Club Stewart and March 6 at Hunter Club. The annual show will highlight vacation sites and events for those who attend.

Other events to look forward to in the coming months include Claxton's Rattlesnake Roundup and St. Patrick's Day events in Savannah during March, the June 12-16 visit of the Vietnam Moving Wall in Richmond Hill, and Independence Day events at Fort Stewart from July 2-4, with headliner Montgomery Gentry, the Clydesdale Horses, and Mark Richt, current head coach of the University of Georgia Bulldogs' football team.

Look for these and other events to be announced in a future edition of the monthly publication, Quality Time.

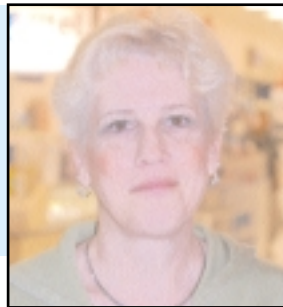


Marne Voices Speak Out

How do you plan to spend Valentine's Day?

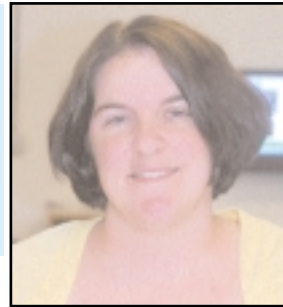
"I will be working."

Sherry Cheney
AAFES Concessionaire



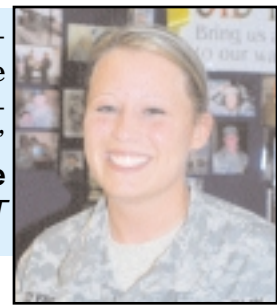
"I will be taking my son to the Club Stewart Valentines Day Brunch."

Cathryn Howison
Family member



"It's going to be my 24th birthday. Also my husband will be here for R&R so I'm really excited."

Pfc. Heather Clyne
HHC, 4BCT



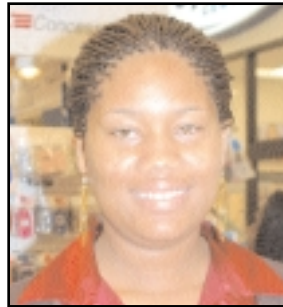
"I will be motor biking."

Spc. Adam Duff
HHC, 2/7 Infantry



"My husband will be home for R&R, so we will be spending a lot of time together."

Lacrysal Andrews
Family member



"I am sending flowers to my wife and daughter."

Master Sgt. Tony Thomas
4th Cav. Brigade OCT



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Sons of Iraq assist Coalition

2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Members of the Sons of Iraq assisted Coalition Forces by discovering weapons caches and improvised explosive devices in areas south of Baghdad Feb. 2.

Four weapons caches and a vehicle-borne IED were found and destroyed.

A four-door sedan was identified by the SoI as a VBIED. An explosive ordnance disposal team detonated an exploratory charge on the vehicle, which caused a secondary explosion. EOD estimated the sedan con-

tained 60 to 100 pounds of unknown bulk explosives.

In southern Arab Jabour, the SoI found a cache that consisted of 35 23 mm anti-aircraft rounds, two 27 mm rounds, six rocket-propelled grenade boosters, 20 Dragonov rounds and other bomb-making materials.

The cache was turned over to Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

The same day, three smaller caches were discovered by the SoI and turned over to 1/30th Inf. Regt. and destroyed by EOD.

Weapons cache destroyed

2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – A weapons cache consisting of various munitions and improvised explosive device components was found and destroyed Feb. 2 in southern Arab Jabour.

Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, located the cache while conducting operations along a

route in Arab Jabour.

The cache consisted of 35 23 mm anti-aircraft munitions, six rocket-propelled grenade boosters, one pressure plate initiator, one bag of RPG propellants and boosters, various small-arms ammunition, one camera charger and various IED-making materials.

An explosive ordnance disposal team was called in to investigate and disposed of the cache via a controlled detonation.

Several weapons caches found, destroyed south of Baghdad

Special to the Frontline

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Numerous improvised explosive devices and weapons caches were found and destroyed Jan. 30 in communities south of Baghdad.

Concerned Local Citizens found five IEDs and gave them to Soldiers from Company E, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Four of the IEDs consisted of two one-liter bottles filled with homemade explosives. The fifth IED consisted of two 57 mm projectiles. An explosive ord-

nance disposal team traveling with Company F destroyed the IEDs in a controlled detonation.

In the afternoon of the same day, Company A, 1/30th Inf. Regt. discovered a cache of three 57 mm mortars. Also that day, a route clearance team from 2/3 Brigade Troops Battalion was clearing a route in 1/30th's area of operations when CLCs reported a weapons cache to the Soldiers. The cache was a mix of IEDs and IED-making materials. It consisted of 18 IEDs made from HME, 10 pressure strips used to detonate IEDs, about 75 projectiles, one anti-tank mine and one propane tank. EOD destroyed the cache in a controlled detonation.

Scout platoon discovers explosive

Special to the Frontline

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – A vehicle-borne improvised explosive device was destroyed by an air weapons team Jan. 27 in Arab Jabour.

Soldiers from Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, discovered the truck after a report from Concerned Local Citizens.

Scout platoon, platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Ramone Manzano, said his Soldiers acted on intelligence from CLCs in the area who reported stopping two men driving a potential VBIED.

The men were driving a blue truck into northern Arab Jabour when they were stopped by the CLCs. Upon arriving on the scene, the Scouts took over the investigation.

Manzano said he opened the driver-side door and noticed two wires running underneath the seat leading toward the truck's engine block. Suspecting a VBIED, he separated the men and

questioned them.

The pair's stories about what they were doing did not match up, Manzano said.

Both matched the unit's intelligence descriptions of potential insurgents and tests concluded that both men had explosive residue on them.

The suspects were detained for questioning, while Soldiers called in an air weapons team of Apache helicopters, which destroyed the vehicle with a Hellfire missile and 100 rounds of 30 mm munitions.

Describing the find as a big event, Manzano, a native of Neptune, N.J., said this was the first time his Soldiers have actually encountered a VBIED.

By taking out the threat, Manzano said it will go a long way in keeping the area safe.

The CLCs have done a lot to make the area safer, Manzano said.

"They play a big role in our effort. They help us (identify) al-Qaeda and point out the bad guys."

Find out the latest from Iraq at:

WWW.TASKFORCEMARNE.COM

MWR

**Ft. Stewart/Hunter
Morale, Welfare and
Recreation**

Youth Services Teen Sweetheart Ball at Hunter
9 Feb – 7-11 p.m., Hunter Youth Center
The sweetheart ball will be held for CYS members aged 13-18 to celebrate Valentine's Day. The ball features a DJ, food and fun. Come dressed to impress.
The cost is \$5 per person or \$5 per couple. 315-6788.

Town Hall Meeting
12 Feb – 5:30 p.m., Club Stewart and Hunter Club
The Town Hall Meeting will give on and off post Families an opportunity to discuss important issues to improve the quality of life. The meeting will also be broadcast live on Marine TV and viewers may phone-in questions at 767-ROCK or 315-ROCK. For more information, call ACS at 767-1257 on Stewart or 315-6816 on Hunter.

Sweetheart Bowling
14 Feb – 1-9 p.m., Stewart Lanes
Celebrate Valentine's Day with a night of bowling and your sweetheart's shoes are free. 3-D glasses will also be available for purchase for 3-D bowling. The cost is \$1 per game per person and a \$.75 shoe rental. 767-4273.

Sweetheart Family Night
14 Feb – 5-7 p.m., Youth Center
It's fun for the whole family (children's activities, mini rockshops, massage/pampering services for parents and dinner provided. Reserve space for you and your Family. 767-4494.

Valentine's Day New Family Orientation and Post Tour
14 Feb – 9 a.m.-2:15 p.m., Soldier Services Center Room # 2074
Come take a tour of the installation and learn about a variety of helpful programs for new Families. The orientation is held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and breaks for an hour lunch. There will be free baked goods and door prizes at the orientation. The tour of the installation is given from 1 to 2:15 p.m. Free childcare is available upon request. 767-71755458.

Valentine's Day Dinner
14 Feb – 4 p.m. Kids decorate. Door open at 6 p.m., Club Stewart and Hunter Club
Children invite your family members out to enjoy a special Valentine's dinner at Club Stewart. The menu includes chicken tenders with honey mustard and ranch, macaroni and cheese, battered corn, herb roasted chicken, mashed potatoes with gravy, vegetable medley, valentine cup cakes, and chocolate fondant with toppings. Reservations are required. While you are at the club, be sure to check out the Languages of Love rockshop. 368-2212/353-7923.

Languages of Love
14 Feb – 4-6 p.m., Club Stewart
14 Feb – 11-2 p.m., HAAF Chapel Fellowship Hall
Join ACS and our Military Family Life Consultant for discussion on the "Languages of Love" and how each of us gives and receives love differently. The topics include: love and deployment, expressing love, and methods of love. 767-3058/315-6815.

Pre-Teen Sweetheart Dance
15 Feb – 7-10 p.m., FS Youth Center
CYS members in grades 6-8 are invited to the 2008 Pre-Teen Sweetheart Dance. Come dressed to impress and dance your heart out. There will be prizes awarded for best dressed and hottest couple. There is no cost. 767-4491.

Tell Me a Story for Young Children
17 Feb – 2 p.m., Club Stewart
Program designed to empower youth grades K-5. Come listen to the book "Mercedes and The Chocolate Pilot," the story of a young German girl and an American pilot during the Berlin blockade. Each Family receives a copy of the book and other materials. Free admission. To reserve your place, call 877-5330. For more information, call 767-6533.

Troops, Families can access free tax-filing services

Gerry J. Gilmore
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON- Rather than paying a tax specialist, service-members and their Families can obtain free assistance to prepare and file their annual tax returns through a special military program, a Defense Department tax advisor said.

The military's tax assistance program processes more than 200,000 returns each year, Maj. John Johnson, director of the Defense Department's Armed Forces Tax Council, said during an interview with Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service reporters.

"It is just one of the benefits military people have," Johnson said of the program. Participants can visit their installation tax center for free assistance in filling out tax returns, he said, or access the Military OneSource Web site, www.militaryonesource.com.

