Vanguard Point

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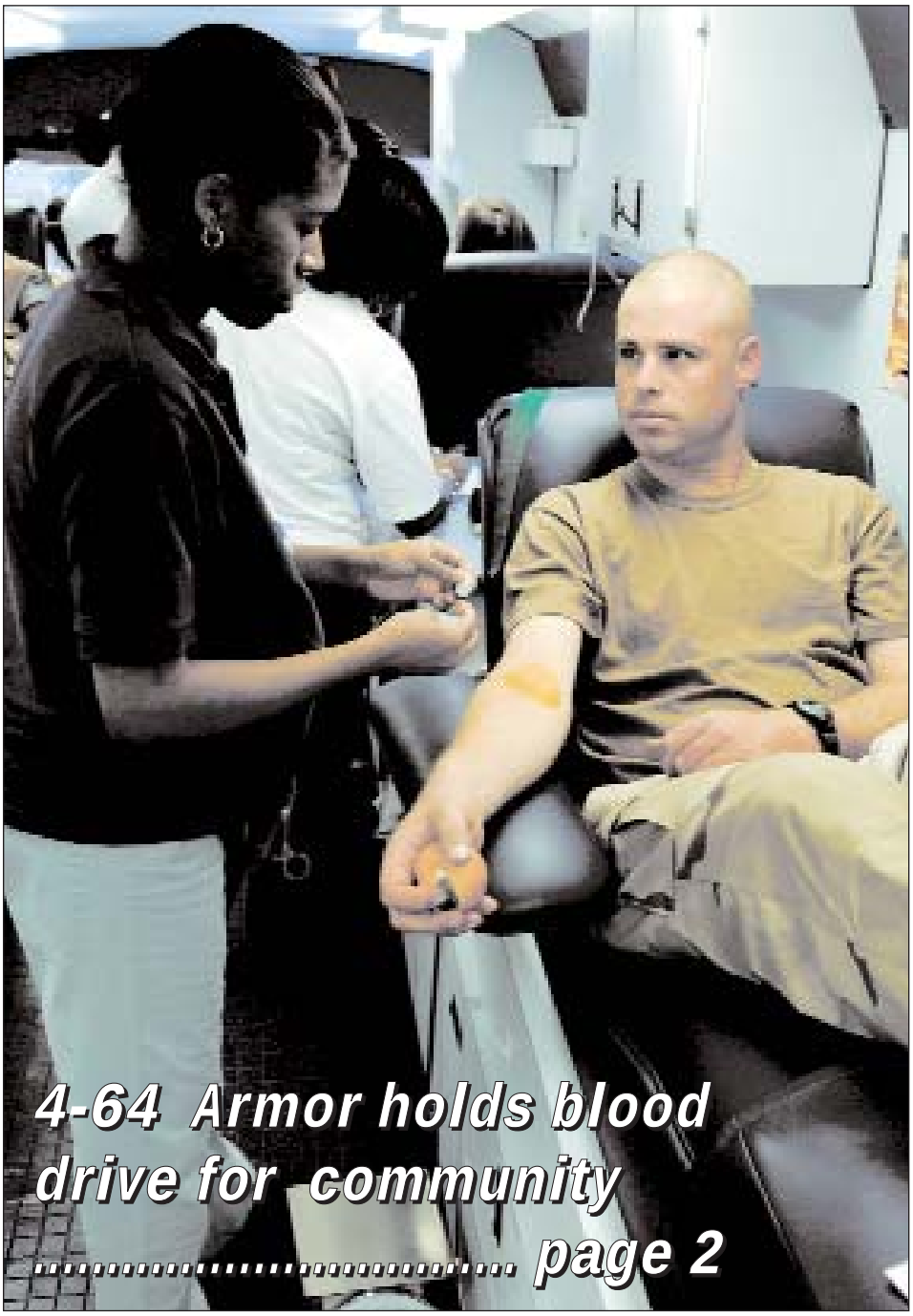

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Tuskers get pierced for those in need

Pfc. Dan Balda
Editor

Soldiers assigned to 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment were given a chance to start their weekend early Friday by donating blood to the Savannah Community Blood Bank.

"We only expected about 60 Soldiers," said Shantel Moses, a blood bank employee. "But we had at least 85 come through."