"You can log on there, online, and also file for free," Johnson said of the Web site. The online tax-filing system on Military OneSource is closed to military retirees, however.

Military members from all service branches sit on the Pentagon's tax council that coordinates the program, Johnson explained.

Free tax-filing assistance services are open to active-duty and reserve component servicemembers, as well as Family members and military retirees, Johnson said.

Participants should bring their military-issued identification cards, W-2 Wage and Earnings statements and any other forms or documents required for tax filing, Johnson said. People who believe they may be eligible for tax refunds also should bring their bank account numbers if they'd like the refund direct-deposited into a specific account, Johnson pointed out.

More complicated tax-preparation work involving itemiz-

ing of returns for added tax deductions also can be processed for free, although these returns normally require more documentation, he said.

Military members receive many tax benefits, Johnson pointed out. For example, all allowances, including housing, meals, Family separation and others, are tax-exempt, he said, as is all military pay for enlisted military members deployed in overseas combat zones. Officers deployed in combat zones, he added, can exclude about \$7,000 of their monthly pay for federal taxes. Servicemembers deployed to combat zones have six months to file their taxes after departing the area, Johnson noted. Another tax-related benefit for servicemember deployed to overseas combat zones is the Savings Deposits Program, Johnson said. Under SDP, eligible servicemembers can contribute up to \$10,000 into their savings accounts while they're deployed and earn a government-guaranteed 10-percent return on their money, he explained.

Fort Stewart /Hunter Army Airfield Briefs

Tax Center hours announced

A dedicated and trained staff is ready to prepare and file your tax return at no charge. Your tax return is filed electronically and if a refund is due, you will receive it usually within seven to 10 business days. Eligible individuals include active duty Soldiers, their dependents, and retirees. The center is open 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., now through April 15. The Marne Tax Center at Hunter is in building 1211 at the Legal Center. Stewart's is at building 621, next to 2nd Brigade Headquarters, across from Cottrell field. For more information, call 315-3675 or 767-7490.

Town Hall meeting slated

The Town Hall meeting will give on-post Families an opportunity to discuss important issues to improve the quality of life. The meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m., Feb. 12 at Club Stewart and Hunter Club. The meeting will also broadcast live on Marne TV and viewers may phone-in questions at 767-ROCK or 315-ROCK. For more information, call ACS at 767-1257 on Stewart and 315-6816 on Hunter.

Support for wounded Warriors available

The Soldier and Family Assistance Center is a one-stop location to support Warriors in Transition. The SFAC provides services tailored and responsive to the needs of the Warriors and their Families. Services the SFAC provides include: coordination resources for Family members, travel pay for Family members on Invitational Travel Orders, and employment and education assistance. The center also provides a warm, relaxed environment where Soldiers and their Families can gather to foster physical, spiritual and mental healing. The SFAC is located in building 87 (former Family Readiness Center) and is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 767-1297.

Come to wine tasting, auction

The Officers' Spouses' Club is sponsoring an evening of wine and beer tasting, appetizers and both live and silent auctions, Feb. 15 at Club Stewart. The evening begins at 6 p.m. with the tastings, mingling and auction preview.

The live auction starts at 7:30 p.m. Advance tickets are \$15, which includes six tastings and appetizers. There will be a cash bar. Tickets are available at Shop of the Marne and OSC board members. Tickets at the door are \$20. All proceeds benefit the Fort Stewart OSC welfare fund. For more information, call 448-2028.

Sidewalk sale at Shop of the Marne

Come preview the new items for spring and get some deals on our clearance merchandise at the Shop of the Marne Sidewalk Sale. The sale will be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday. The Shop is located at building 25 off McNeely Road, behind the PX. Normal hours are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., each Tuesday and Thursdays and the first Saturday of the month.

OSC February luncheon

The Officers Spouses Club members invite you to our February Pursuit of Talent Luncheon 11 a.m., Feb. 14 at Club Stewart. Come see some of the hobbies and pursuits that our members are sharing and give some of them a try yourself. Cost of the luncheon is \$11.

On-site child care is available by reservation for those children registered with Child and Youth Services. Please call 369-0663 for reservations. Please make your reservation before Feb. 11. For last names beginning with A-L, please contact Paige Adgie, 877-2626 and last names beginning with M-Z, please contact Jill Peterson at 492-8444.

Scholarship applications available

The Fort Stewart Military Family Membership Scholarship Fund is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization under the auspices of The Officers' Spouses' Club that awards merit-based scholarships for deserving eligible

Family members of all active, retired or deceased military of the Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield communities. Applications for these scholarships are available at local high schools, ACS and the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Army Education Center. This isn't just for high school seniors. Family members looking to continue their education are encouraged to apply.

Take Family orientation, post tour

Come take a tour of the installation and learn about a variety of helpful programs for new Families. The tour meets on the second floor of the Soldier Service Center, building 253, room 2074 at 9 a.m. every Tuesday and Thursday. Orientation is held from 9 a.m. to noon and breaks for an hour lunch. The tour of the installation is given from 1 to 2 p.m. Free child care is available upon request. For more information, call ACS at 767-9176 or 767-5058.

Home schooling monthly meeting scheduled

The home schooling meeting will be held at 11 a.m. on Feb. 15 at the Youth Center. Come meet other home schooling Families to learn and share information and experiences. Pot luck lunch will be at noon. In addition the Home School Academy is held at 9:30 a.m. every Friday. For more information, call 767-4491 or 767-6533.

Stewart

Join Library Book Club

Join fellow readers and participate in book discussions. Club will meet from 7 to 8 p.m., Feb. 21 at the Fort Stewart library. Free books will be provided to club members for use in the discussion. Space is limited to 20 readers. For more information, call 767-2828.

Design your own t-shirt

Join us for some fun and creativity by decorating a t-shirt anyway you like 1 to 4:30 p.m., Feb. 28 at the Southern Oaks Community Center. You can then wear your own art! Shirts and supplies will be provided.

Join Neighborhood Huddles

Come talk to us. GMH will be there to listen to your ideas, issues or concerns. Help make your neighborhood a great place to live! All huddles are scheduled between 10:30 to 11 a.m. The huddles are scheduled for Feb. 14 for Marne Homes at the playground on the corner of Davis Street and Hero Road; Feb. 21 for Marne Woods at the playground between St. Tropez and Fedala; Feb. 28 for Bryan Village North at the playground across from Brittain Elementary; and Feb. 29 for Bryan Village South at the playground across from Brittain Elementary.

Hunter

ID card facilities close

The Fort Stewart ID card facility located in the Audie Murphy Soldier Service Center, building 253, will be closed for RAPIDS upgrade, Feb. 28 - 29. All emergency requests for dependent ID cards and Common Access Cards are encouraged to report to the Hunter Army Airfield ID card section, building 1209.

Fort Stewart Groundbreaking Ceremony

Fort Stewart Residential Communities Initiative and GMH Military Housing Unaccompanied Personnel Housing will host a ground breaking ceremony 2 p.m., March 5 at the corner of Hero and New Guinea Roads. The event will mark the official start of construction for the Fort Stewart UPH project. The project will consist of 37 two story walk-up garden style town homes situated on a 50-acre wooded parcel of land. There will be a total of 334 bedrooms in this project consisting of 298 one bedroom apartments and 36 two bedroom apartments. The structure will house E-6 to Officer Bachelors.

Hunter

PWOC classes, meetings slated

Classes are available for children, ages three and older, including adult Bible study and RCIA classes, 9:45 to 10:30 a.m. every Sunday in the Religious Education building. Call Pam Perez at 315-5440 for additional information. Protestant Women of the Chapel meets every Wednesday, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Call Valarie Moore at 920- 8519.

Child scholarships begin

The Defense Commissary Agency's 2008 scholarship for military children is now accepting applications. The applications are available at the commissaries worldwide and online at www.commissaries.com or www.militaryscholar.org. The packets must be turned in to a commissary by Feb. 20 and include an essay (requirements outlined in application). The program is open to unmarried children under age 21 (23 if in school) of military active-duty, Reserve, Guard and retired personnel. For more visit www.commissaries.com.

Hunter Community Center moves

The Hunter Army Airfield Community Center, building 1286, will be closed today and is moving to Building 1279. The relocation is happening because Building 1286 will be renovated. Army Community Services, the leisure travel office, the pass and permit office, Family child care, and the school liaison office will move to the new location. The offices will reopen Friday. Current phone numbers for the offices will be transferred to the new location. For Army Emergency Relief, call 315-6816 or 767-5058. The Hunter Child and Youth Services registration office will also move to building 1279, today.

Candy Hearts Giveaway

Satisfy your sweet tooth by stopping by for some free candy hearts, at your convenience Feb. 14 at the GMH Leasing Office at the New Savannah/ New Callaway Community Center.

Design your own t-shirt

Join us for some fun and creativity by decorating a t-shirt anyway you like 2 to 5 p.m., Feb. 20 at the New Savannah / New Callaway Community Center. You can then wear your own art! Shirts and supplies will be provided.

Neighborhood Huddles

Come talk to us 10:30 to 11 a.m. GMH will be there to listen to your ideas, issues or concerns. Help make your neighborhood a great place to live. The New Savannah huddle is Feb. 11 at the community center. The New Callaway huddle will be Feb. 20 at the New Callaway Community Center. Wilson Acre's and New Gannam's will be in March.



Stewart

Mother, daughter tea party

It's tea time! Mom, bring your daughter to our old fashioned tea party just like the ones you had as a girl, 2 to 4 p.m., Feb. 13 at the Southern Oaks Community Center. Let them dress up in their favorite high heels, hat and pearls! Light refreshments will be served. Pinkies up!

Candy Hearts Giveaway

Satisfy your sweet tooth by stopping by for some free candy hearts on Valentine's Day. You can stop by at your convenience at Southern Oaks Community Center and Liberty Woods Leasing Office.

From Iraq to West Point, 3rd Inf Div Soldier excited about future

Cpl. Ryan M. Blaich, II
Marine Expeditionary Force

If there was a place that could characterize the combined, total effort being put into the security and future of Iraq's Al Anbar Province, it very well may be Camp Blue Diamond, near Ramadi. Uniforms from every military branch of the Department of Defense can be found here. It is also home to the headquarters element of the 7th Iraqi Army Division. Iraqi police guard the streets just outside the gates. It is a complete melting pot of everyone involved in the Anbar success story.

People here come from all walks of life, from various corners of the world, unique in every sense of the word but seem to be connected by a common value, which is a shared patriotism for their homeland. For one soldier here on his first deployment, it is not only an opportunity of a lifetime but a way to relate to those in his family who also answered when their nation called. "I was brought up to believe that every man should serve his country however he can," said Spc. Gerald Bradner, 21, from Brookneal, Va. "Everyone from my grandfather all the way down to me has served when our country was at war. It's a great family tradition."

Bradner, an intelligence analyst with 3rd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, joined the U.S. Army shortly after he graduated William Campbell High School in 2004. His grandfather and great uncles all fought the Axis

aggression in World War II. His father volunteered to fight communism in Vietnam. And today, Bradner is proud to be combating terrorism in Iraq.

"This may be the only conflict in our lifetime and I couldn't imagine just sitting it out," he said.

The greatest compliment to Bradner's character may be when his superior officers, only knowing him a short time, recommended he apply for a commissioning program. Up until this point, Bradner constantly questioned his future in the army, but this deployment changed all of that.

"I didn't think I was going to like the Army as much as I do, but I really love wearing the uniform and I like serving my country," he said. In order to become an officer in the U.S. military, Bradner will have to complete four years of college and earn a bachelor's degree. He will have to choose a major, which he said would be history, but he will not have to choose a university. His superiors felt he was a prime candidate for one of America's premiere institutions, the U.S. Military Academy better known as West Point.

Located on the Hudson River, 50 miles north of New York City, Bradner will become a cadet in the class of 2012 and part of an alumnus with men such as Gen. Robert E. Lee, Buzz Aldrin and Dwight D. Eisenhower. To Bradner, this is a challenge he is eager to begin.

"I'll be the first person from my high school to go to West Point in 40 years. So, I'm really excited about that. I look at it as

an opportunity to set myself apart from my peers," he said. "Growing up in a small town, I'm glad to be able to stand out and represent my community however I can."

Bradner will enroll in August, 2008, for the fall semester. West Point only admits approximately 1,200 students a year, 200 of which are prior enlisted but have to attend a prep school prior to attending the military college. Bradner is part of a select few who gets to bypass prep classes and go straight to the academy. Only 20 Soldiers are given this chance every year, he is one of them. Currently, Bradner gathers all sorts of information and aids in the counter-insurgency fight against al Qaeda.

His role in Iraq is much more aggressive and involved than it may appear. He spends a lot of time behind a desk and speaking to leaders in the Iraqi army and police. Although the conversations are casual, the information gathered from them will have a direct impact on the actions of men with guns out in Ramadi.

"When we first got to Ramadi, the place was bad," he said. "We were seeing 10-15 attacks per day, and that was normal. Some days we'd see 20 attacks. Before we left, we conducted an operation with the Marines and that really helped clean up Ramadi. Since then, we've galvanized the tribal leaders and they've basically ousted al Qaeda in Ramadi."

Now, although he misses his family and will be spending his first Christmas away from home, he said he wouldn't change a thing.

SOAR From Page 1A

Upon arrival, the troops encountered heavy resistance as the enemy attacked from well established defensive fighting positions. Monitoring the situation over the radio, Osgood learned that troops from his element had suffered multiple casualties. Right away, he began modifying the casualty evacuation plan to ensure the troops he was responsible for could receive prompt medical attention Osgood doesn't recall exactly what he was thinking at the time, but he knew he had "a great flight surgeon on one aircraft and the best Combat Search and Rescue men out there on another." In addition, he said 160th medical personnel are hand-picked and train extensively to know their jobs and responsibilities before ever being sent to a hostile area. "It was just a matter of prioritizing what we were getting over the radio and getting the best medical care to our brothers on the ground," he said.

"Being in such a professional and small community, it gives us a chance to get to know everyone we work with, and that makes it a little more personal when caring for the wounded." When the helicopters returned to transport all the troops off the target, Osgood launched into action. Under enemy fire, the ground troops simultaneously loaded the aircraft while Osgood orchestrated the placement of the eight casualties. He directed the injured to litters and attended to their wounds.

These actions were all part of what Osgood says he is trained and expected to do day in and day out. "(Special Operations Forces leaders) expect the best medical treatment in the world and our guys should get it," he said. "I wanted to get the wounded and the rest of the troops out of there." Of the eight casualties, three had critical injuries. Osgood provided immediate treatment to these Soldiers, stabilized them and ensured that all wounds had been properly identified. He then briefed the pilot-in-command. Upon learning the estimated time of arrival and receiving assurance that medical personnel would be waiting, Osgood went back to his injured charges. He provided additional medical care, utilized approved pain management techniques to make the injured as comfortable as possible. Osgood's actions during this mission were critical to saving the lives and limbs of the injured, said Maj. Larry McCord, the battalion flight surgeon. At the end of the mission, Osgood said he was happy to be done, knowing that patients had been transported to the proper facilities for additional care. He then got the aircraft ready and restocked the medical kits knowing that the next mission could come at any time.

This is just one example of Osgood's contributions and dedication to his unit and the special operations forces it supports, McCord stated in his nomination of Osgood for the Army Aviation Association of America's annual Dustoff Medic of the Year award. The AAAA panel selected Osgood as their 2007 recipient of this award, recognizing him with the honor during an organization chapter banquet at Fort Rucker, Ala., Jan. 31.

"Staff Sgt. Osgood's performance as a flight paramedic is exceptional," McCord wrote in the award nomination. "He exemplifies the spirit of the Dustoff mission and his performance embodies the motto, 'I have your wounded!'" Osgood has flown more than 100 direct assault, time sensitive, and CASEVAC missions totaling more than 500 hours of combat time.

In his four years with the 160th, Osgood has performed several life-saving procedures.

Stewart-Hunter starts e-mail migration, updates software platform

Pat Young
Managing Editor

Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield needs to prepare for an e-mail migration, which will affect about 12,000 users on the installation. The Directorate of Information Management will facilitate the migration, which updates the antiquated platform of Microsoft Exchange 5.5 to the Army standard, Exchange 2003.

"The upgrade and migration is important because it allows Fort Stewart individually and the Army as a whole to work off of a relevant common platform," said Charles McCallar, Chief Information Technology Systems Support Division. "This will allow us to take advantage of newer improved technology and better software products. It will also put us in a position to jump to the Microsoft Exchange 2007 platform sometime within the next year or two after migration

is complete. The migration has been expected for the last two years, and we are in final preparation to execute."

DOIM has started the process beginning with their own email accounts, to ensure the process runs smoothly and concerns associated with the project are addressed.

Technicians are sensitive to customer issues and will endeavor to reduce the impact on users. After the system is streamlined, the project will move into the second phase of the move, which will include the Garrison accounts then 3rd Infantry Division rear-detachment units.

"When that is complete, we will then move the rest of the 3rd Infantry Division accounts," Veronica Schultz, Systems Administrator IT Systems Support Division. She said that phase will include Command and Control elements. "We are expecting the whole process to take two to three months, depending on the level of

problems and concerns that we encounter."

The migration will only affect e-mail and files that are on the host servers at the time of the migration. Therefore, DOIM strongly recommends unit Information Management Officers help users backup files.

"Blackberry users are a special case and they are handled differently," Schultz said. "One thing for the user to know is a 'digitally encrypted' e-mail will cause the account not to migrate properly and the message will be corrupted. Ensure that all digitally encrypted files are downloaded before your account is moved."

Schultz said once this action is complete and the user's account is in use again, they can move the encrypted files back up to the host if desired. The effect is temporary. This migration is Army wide and affects users in the "CONUS Forrest" and many forts, camps, posts and stations across the Army have already experienced the

migration, according to McCallar.

"We are fortunate to be able to benefit from 'lessons learned' as a result of other installations migrating before us."

McCallar said the DOIM Exchange Migration Team has been meeting with each Directorate and Brigade, along with separate units, to ensure that the experience is well understood and that there is limited impact to the daily operation.

"Anything that directly impacts your daily activity can be disconcerting," McCallar said. "We are making every effort to ensure that there are no surprises. Each directorate and brigade will be contacted a couple of days prior to their migrate date. By doing this, impact can be minimized."

An important note is that the unit IMO is the first responder when working with the DOIM toward a smooth migration.

WTU

The WTB was started under the Army Medical Action Plan. According to the Department of the Army Installation Management Command, AMAP is an Army initiative to develop a sustainable system where wounded, injured and ill Soldiers are medically treated and rehabilitated. The rehabilitation prepares them for a successful return to duty or a successful transition to their homes and communities.

The diving class is not yet an official part of the WTB program; however Sherman is not only training WTB Soldiers, but training their Families as well. He feels training Soldiers, along with their Family members, helps with the rehabilitation process, which helps to return most Soldiers to the fight. As a part of the transition back to active duty or out of the military, Soldiers have the opportunity to be in touch with subject matter experts who can help make the transition from the WTB smoother. Not all WTB Soldiers transition out of the military. According to Donna Finney, Army Community Service director approximately 80 percent of Soldiers are healing, then

returning to active duty. Lt. Col. Leonard Porter, WTB commander, thinks that the diving class is beneficial in boosting confidence, as well as morale. Some Soldiers who participated in the diving class were able to gain self-assurance.

The scuba diving class helps Soldiers who work in the WTB gain courage Porter said. "I think the class has a lot of benefits, so I would like to see it continue and grow."

With this in mind, the scuba diving class was not only for Soldiers but their Families as well, since Family members age 15 and up can also enroll. "I can see the class growing as more warriors and their Families know more about it," Porter said.

Initially, some of the WTB Soldiers seemed nervous and apprehensive when they got into the water, yet when the class was over, the look of joy was written all over their faces. Some Soldiers plan to continue the sport in the future. Spc. Randall Mullally, Company B, WTB, said he plans to get certified so he can jump from a helicopter into the water to scuba dive.

The free introductory class is open to Soldiers, as well as

Family members.

"This is a great opportunity to come and try something new," Mullally said. "(It's) something that usually costs between \$200-300, plus (the cost of) equipment rentals."



Kaytrina Curtis

Soldiers in the Warriors in Transition Battalion get an introductory handicap scuba diving class, Jan. 29 at Hunter's Tominac Fitness Center.