Capt. Stephen Gifford, the personnel officer for the unit, said that Soldiers had been waiting in line since 9 a.m. in hopes of donating blood.

"You would never see these lines at a blood center," he said. "I really can't explain it. I think part of it was that the Soldiers were given the day off if they or their dependants gave blood. But there were still Soldiers waiting in line at 4 p.m."

For Spc. Bryan Bradford, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4/64, getting off work early was the farthest thing from his mind.

"It's a worthy cause and I wanted to help people out," Bradford said. "I had a friend who died in a car wreck and I gave blood when he died, and I've continued to do that for a while.

The threat of being pierced with sharp instruments failed to deter him as well.

"I'm terrified of needles, but its worth it to me, a little pain but a lot of gain," he said. I feel that it's important for not just Soldiers to give blood, but everybody. Especially around the holidays, it's all about helping your fellow man."

Kristie Waterfield, liaison to Savannah Memorial Health University Medical Center from Savannah Community Blood Bank said that Savannah Memorial uses about 800 pints of blood a month. That comes out to about 10,000 units a year that can be used for everything from the trauma center and general surgery, to cancer treatments and neo-natal intensive care.

"I called Sgt. Maj. Stanley to ask if he would be able to support a blood drive at his unit," Waterfield said. "I went to him because the military tends to be a more giving community organization. The people understand the need for blood donation. They are the kind of people that will stand in line for four or five hours just to donate because they know what good its doing."

Gifford saw another reason for the want to donate blood. .

"I think for the Soldiers, giving blood means a little something more right now because we are wearing DCU's [desert camouflage uniforms] than it would in garrison or a normal civilian environment," he said. "It also has a lot to do with the holiday events that we are putting on through our FRG [Family Readiness Group]. We have sold stuffed bears for a more festive approach. But there is no blood substitute. If I was the blood bank and I was expecting 50, I would be happy with 30. That fact that we got 80 Soldiers out there is phenomenal."

Gifford said that over two-thirds of the unit's Soldiers were unable to give blood because of the small pox vaccine they were given in preparation for deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

Regardless of the numbers that gave blood on Friday, Gifford thought that Soldiers fill a need for blood donation centers.

"When you are a Soldier you have a better understanding of how to rely on others for help and to give help to those in need," he said.

Gifford also compared the selfless act of giving blood with the unit's mission in Iraq.

"When we give blood it goes towards people we don't even know," he said. " It's the same thing in Iraq. We are helping the people of Iraq and protecting the US without even knowing most of the people we are helping."

If Soldiers still want to donate blood and missed the date on Friday, the blood donation center is parked at the post exchange every 56 days.

Photo by Pfc. Dan Balda

Shantel Moses, a Savannah Community Blood Bank employee, takes blood from a Soldier assigned to 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment, Friday during a battalion blood drive.

Photo by Pfc. Dan Balda

Brig. Gen. Karl Horst, 3rd Infantry Division Assistant Division Commander (Maneuver) visits with Robert Allen, a former Army Military Policeman, at the Carl Vinson Veterans Administration Medical Center in Dublin, GA Wednesday.

Fort Stewart Soldiers spread Holiday cheer with veterans

Pfc. Dan Balda

Editor

Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart Garrison and members of Hinesville-area veteran groups brought some Christmas cheer to wounded veterans at the Carl Vinson Veterans Administration Medical Center in Dublin, GA, Wednesday.

"It's been the tradition of the 3rd Infantry Division for the last 20 years to come down here," said Brig. Gen. Karl Horst, 3rd Inf. Div. Assistant Division Commander (Maneuver). "A lot of the residents don't have family in the area, but the military is a family and we wanted to remind them of that."

Soldiers visited and brought holiday gift baskets to give to the residents. They did this to remind the veterans that regardless of how long ago they served their country, their brothers and sisters in arms remember their sacrifice, Horst said.

Traditionally the Soldiers wear their Class A uniforms but this time they wore their Desert Camouflage Uniforms. This was not an accident Horst said.

"We wanted the Veterans to be mindful of what these Soldiers are preparing to do," Horst said. "It's important to link the past and present, and making this trip is a very powerful way to start the holidays."

Horst visited with some of the residents, swapping stories and presenting some of them with a coin of excellence for the time they spent in defense of their country.