From Page 1A

CARE

• Tuesday and Thursday at the Child Development Center from 6 to 9 p.m.

• First Saturday, Child Development Center, and School Age Services, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

• Newman Fitness Center, at Fort Stewart; call central registration at 767-2312 for times.

• Tominac Fitness Center, at Hunter Army Airfield; call central

registration at 315-5425 for times.

• Hours may also be used for special events as announced.

Hours must be used in the current month and unused hours do not carry over to the next month.

Hourly punch cards are available for pick up from the Child and Youth Services, central registration office located in building 443 on

Hunter or building 1279 at Hunter.

Please call for hours. Verification of deployment (orders or an unexpired pink deployment card) or a Temporary Duty status of sponsor is required when you go to registration to get an hourly punch card.

Punch cards for upcoming months may be picked up from the Central Registration Office, begin-

ning on 26th of each month.

Wounded Warriors are authorized 16 hours of free hourly child care per month.

In addition to the 16 hours per month, Wounded Warriors are authorized unlimited hourly care hours for medical appointments.

Five free hours of hourly child care per month are authorized for Soldiers assigned to the Rear

Detachment Cadre.

Punch cards are available for pick up at the Stewart-Hunter Child and Youth Services central registration office.

Should you have any question please contact Maria Boiza at 767-6071, Meckaela Smith at 767-2312 or Jennifer Bishop at 315-5425.

From Page 1A

Ask the Judge: casualty assistance tax info provided

Special from Staff Judge Advocate

Q: My spouse was a Soldier who recently died in combat. In addition to the trauma of dealing with this loss, I now have to deal with the IRS. What do I do?

A: Having to deal with the loss of a loved one is difficult enough without having to concern yourself with their taxes. Although it is a small consolation, the law does provide tax relief in most cases. When a Soldier dies from combat zone or hazardous duty-related injuries, federal income tax liability for his tax that year will be forgiven. Also, tax liability for prior calendar years the Soldier served in any designated area can also be forgiven, provided the statute of limitations for filing a claim of refund has not yet expired for that year. Generally, the limitation is three years from the date the return was originally filed, plus the filing extension granted to Soldiers under the SCRA (generally 180 days). Consult with your Tax Center or Legal Assistance Office to determine what are considered eligible years or eligible locations for tax forgiveness.

Q: My spouse was a civilian Federal employee who recently died from injuries sustained in a terrorist attack in a hostile area. Does my spouse's income qualify for tax forgiveness?

A: Yes. Most of the same benefits extended to Soldiers as listed above also apply to civilian federal employees in similar circumstances. Any federal income tax liability is forgiven for the tax year the death occurred. Also, income tax lia-

bility dating from the year before the year in which the injury causing the death occurred, and all years going forward to the year of death, is forgiven.

A: s is also the case with Soldiers, any forgivable tax that has already been paid will be refunded if the period for filing a refund claim has not ended. If any tax is still due, it will be canceled. Again, consult with your Tax Center or Legal Assistance Office for further guidance.

Question: How do I claim any tax forgiveness to which the deceased Soldier or employee is entitled?

A: nswer: There are several steps that must be completed accurately in order to ensure that the IRS grants the tax forgiveness to which the deceased Soldier or employee is entitled.

Such procedures are complicated and it is highly advised that you contact your tax center or legal assistance office to ensure that proper procedure is accurately followed.

Some of the procedures involved include filing the proper return with proper designation of the Soldier or employee as deceased, using proper IRS and DOD forms to identify the deceased Soldier or employee, and calculating the portion of the return, which is attributable to the deceased in cases where joint returns are filed.

Q: I just received a check from the government as my Soldier's death beneficiary. Is this taxable?

A: Generally, no – but there may be exceptions. The death gratuity, all life insurance proceeds received by designated beneficiaries, any survivor payment by the Veteran's Administration, and any unpaid pay and allowances or payments for leave earned or accrued while in a combat zone are all not taxable. However, any annuity paid under the Survivor Benefit Program, or any non-combat zone unpaid pay and allowance, is taxable. Contact your Legal Assistance Office or your Tax Center, or another qualified legal or tax professional, for answers to your specific case.

Q: Where can I find more information?

A: Your Fort Stewart or Hunter Army Airfield Tax Center will gladly assist you.

Casualty assistance cases are given the highest priority and will be treated with the respect to which surviving Family members are rightly entitled. You may contact the Fort Stewart Tax Center at 767-7490 or the Hunter Army Airfield Tax Center at 315-3675.

Services are free of charge to any person having a valid military identification card or to the primary next of kin of Soldiers who die in a military status or civilian employees who die while accompanying the force overseas.

In addition, you may consult IRS Publication 554 (Survivors) or IRS Publication 3 (Armed Forces) for more detailed information.

Notice of availability

Environmental assessment, draft finding of no significant impact: *To implement the renewal of the installation's Integrated cultural resources management plan and Programmatic agreement for Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, Ga.*

As a military Installation consisting of Federal lands and utilizing Federal funds, Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield is required to comply with Sections 106 and 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. All actions, such as construction, maintenance, and training, on installation lands are subject to review; in addition, the NHPA obligates Stewart-Hunter to identify and evaluate historic properties on the installation, to assume responsibility for the preservation of these historic properties, and to consult with stakeholders such as the advisory council on historic preservation, federally recognized American Indian tribes, the state historic preservation office, and the general public regarding preservation of historic properties.

To avoid the requirement for numerous case-by-case analysis and consultation requirements, yet still meet the letter and

intent of the law, Stewart-Hunter utilizes a programmatic agreement between itself and the Georgia SHPO. An Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan is also utilized to integrate the installation's cultural resources program with the installation mission, allow for ready identification of potential conflicts, and identify required compliance actions. Both the ICRMP and the PA require periodic revision; accordingly, they have been updated and revised to reflect changes in survey methodology and incorporates lessons learned from 2000 through 2008.

The EA for implementation of the 2008 PA and ICRMP addresses the potential impacts to the human environment to include wetlands, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, and all other components of the surrounding environment. The EA, resulting in a draft FNSI, indicates that no significant adverse impacts would result from the proposed action. A copy of the EA and draft FNSI will be available for public review from Feb. 11 through March 12 at the following public libraries. All public review comments must be received no later than March 12, 2008.

Fort Stewart Main post library, Building 411, 316 Lindquist Rd., Fort Stewart, GA. The library is open 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; closed Friday; and open 11:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Hunter Army Airfield post library, Building 1290, 165 Markwell Street, Hunter Army Airfield, GA 31409. The office is open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and closed Friday through Sunday.

Liberty County public library, 236 Memorial Drive, Hinesville, GA. The office is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday to Sunday; and 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday.

Mall branch library, 7 Mall Annex, Savannah, GA. The hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday to Saturday; and 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday.

Request all comments be mailed to: Chief, Environmental Division, Attention: Thomas C. Fry
Directorate of Public Works
Headquarters, Fort Stewart
1550 Frank Cochran drive, bldg 1137
Fort Stewart, GA 31314-4927

Legal Notices

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **Spc. Richard B. Burress**, Co. E, 1/30th Inf., Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314, contact Capt. Christopher F. Botterbushch, 2/3 Brigade Troops Battalion, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314, phone 767-5370.

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **Sgt. Peter C. Neesley**, Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314, contact Capt. Kyle W. Hemminger, rear detachment commander, 3/7 Cav., Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314, phone 767-7328.

Anyone having claims against or who is indebted to the estate of **Spc. James D. Gudridge**, 4/64 AR, 4 BCT, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314, contact 1st Lt. Joshua Reece, HQ 4/3 BSTB, Fort Stewart, Ga. 31314, phone 767-9310.

Education Matters

Family Member Needs Assessment Survey

The local education centers are gathering Family member feedback so as to plan new post secondary continuing education programs. The questionnaire allows Family members to indicate their obstacles in obtaining education, indicate what certificate and college programs they would like and the best time to offer programs. See an education counselor to complete the short survey, or it can be submitted online by going to the Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield Web site and selecting "services" or type in <http://www.stewart.army.mil/ima/sites/services/education/education.asp> and see the survey link on the bottom right.

Free college course offered

Columbia College Spouse's Opportunity Scholarship provides spouses of military personnel a tuition waiver for an initial classroom course with Columbia College at both the Stewart and Hunter education center sites. The active duty spouse does not have to take classes with Columbia College in order to be considered. This is a value of \$450, which is the cost of Columbia's three-credit hour classroom course. The program is an incentive for eligible students to embark on a degree program, while completing the financial aid process. In addition, Columbia College is offering two other scholarships for their students who have completed at least 15 SH with Columbia and are maintaining a 3.0 grade point average. Call 877-3406 at Stewart or 352-8635 at Hunter for more information.

National Military Spouse Scholarship offered

The National Military Family Association's Joanne Holbrook Patton Military Spouse Scholarships are awarded to spouses of uniformed servicemembers (active duty, National Guard and Reserve, retirees, and survivors) to obtain professional certification or to attend post secondary or graduate school. Scholarships range in amount from \$500 to \$1,000. Scholarship funds may be used for tuition, fees and school room and board. Complete an NMFA survey, short answer questions, and an essay on the NMFA's Web site: www.nmfa.org/scholarship. Application deadline is March 15.

CTC scholarships available

The Central Texas College Foundation is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2008-2009 academic year. Interested CTC students have until March 31 to apply for any of the more than 120 endowed scholarships totaling over \$2.6 million. Scholarship opportunities are based on financial need as well as academic achievement. The online application for both the CTC Foundation and CTC Scholarship Fund for high school seniors is available at <https://ctcd.scholarships.nelnet.net>. This school is listed by Military Advance Education in the 2007 Top Colleges and Universities.

Apply for Rita Ackerman Scholarship offered

The Rita Ackerman Scholarship in the amount of \$500 each is given to the spouse of an active, retired or deceased enlisted Soldier and residing in the Fort Stewart - Hunter Army Airfield area. The scholarship is a memorial to Rita Ackerman, a former Enlisted Spouses' Club member. Stewart's Enlisted Spouses' Club selection committee will award the scholarship based on academic merit, volunteer activities, recommendations and an essay. Applicants must be accepted, or expect to be accepted by an institution of higher learning or vocational school. It must be completed and mailed by April 1. For more information go online at fortstewartesc.com/Scholarship.aspx, or see an Army education counselor for an application.

Military Family Member Scholarship

The Military Family Member Scholarship Fund is a non-profit organization under the auspice of the Officers' Spouses' Club to provide merit-based scholarships.

Applicants should be a spouse or unmarried Family mem-

ber of an active duty, reserve or national guard, retired or deceased member of the U.S. military forces who will be attending accredited institutions pursuing vocational, associate, baccalaureate or masters degrees. Applications must be completed and mailed by March 12. A special selection committee will award the scholarships in May. The decision will be based on academic records, transcripts, volunteer activities and an essay. Download the application at thesteelmagnolia.org/Scholarships.html, or see an Army education counselor.

Apply for the Georgia HOPE grant

The HOPE Grant is money given by the state of Georgia to students with financial needs to attend vocational/trade schools. The grant covers certificate and diploma programs. Any Soldier or Family member of a Soldier who is stationed in Georgia may be eligible. If you are interested in attending a Georgia vocational or trade school, inquire with your school's financial advisor or visit the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Army Education Center to speak with a counselor.

Educate while you wait

Get your certificate or diploma and pursue your new career during this deployment. Certificates for Web site technician, child care manager, and medical transcription are a few of the eligible programs offered by Savannah Technical College. Classes are available in the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Army Education Center and at the Liberty Campus on Airport Road in Hinesville. For more information, call Savannah Tech in the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Army Education Center at 408-2430 or the Liberty Campus at 408-3024.

Take CLEP and DANTES exams

College Level Examination Program and DANTES Subject Standardized Tests are available on post. Call Columbia College at 877-3406 for more information and testing dates. The exams are free for military personnel. CLEP tests are \$85 and DSSTs are \$90 for non-military examinees.

Take GED, skills enrichment courses

Graduation Equivalence Diploma and adult education classes are offered in partnership with the Liberty County Adult Education Program at the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Army Education Center. The courses prepare you to take the GED exam or refresh your skills. The courses are free of charge. You can select from one of a number of dates and times, which are 9 a.m. to noon or 1 to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday; or 6 to 9 p.m., Tuesday and Wednesday in rooms 225 - 228. For more information, call 368-7322. To register for the classes, you must be present for both days of the process. Registration is first come, first serve. Active duty military are registered upon request. Call 368-7322 for complete details.

Green-to-Gold briefing slated

The Green-to-Gold briefings are held at the installation education centers every month. On Stewart the briefings are 2 p.m., the first and third Thursday of each month. The Hunter briefings are 2 p.m., the second and fourth Thursday of each month.

Learning center provides computer resources

The Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Education Center's learning center has 55 computers with Internet access available. You can use the center to complete your homework, research for your classes, access the Army's basic skills automated program, "Lifetime Library" or just stop in to check your e-mail. The center is open seven days a week. It is closed on federal holidays. The learning center is room 230, building 100. The hours are 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday - Thursday; 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday; and noon to 6 p.m., Sunday. The Hunter learning center is open 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday-Friday; 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday; and noon to 6 p.m., Sunday. Take advantage of a variety of study resources and Internet capability. For more information, call 315-6130.

\$4500 tuition available for Soldiers

All active duty members have \$4500 per fiscal year for education. This entitlement is separate from the Montgomery GI

Bill benefits available from the Veteran's Administration. Details are available at 1:30 p.m., Monday - Friday, during a one-hour brief at the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Education Center, room 223.

Troops-, Spouse-to-Teachers briefings slated

The Georgia Troops-to-Teachers Program provides federal funding to qualified servicemembers of up to \$10,000 for becoming public school teachers. Under the Spouse-to-Teachers Program, eligible military spouses may be reimbursed for the cost of state required certification tests up to a total of \$600.

Future meetings are scheduled for 11 a.m., Feb. 27, March 19, April 23 and May 21 at the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Education Center. For more information, visit online at www.tttga.net and www.sttga.net or call 1-800-745-0709 or 767-8331.

Next college term dates announced

Enrollment will soon begin for the "spring" college term. Please contact the college directly for course schedules

Central Texas College term runs March 17 to May 10. For more information, call 767-2070 or 315-4090 at Hunter.
Columbia College term runs March 24 to May 17. For more information, call 767-5336 at Stewart, or 352-8635 at Hunter
Embry Riddle term runs March 17 to May 18. For more information call 767-3930 at Stewart or 352-5252 at Hunter.
Savannah Tech term runs March 28 to June 11. For more information, call 408-2430.

Webster University term runs March 17 to May 15. For more information, call 767-5357 at Stewart or 354-0033 at Hunter.

CES makes training available

The Civilian Education System provides the Army Civilian Corps self-development and institutional training (leader development) opportunities to develop leadership attributes through distance learning and resident training. CES includes the Action Officer Development Course, Supervisory Development Course, Management Development Course, Foundation Course, Basic Course, Intermediate Course, Advanced Course and Senior Service College.

If you are unfamiliar with CES, this link will take you to Army Management Staff College site for CES, or learn more online at www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil/ces.

As a part of Workforce Development, CES is critical to building a strong civilian workforce. Civilians should utilize their Individual Development Plan to program CES courses into their professional development. Please familiarize yourself with CES and encourage the workforce to enroll in the CES courses.

Webster offers deployed reduced online tuition

Soldiers enrolled in Webster's graduate classes will receive a reduced rate, while deployed.

Contact Marsha Sands at sands@webster.edu, or 354-0033, DSN: 315-5906 for additional information. This school is listed by Military Advance Education in the 2007 Top Colleges and Universities.

Hunter Spouses' Club Scholarship offered

The Hunter Thrift Shop- Hunter Spouses' Club Scholarship Program will award several scholarships in amounts from \$200 to \$1000 to deserving students (dependent child or spouse) to further their education.

Enter their website, www.hunterspousesclub.org, select scholarships and download the application for complete details. Applications must be postmarked by March 14.

AER scholarship available

AER is presenting three scholarships: Stateside Spouse Education Assistance, Overseas Spouse Education Assistance and the Major General James Ursano Scholarship Fund for Dependent Children.

Application deadline is Feb. 18 for the Overseas Spouse Scholarship and March 1 for the other two programs. Go to AER's Web site for complete details and applications: www.aerhq.org/education.asp



Looking for employment?

Opportunities for permanent employment are available in non-appropriated funds - Morale, Welfare, and Recreation jobs at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield.

Management jobs available

The following are positions with frequent vacancies. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis.

Child and Youth Program Assistant (entry skill, and target levels), \$10.39 to \$13.08 per hour
Recreation aid, \$5.85 to \$7 per hour
Operations assistant, \$5.85 to \$8 per hour
Cook, \$8.70 per hour
Hotel desk clerk, \$7 to \$7.50 per hour
Cashier, \$8 per hour
Custodial worker, \$7.72 per hour
Waiter/waitress (trainee), \$7.17 to \$8.17 per hour
Food service worker, to \$7.17 per hour
Bartender, \$8.70 per hour
In addition to the above continuous vacancies, NAF offers mid-level and management level career opportuni-

ties in Child and Youth Services, recreation, lodging/hospitality management, business operations, financial management, information technology, program management, and support services. To search for these types of positions go to cpol.army.mil. click on Employment, click on Search for Jobs, at the bottom of the page under Search-Announcement type in SCNAFDW% then click on "Get Announcement" or hit the enter key. This will narrow your search to Stewart-Hunter NAF vacancies. Instructions on how to apply are on each announcement. For federal employment opportunities, go to www.usajobs.opm.gov.

Additional NAF vacancy announcements with immediate openings currently posted on the cpol website are:

Recreation assistant (Lifeguard) at Stewart-Hunter, \$9.75 to \$10.25 per hour, the applicant must possess nationally recognized lifeguard, CPR, and first aid certifications. The closing date is Aug. 29.

Child and youth program associate technology lab at Stewart, \$15 to \$17 per hour, closing date: Feb. 14.

Child and youth program associate homework lab at Stewart, \$17.13 per hour, closing date: Feb. 14.

Child and youth services assistant director at Hunter \$35,000 to \$37,000, closing date: Feb. 13.

Small engine mechanic at Hunter, \$12.25 per hour, closing date: Feb. 20.

Cash collector at Stewart, \$11.11 to \$15.52 per hour, closing date: Feb. 18.

Recreation specialist (bowling technician), \$10.92 to \$12

per hour, closing date: Feb. 19.

To search for these types of positions go to cpol.army.mil, and click on Employment. This will narrow your search to the Stewart-Hunter NAF vacancies. Instructions on how to apply are on each announcement.

Student Career Employment available

Opportunity exist now at the local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, Fort Stewart. Check out our student career and/or student temporary employment!

The U.S. Army offers a variety of exciting opportunities to gain important career-related work experience prior to graduation.

If you are interested in the challenging and rewarding field of government service, you have the opportunity to develop specialized skills that will prepare you for advancement in your chosen career field.

Candidates must be seeking degree in: Human Resources or Information Technology; YP-201-1 (Comparable GS04 target GS09). Learn more online at cpol.army.mil or usajobs.opm.gov. Send Resume and college transcript to:

Jackie JohnsonBrunson
Human Resources Specialist
Civilian Personnel Advisory Center
Fort Stewart/Hunter Army Airfield
767-8671
FAX: 767-2302
jacqueline.johnsonbrunson@us.army.mil

On the wings of eagles, Soldiers transition to the future

Pat Young

Frontline Staff

Seven Soldiers left active duty at the Fort Stewart - Hunter Army Airfield retirement ceremony held Jan. 31 at Club Stewart.

The retirees were Master Sgt. Terrence Milton, Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion; two Soldiers from the NCO Academy, Master Sgt. Kenneth Molina and Sgt. 1st Class Darrin Bhimull; Sgt. 1st Class Richard Stewart, 92nd

and making it. He said as they left the service, their military bearing and professionalism would help them stand out. He said he didn't doubt they would continue in greatness, teaching others, and serving the nation in other venues.

Col. Todd Buchs, Stewart-Hunter garrison commander, was on-hand as guest speaker at the ceremony and echoed Lynch's words. He applauded their service to country, which cumulatively spanned more than 161 years. He also thanked the retirees and their family members, for their commitment and sacrifices.

Each of the retirees had unique experiences and expressed thoughts upon the occasion.

Milton said he was in the service, and in 1984 realized that he would go ahead and make it his career.

"After I made the commitment, I realized I was where I wanted to be," Milton said.

Not so much retiring, but transitioning to Florida A&M Reserve Officer Training Command in Tallahassee, as the senior military science instructor, he presented strong advice to Soldiers as they continue their own careers.

"Stay focused, stay positive and stay determined."

Molina understands what it takes to bring things into focus.

"The Army has changed me, made me a man. More respected," Molina said as he reflected over the years, thinking back from his original decision to join more than 20 years ago. A choice to help change his life, from the rough streets of

Brooklyn, New York. He said he would retire locally with his wife Diana, and together they would run a Family business.

His wife agreed sagely and said the Army was good to her Family and noted it wasn't for everyone but was great if people could stand being "independent" allowing them to travel through Europe.

Bhimull, was originally from Trinidad but entered the service while in New York. He said he had an excellent career in the Army and had no regrets. He said his life was highlighted by his wife Karen and the birth of his children, his daughter Deirdre, 18, who was born in Belgium, and son Joshua, 13, who was born in Hawaii. He shared his

secret with would-be careerists.

"You've got to hang in there. The military is ever changing," Bhimull said.

"You've just got to keep pace with it."

Stewart who kept his own pace as a former college basketball player for Virginia-Wesleyan, retired from the Army after 23 years of service. He entered the Army in Blackstone Va. and met his wife, Cheryl, at Fort Riley, Ks. in 1992.

"It's a long hard road, but listen to your leaders and you'll make it," Stewart said as advice to younger Soldiers starting their career. Stewart plans to settle in Palm Bay, Fla.

Jones started his career at Fort Hood and has seen assignments at home and abroad. He said he and his wife, Remedious, were almost assigned to Heidelberg, Germany but went to Hanau instead and love it. He said one of his most memorable assignments was as a drill sergeant.

"I wanted to see them transition from civilian life to military life. I was determined to help them succeed," Jones said with a smile, as he prepares to transition to a future career, where his interest is in helping teach future military leaders as a ROTC instructor.

As Jones is sure of his future plans, Bennett was when she started down her career path more than 20 years ago. She knew she would retire from the Army when she joined. She knew the Army was what she wanted to do since high school.

"My dad and uncle were both in the military. It is what I wanted to do," Bennett said and added her career was great because she made it how she wanted it. "You're the one who decides how it (military career) is going to be." She said it was about your personal outlook. She said she herself had no regrets and planned on remaining in the area with her husband, Sgt. Jabe' Thompson, 3rd Brigade Support Battalion.

As the ceremony drew to a close, the retiree's prayer, which was included in the program, was brought to the attention of those attending.

The last paragraph of the prayer surmises many of the well wishers thoughts and congratulations as they filed past the honored guests.

It reads, "Oh God, whose word declares ['to everything there is a season and time for every purpose,' show me this time as one of passage to a new path. May this retirement from active service to America's Army mark the beginning of a different journey where you will still be my guide and refuge."

Yet West, who served after 26 years, and has already began enjoying the fruits of her career, earning an associates degree while she was in, recalls **Isaiah, 40:31**, as she begins her next phase of life,

"But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."



Pat Young

January 2008 Stewart-Hunter retirees, Staff Sgt. Tamara Bennett, 11th ACR, with her husband Sgt. Jabe' Thompson, 3rd BSB; Cheryl and Sgt. 1st Class Richard Stewart, 92nd Engineers; Diana and Master Sgt. Kenneth Molina, NCO Academy; Master Sgt. Terrence Milton, HHSC STB and his wife Sheila; Sgt. 1st Class Darrin Bhimull, NCO Academy and his wife Karen; Sgt. 1st Class Marvin Jones, 2/306th FA and his wife Remedious; and Staff Sgt. Marguerite West, 175th Engineer Platoon, represent more than 161 years of service to the nation at the retirement ceremony Jan. 31 at Club Stewart.

Engineers; Sgt. 1st Class Marvin Jones, 2nd Battalion, 306 Field Artillery; Staff Sgt. Marguerite West, 175th Engineer Platoon; and Staff Sgt. Tamara Bennett, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Irwin, Calif.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, 3rd Infantry Division commanding general, who couldn't be present in person because he is deployed to Iraq, was represented by his wife Sarah Lynch, who attended the ceremony, and by a special video the general prepared especially for the retirees. From a wide screen display, Lynch presented a very personal gesture of thanks. He extended his appreciation of their efforts, and noted how they helped make great changes in the world-not reading about history, but being part of it

COVENANT

From Page 1A

Directorate of Public Works

Q: *Scouting is important to children, particularly during deployment. Scout troops on the installation currently do not have a dedicated building, and must transport materials for each meeting. Would it be possible to designate a facility for use by Boy and Girl Scouts?*

A: The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts were previously assigned, Building 7708 at Wright Army Airfield (2269 SF) when their individual buildings in Hallwood Homes were demolished. At the request of the Girl Scouts, Building 7709 was assigned to them Dec. 6, 2007 (2269 square feet) and the Boy Scouts received the entire Building 7708. This has proved to be a great arrangement and the Troop leaders are happy that they have enough space and they like their space.

Civilian Personnel Activity Center

Q: *Several new employment positions are opening for the Soldier and Family Assistance Center. Why are these positions temporary?*

A: These positions are temporary because they are directly tied to the war in connection with the Warriors in Transition and are funded through Global War on Terrorism dollars. Since this is a new initiative, these positions are being filled on a temporary basis.

Directorate of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

Q: *Multiple recreation programs exist for children ages four and up. Can we have programs designed for preschoolers?*

A: MWR conducted a survey on what preschooler programs for youth under four years of age that parents would like to see offered. The results included swimming classes, tumbling, music activities and arts and crafts. Currently CYS offers tumbling at all the CDCs to children already enrolled in CYS. For children not currently enrolled in the CDCs tumbling is available at Jordan Gym.

Different youth activities are provided for preschoolers on the first and third Wednesday of each month at the Bryan Village Youth Center, building 7338. Preschool playgroups are also available on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the youth center for parents and children. A Mommy and Me Program for health and fitness is offered at Jordan at Stewart and Tominac Fitness Centers at Hunter. The library offers story time and crafts. Swimming programs for youth under four years of age are in the process of being explored for late spring/early summer.

For more information on classes or to sign up, please contact the registration office at 767-2312 or 767-5425.

Army Medical Command, DMWR

Q: *Winn Army Community Hospital does not currently offer a Cancer Survivor Support Group. Could we get one started?*

A: The Preventive Medicine Department has met with Liberty County and they are very interested in combining efforts with the American Cancer Society. The three parties are scheduled to meet mid February to begin a Breast Cancer Support Group. We will announce in the Frontline once confirmed.

Q: *How will the Army Family Covenant help in getting appointments in a timely fashion at clinics?*

A: The Chief of Primary Care/Clinical Support Division spent last month looking at primary access care. A multi-faceted approach is being implemented that includes hiring new providers. Since Oct. 2007, we have increased appointments by 18 percent. This is the top

priority at Winn.

DMWR

Q: *Currently, new Soldiers at the installation receive free child care one Saturday per month. Will single parent Soldiers and non-deployed Soldiers also receive this benefit?*

A: Deployed Soldier's Families receive free childcare as follows:

Free child care during mandatory pre and post deployment meetings; free child care for battalion level Family Readiness Group meetings; 16 hours of free respite child care per child per month; reduced hourly child care fee paid at \$2 per hour (regularly \$3.50) beyond the 16 hours of respite care per month. If the Soldier is assigned to the Rear Detachment Cadre, the Family is eligible for the following child care: free child care for battalion level Family Readiness Group meetings and five hours of free respite child care per child per month during designated support assignment.

Also, reduced hourly childcare fee paid at \$2 per hour (regularly \$3.50) beyond the five hours of respite care per month.

Soldiers who have TCS, PCS (unaccompanied tour) and are TDY (90-179 days) are eligible for the same free child care as deployed Soldiers. For more information, please call Maria Boiza at 767-6071.

Staff Judge Advocate, DMWR

Q: *Registered sex offenders are allowed to live on post and utilize the gym facilities, where child care is provided. How do we feel safe leaving children at the gym when sex offenders can utilize the facility?*

A: The safety and well being of Soldiers and Family members is the command's primary concern. Federal law and Army regulations do not prohibit registered sex offenders from residing on post or using installation facilities as long as they comply with Army regulations and applicable state law. Authorized patrons are allowed to use fitness facilities as long as they do not violate facility rules and applicable laws. No one is allowed in the rooms where child care is provided unless they are an employee or a parent of a child being cared for in the child care facility. Under Georgia law, registered sex offenders may not be employed by a child care facility and may not be employed within 1,000 feet of such a facility. In addition, registered sex offenders may not loiter at any child care facility or area where minors congregate. Therefore, registered sex offenders may only utilize fitness facilities if they are actively engaged in the use of the facilities and cannot loiter in the vicinity of any area where child care is provided. Anyone who is aware of a violation of the law should report it to the DES Desk Sergeant at Stewart: 767-4895 or Hunter: 315-6133. If a registered sex offender violates the law, he or she is subject to prosecution and bar from the installation.

DMWR

Q: *Will we have middle and high schools on post as part of the Army Family Covenant?*

A: A joint venture with Liberty County is planned in order to provide a middle school on the installation. The planned location is near Gate 7, Airport Road. Currently a boundary survey is being conducted by the Savannah Army Corps of Engineers.

Lt. Col. Whitney, Hunter Army Airfield garrison commander, and Dr. Thomas B. Lockamy, Jr., Chatham County Superintendent, met Feb. 7 to discuss prospects of a partnership between the installation and Chatham County for a school on Hunter.

Q: *Can we have more adult-oriented recre-*

ation programs as part of the Army Family Covenant? High-adventure activities like rock climbing and sky diving would be enjoyed.

A: Outdoor Recreation is planning an action packed calendar of high adventure programs for adults and Families starting in Jan. 2008. Programs include but are not limited to:

Introductory classes:

Climbing sessions at Tominac Fitness Center; sea kayaking sessions in late spring at Holbrook Pond Outdoor Recreation Center; whitewater kayaking and rafting sessions in the late spring at Holbrook; kite boarding in late spring at Tybee Island; boogie boarding in early summer at Tybee; scuba diving at the installation fitness centers; basic sailing at tybee Island; hand gun shooting and skeet and trap shooting - Stewart-Hunter

Day excursions:

Sea kayaking (late spring); beach combing on barrier islands (late spring); coastal river kayaking (late spring); off shore fishing, paint-ball games, kite boarding (late spring)

Weekend trips:

Hiking on the Appalachian trail; mountain biking; whitewater rafting; whitewater kayaking/canoeing; snow skiing and scuba diving

Upcoming calendared events include:

Cardboard Flotilla Race at Tominac, Feb. 9; Intro to rock climbing, at Tominac, Feb. 11; "Dive-In" movie, at Tominac, Feb. 19; Women in the Outdoors event, Holbrook Pond Rec Area, Feb. 29 to March 1.

The outdoor recreation staff will be glad to assist individuals in finding information on availability for other activities such as sky diving, hang gliding, etc that are available in southeast Georgia. POC is Susan Chipple, 767-5145 or Chris Dent, 767-8609.

MEDDAC

Q: *I have had difficulty obtaining coordinated appointments for my children and have missed several days of work while unsuccessfully attempting to get referrals for their care. Can we expand medical options at Hunter?*

A: Medical options are available and will continue to refer out to the TRICARE network based on workload. If there is a special need to be considered, we will review the request on a case by case basis through the Patient Advocate's Office.

Directorate of Human Resources, Army Education Center

Q: *According to the Army Family Covenant, education and employment prospects will be increased. Are there any plans to provide tuition assistance to Family members to expand education opportunities?*

A: We have many programs for spouses. Career Advancement Accounts for Family members began as a pilot program at Fort Bragg and Fort Benning in January. Initially, \$3,000 in tuition assistance per year will be provided through the program to Family members.

After the pilot period, the services may be expanded to other sites. Family members can currently use the Georgia HOPE grant to pursue certificate and diploma programs at any technical school in the state. The local school for use of the HOPE grant is Savannah Technical College which also guarantees job interviews with their major industry partners. As always, Federal Financial Aid is also available to assist, as well as certain scholarships and loans. Contact an Education Counselor to obtain more information at 767-8331.

DMWR

Q: *Can we implement a Family Readiness Morale Fund for funding activities and events to offset the cost for Families?*

A: This type of fund has already been established. The Army Community Service Center regulation, AR 608-1, authorizes garrisons to establish a FRG Supplemental Mission Activity fund to offset FRG fundraising.

The funds originate as donations and are distributed between the units based on Soldier population. FRGs are encouraged to partner with MWR events such as the Easter Egg Hunt and the Fall Festival to provide free services to Families.

MEDDAC

Q: *Are there any plans to make well-baby or immunization appointments more accessible?*

A: Adjustments to the schedules were made. Appointments are available to the parents for their next well-baby appointment prior to leaving the Pediatric Clinic. This system has improved patient satisfaction.

MEDDAC

Q: *My child must miss additional school for medical specialist appointments due to the one hour drive each way. Can we pursue options to increase available specialists in the local area?*

A: Medical options are available and we will continue to refer out to the TRICARE network based on workload. If there is a special need to be considered, we will review the request on a case by case basis through the Patient Advocate's Office.

Winn meets with Humana on a monthly basis requesting that more specialists and primary care providers are increase in the local area. Humana has increased their providers by 11 in our network area since Nov. 2007.

DMWR

Q: *Will the Army Family Covenant help Families here who are looking for work on the installation?*

A: There will be more opportunities for spouses and teens who qualify for the advertised positions. The opportunities are advertised in the Frontline (weekly). Army Community Service Employment Readiness Program provides classes for Family members to go through the federal job application process. For more information, call Randy Knox at 767-5058.

DMWR

Q: *Will the Army Family Covenant help provide more professional positions for highly educated spouses? Local employment options are limited and the median pay scale is very low.*

A: This is being addressed as a Department of the Army-wide issue.

Higher-end employment options may not have same opportunities or compensation at a new installation. Army Spouse Employment Preference assists by giving Army spouses preference for positions with participating companies.

Additionally, the Army also recently spent \$50 million to hire new healthcare providers for Soldiers and their Families.

This new initiative will open more employment opportunities for Family members. ACS challenged their Employment Readiness Program to talk to local business and agencies, build partnerships, and find more mobile positions for spouses.

The Army is also working with lawmakers to help Army spouses gain priority for civil service jobs, which will provide increased compensation in comparison to current employment opportunities in the local community.

5/7th Cav Regt watches community transform

Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – After just six days of operations out of Patrol Base Meade, Soldiers assigned to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division began to see results of their cooperation with community leaders in



Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Soldiers of Troop A, 5/7th Cav., operationally assigned to the 2nd BCT, kneel during a security halt as they walk to a nearby town south east of Patrol Base Meade Jan. 27.

Sayafiyah, south of Baghdad, Jan. 27.

During the operations, Troops B and C, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Div., established security in villages near the patrol base leaving one troop, Troop A, to handle security further south.

Troop A, accompanied by Lt. Col. Clifford Wheeler, 5/7 Cav. Regt. commander, was to establish a foothold in Sayafiyah on the banks of the Tigris River, approximately 15 kilometers southeast of Patrol Base Meade. Their arrival uncovered more than expected.

As the route clearance team marked improvised explosive devices, Troop A cleared buildings and together made their way to the town, a suspected terrorist safe haven.

Opening the road to Sayafiyah was no small feat. Residents of Sayafiyah, who had volunteered to assist Coalition Forces locating IEDs were out in front of route clearance vehicles, looking for tell-tale signs

of the deadly traps.

The local volunteers came forward to assist earlier in the month when Sayafiyah community leaders met with the commander of 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., Col. Terry Ferrell. In that meeting, Ferrell assured Sayafiyah leaders his Soldiers would be conducting operations to establish a long term presence in the region.

With the assurance, the regional leaders agreed to assist clearing vital roads, which would eventually be used to deliver supplies and equipment to troops staying in the city.

1st Lt. Robert Seiter, platoon leader with Troop A., said that he and his fellow Soldiers recently came from an area with a completely different security situation.

Seiter, a native of Fort Mitchell, Ky., said in the unit's previous location, west of Fallujah, the Soldiers established a rapport with neighboring villagers, which enabled troops to employ a less aggressive security plan.

Spc. John D. Gilga, a cavalry scout with Troop A and native of DuBois, Pa., said though he was focused on the mission venturing south, he was still nervous heading into unfamiliar territory.

The foot patrol was slow and deliberate. Along the way, the Troop A Soldiers encountered two corroding IEDs, which did not have initiating devices attached.

While the danger of pressure plate IEDs remains, residents said that most, if not all, insurgents in the area had fled.

It was close to noon when Troop A and its commander reached their destination, a lively, rustic farming community.

To the Soldiers' surprise, community residents and local leaders were on hand to greet them.

Wheeler and the leaders spoke at length on issues facing the region and the future of Coalition Forces in the area.

Wheeler was able to secure a building for Troop A's observation post and the residents were assured that a Concerned Local Citizens group would be established.

As night fell, a crowd of local residents gathered to watch their new neighbors dismantle the front gate of their new post.

Cut cable creates computer chaos on FOB Kalsu Internet

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
2nd BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Soldiers trying to access the Internet on FOB Kalsu may experience a slow-down in the computers' processing speed, causing some to wonder "why me?"

The experience is not limited to Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. Due to a major cable break in the Mediterranean Sea, countries in Asia and the Middle East are experiencing a disruption in Internet capabilities.

Due to the degraded capabilities, the 2nd BCT S6 signal shop is implementing tighter restrictions on the network. To maximize use of the small amount of bandwidth available, only .mil and .gov sites will be left open for access, said Maj.

Louis Manning, 2nd BCT, S6, signal systems officer in charge.

Because the break is on a major commercial undersea segment somewhere between Egypt and France, Manning said it could take some time to correct the problem.

Soldiers looking for faster access can go to one of the three Internet cafes on base, said Spc. Nancy Perez, 2nd BCT computer help desk.

The Internet cafes located on FOB Kalsu run off a satellite-based system, SpaWare, and are unaffected by the break. Soldiers can use these cafes to access any site they choose.

If there is no one waiting in line, Soldiers can stay on as long as they like. However, if there is a line, Soldiers are limited to 30 minutes, said Pfc. Lawrence Fluellen, a military policeman in the MP platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2/3 Brigade Troops Battalion.

Fluellen, who also works in the 2/3 BTB computer lab front desk, said since the lines went down Jan. 30, the lab has been very busy.

Though the incident may cause some people to wonder how safe their Internet connection is, Perez said cables like the one broken are extremely difficult to damage.

Unlike normal fiber cables, underwater cables are armored, making them extremely difficult to break. They are encased in a metal casing and covered with another insulating coating, she said.

One explanation for the break is either the cable was hit by some boat, piece of underwater machinery, submarine or large maritime animal, Perez said.

Regardless of the cause, the effect is a severe slowdown in the non-secure Internet for about seven to 10 days, the length of time repairs are expected to take, Manning said.

Coordinated medical engagement treats hundreds in Khidr

Pfc. Amanda McBride
4th BCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Working side-by-side, surgeons and medics from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and the Iraqi army came together in a coordinated medical engagement, Jan. 28 in Khidr, Iraq.

“By us coming out here and doing this with the Iraqi army, the families know that we are serious and want to help them,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Newsome, commander of 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

Throughout the day, Coalition and Iraqi army surgeons treated more than 500 people. Many seen during the day received medical care for injuries or illnesses that otherwise may not have been treated.

“Most of the people being seen today were because of cold and flu symptoms,” said Sgt. 1st Class Monty Ranisate, medical platoon sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3/7th Inf. Regt. “We also saw many chronic diseases.”

Due to the previous medical facility in the town being destroyed by al-Qaeda in Iraq, many have been unable to get the healthcare they need.

When residents arrived at the school to be seen, they were first sent to the preventive medicine room to learn information on how to stop diseases before they start. During the preventive medicine class, residents were taught how to properly boil water and to practice good personnel hygiene. With some residents not having clean drinking water, many have developed diseases from the unclean water. Mohammed, an Iraqi medic, explained how boiling water would kill germs making it healthier for them to drink. Children from the community were also taught not to play with plastic weapons because of the similarities between real and toy weapons.

“I told them not to use the guns,” Mohammed said. “Anyone who sees them might think they are real.”

After the class, patients received a standard medical questionnaire and had their vital signs checked. After checking vital signs, those who needed to be seen waited in line to see a doctor.

Doctors diagnosed the patients on what exactly was wrong with them, Ranisate said. “And if they need to make follow up appointments, we help them make it with local doctors.”

In addition to receiving medical care, residents received humanitarian assistance bags.



Pfc. Amanda McBride

Lt. Col. Timothy Monahan, battalion surgeon for HHC, 3/7th Inf., 4th BCT, listens to an Iraqi girl's heart pace during a coordinated medical engagement Jan. 28 in Khidr, Iraq.

3/1 Cav medics help heal communities with compassion

Spc. Ben Hutto
3rd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq – Ahmed's whole body shook as Capt. Sayed Ali, from Long Island, N.Y., the surgeon assigned to the 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, examined him. Ahmed, a 24-year-old cab driver, was driving his cab when an insurgent roadside bomb destroyed his vehicle and left him injured, forcing his father to bring him to Patrol Base Assassin for help.

Ali asked the cab driver to perform a series of movements to determine the severity of his injuries. As the young man strained, his father and the medics of Troop A looked on. Obviously in pain, Ahmed weakly strained to push his head against Ali's palm.

Ali asked his medics to prepare medication for Ahmed to take home and gave the young man a new cane for better support. Consultations like these, between Ali and local citizens living around Patrol Base Assassin, are frequent. Medics working for Ali estimate he sees one or two local citizens at the patrol base aid station every day.

“We've done everything from treating a common cold to amputated limb rehabilitation,” said Spc. Clifford Overton, from Nashville, Tenn., a combat medic in Troop A. “In many cases, there is only so much we can do because of

our supplies here, but we do what we can. The people here need more quality doctors. A lot of patients come to us because they have no other options. They look to us for hope.”

Overton explained that many of the aid station's patients come because they have no money, they trust that American doctors have more expertise or they have been treated by local doctors with little success.

Whatever the reason, Ali and his medics never turn anyone away.

“Captain Ali is awesome,” said Spc. Rafik Brooks, Jr., from Keysport, Pa., a combat medic in Troop A. “His morals are so high that he sees everyone that comes. He will schedule appointments with people outside. He takes referrals from Civil Affairs. He finds people at our medops (medical operations) and has them come back here for follow-ups.”

Although many at the patrol base believe Ali goes out of his way to help the local populace, he doesn't view his actions as anything special.

“I don't like it or dislike doing it,” Ali said. “My main priority is to get all of these guys (Troop A Soldiers) back to their families. I can't tell them not to go out or keep them here at the base, but if I can indirectly protect them from an IED (improvised explosive device) or a VBIED (vehicle

borne improvised explosive device), it's a good thing.”

Overton agrees with Ali.

“One act of kindness can save a world of hurt when it comes to IEDs and things like that,” he said. “An act of kindness can show the people here that we are here to help and prompt them to report things like IEDs. What we are doing here has a big effect on what's going on out there.”

Ali said Troop A has been receptive to the needs of the people around them since their arrival.

“I think from day one we were open to people coming here,” Ali said. “People here were initially scared of an American patrol base, but as you can see, it has gotten better as word has gotten out. People are now showing up without me having to ask them to come.”

The medics are proud of their accomplishments.

“It's been the experience of a lifetime,” Overton said. “Being in a line unit is different. There is a huge difference between going out every day and being in an aide station behind walls. We can explain it to people all day, but only those of us that have been out here will understand everything we've done. It has been a real learning experience. It will be something I'll always be proud of.”

Even though the experience can't fully be put into words, Overton explained working with the people of Iraq has been a special experience for him.

Last stop before Chinook flight

Pfc. Monica K. Smith
3rd CAB Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – Chinooks are big, too big to fly during the day because they make a large target for enemy fire. Occasionally though, a Chinook will be seen flying over Baghdad International Airport during daylight hours, performing maintenance test flights.

The Army is the only branch of service which requires a separate pilot to fly maintenance test flights. Maintenance test pilots are the final stop in the maintenance process.

“It’s like when you drop off your car at a Chevy dealer and after they fix it, they drive it around the block to make sure everything works and nothing falls off - that’s what we do,” said Chief Warrant Officer Stephen Kuritko, maintenance test pilot with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment.

After the mechanics have completed their maintenance work on an aircraft, the test pilots perform a maintenance check that can be as simple as one flight or last two weeks, depending on the extent of the maintenance work, said Kuritko.

“An engine performance check could take you two to four days,” Kuritko said. “We check everything by the book. Starting with a ground run, where we crank the engine on the ground, we run the Chinook up and keep progressing all the way up to top speed checking things on our way. That’s with scheduled maintenance.”

Unscheduled maintenance usually occurs when a problem arises during a mission the night prior. In those instances, maintenance is often concentrated on particular areas and not all checks require a flight. However, if the pilots don’t know what caused a problem, test pilots will fly the aircraft to try and reproduce the problem in order to repair it.

“Troubleshooting is the hardest part,” said Chief Warrant Officer Ron Durham, also a test pilot with Co. B, 2/3rd Avn. Regt. “Diagnosing an intermittent problem, a problem where sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t, is very hard. But it’s very fulfilling; it makes me feel good when I discover and work on a problem and then I go out there and fly it and I see that I actually fixed the problem.”

There are four Chinook maintenance test pilots, Durham and Kuritko in Co. B, 2/3rd Avn. Regt., Maj. Rogers Stinson, Company B, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, and Chief Warrant Officer David Campbell of Company D, 2-3rd Avn. Regt. The advantage of having dedicated maintenance test pilots is while other pilots handle missions, test pilots focus on Chinook maintenance, said Kuritko.

“They’ll fly a mission at night and the maintenance test pilots come in the morning and see what needs to be worked on,” Kuritko said. “It’s funny because the other pilots think we can fix everything. They say, ‘it’s messed up’ and walk away from (the aircraft), but we don’t have a bag of magic; it takes some work.”

That work comes in the form of good test pilots whom Durham calls, “a special breed.”

“You have to volunteer to be a test pilot, your company doesn’t just select you,” Durham said. “You have to use your mind. If the aircraft breaks and the guys fix the aircraft, it’s up to us to make sure everything is functioning properly, that it’s air worthy.”

Although test pilots are the final stop in the

maintenance process, Kuritko says the pilots who fly missions have the real final say.

“When you give it to the line pilots and they fly it down range, did they accept it or not?” Kuritko said. “You have to ask, ‘Are they happy with it?’ If they’re happy, we’re good.”



Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Chief Warrant Officer Steve Kuritko, Co B, 2/3rd Avn. Regt. inspects a Chinook Jan. 28 at the Combat Aviation Brigade flight line, Baghdad.

Change - a good thing for air traffic controllers

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills
3rd CAB Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – Change can be good, in particular when aimed toward a better working environment. Take the air traffic control towers at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, south of Baghdad, and Camp Liberty’s Liberty Pad in Baghdad. At both locations, aircraft were obscured by buildings as they approached for landing, radio traffic could be spotty and safety was an issue in general.

Soldiers of Company F, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment decided to change things by building taller air traffic control towers with state of the art equipment.

Just ask Sgt. Nicole Olcott, air traffic control shift leader in Company F. During the first part of her deployment to Iraq, which began in May 2007, she and her Soldiers worked in the so-called “Tree House” located on FOB Kalsu.

The Tree House was a jury-rigged version of an air traffic control tower and a far from ideal center to control helicopter and unmanned

aerial systems traffic to and from FOB Kalsu.

“We actually had a wooden structure that was on top of two MILVANS,” said Olcott, from Palmcoast, Fla. “It worked for what it was needed.”

Unfortunately, the line of sight from the Tree House to where helicopters generally approached FOB Kalsu was obscured by a helicopter maintenance structure. A much taller tower was built with a control center more along the lines of towers at civilian airports in the States. The new tower gives air traffic controllers a full view, an essential ingredient in safely controlling the flow of aircraft to and from an airport.

“It gives a range to see everything around the whole FOB,” Olcott said. “We can see about 10 to 12 miles out on a clear day.”

The ability to see is essential to the duties of an air traffic controller, said Sgt. 1st Class Shaheem Smith, Liberty Pad ATC noncommissioned officer in charge.

At Liberty Pad the air traffic controllers worked out of a cramped tactical control tower on the back of a vehicle until the new

tower was built.

“It makes for a safer, faster traffic flow because of the 360-degree view,” Smith said of the new tower. Smith, from Farrockaway, N.Y., said sitting up high improves every aspect of the air traffic controllers’ work. “A lot of times now we can see the aircraft before they call in,” Smith said.

That makes things easier on the air traffic controllers and safer, said Spc. Shaun Kramer, air traffic controller at Liberty Pad, Company F.

“It’s definitely easier,” said Kramer, a native of Maple Park, Ill. “When you have more time to see and talk to the pilots, you have more time to sequence and separate aircraft.”

Outfitted with the latest in digital radios, and more spacious, the new Liberty Pad tower is a marked improvement over the old tactical control tower that sat low to the ground, said Spc. Mark Willard, Company F, from Tallahassee, Fla.

“The radios down there (in the tactical control tower) were pretty distorted and the radios up here are better because of the height

and the line of sight,” said Willard from his vantage point towering over Liberty Pad. The several flights of stairs leading up to his place of work are also a bonus.

“Got to love the good work out every morning,” he said.

These improvements were part of a long process that began before Company F arrived in Iraq in May 2007, said Capt. Kristopher Lewis, Company F commander, and his company finished the work. The towers were ordered months before the unit’s arrival and by the time they arrived they had to finalize the projects, consolidate all the parts and monitor construction.

“We assumed the mission at FOB Kalsu in June 2007. Tower construction actually kicked off September 2007 and was finished December,” Lewis said.

Company F also installed new runway lights and approach lights at FOB Kalsu’s landing pad. Olcott said two of her Soldiers, Spc. Greg Pellegrin and Pfc. Andrew Becker, installed the lights, which helps pilots see the approach to the landing pad.