Some of the Soldiers wiped away tears as they listened to the stories of those that came before them

Ray Humphrey, a World War II veteran, told Horst about his fond memories of driving Gen. Clarence Armstrong around Europe after the conclusion of hostilities.

"I drove him to Monte Carlo and he took me to the casino with him," Humphrey said. "We also went to Rome so he could meet the Pope, but I didn't care to much for that, I'm Baptist."

After visiting with the residents, Soldiers could be seen pushing residents in wheelchairs to the auditorium for a Christmas concert put on by the Dublin High School Jazz Band.

Horst addressed the audience, specifically the veterans before the concert began.

"We are carrying on the legacy of the wars you fought in," he said. "Please think of these Soldiers as many of them are going to Iraq for the second time to fight the global war on terror."

After Horst's speech, Reginald Ferguson, the director of the band, told the audience it was his and the bands distinct honor and pleasure to play for the veterans and Soldiers.

The band began the concert by playing "I'll Be Home For Christmas," and continued on with other Christmas favorites such as "White Christmas", and the theme from Peanuts.

The band was treated with a standing ovation at the conclusion of their concert.

Horst finished up the concert by saying, "What these Soldiers are doing now is just as important as what you did. Please keep them in your thoughts and

Iraqi police train on AK-47s, police procedures

By Staff Sgt. Susan German
122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Courtesy photo

A Soldier from the 307th PSYOP, 10th PSYOP Battalion, shows an Iraqi police officer how to properly fire an AK-47 rifle during basic weapons training for 26 Iraqi Police from the Al Karkh Patrol Sector, Bagdad.

CAMP INDEPENDENCE, Baghdad, Iraq - Building confidence in their skills and helping them feel safer as they patrol the streets of Baghdad is an important contribution toward an eventual transfer of authority and returning Iraq to its rightful caretakers. Part of that confidence already exists, the remainder can be strengthened through training and the reinforcement of tactical as well as technical skills.

Civil Affairs teams supporting the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and 1st Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment, of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, conducted basic weapons training and a live-fire range for 26 Iraqi Police officers from the Al Karkh Patrol Sector, at Camp Independence Dec. 1. While conducting joint operations, the CA teams helped identify the need for weapons training during neighborhood assessments. They were told by the commander that members of the Iraqi Police in their sector were uncomfortable with their weapons, said Maj. Jim Joos, commander Company B, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Rhode Island.

"This is a very good civil affairs mission since there are a lot of cops within the CA ranks, and cops know how to handle weapons," Joos, a police officer from Philadelphia said. "This puts them in a very good position to help train the Iraqi police." For two hours, Sgt. Les Coash, from St. Louis, an assistant team leader for a tactical psychological operations (PSYOP) team from the 307th PSYOP Company, 10th PSYOP Battalion, instructed the IPs on fundamental marksmanship skills in a classroom setting. He demonstrated each position as he explained it, using an AK-47 rifle and Glock pistol, the weapons the IPs are most familiar with. As a former Marine, Coash trained more than 2,000 Marines and Sailors, as well as provided refresher training to special operations forces.

Some terms, such as "stock weld" just didn't translate and brought looks of confusion from the IPs. Humor was also lost in translation and didn't bring the expected response, although a remark about the volatile Haifa Street did elicit nervous laughter from the Iraqis.

Another purpose for the training was to improve the IPs' shooting accuracy. While out on operations, Coash and his colleagues noticed that at times Iraqi Police and National Guard were firing without direction, shooting entire magazines of ammunition at the side of a building with no actual targets. "That puts our guys at risk, because we've been in

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Deployment entitlements at a glance

Base Pay/Special Pays – no change due to deployment.
BAS – meal card holder meal deductions will stop. No change for non-meal card holders.
BAH – no change.
HFP - $225 per month for any period of time during the month falling between 1 Oct 2002 – 30 Sep 2004; $150 per month for any period of time not falling between those dates.
HDP-L – Rate varies by location; $1.66 per day for locations authorized $50; $3.33 per day for locations authorized $100.
FSH - $250 per month or $8.33 per day for any time period falling between 1 Oct 2002 – 30 Sep 2004; $100 per month for any period of time not falling between those dates
Per Diem - $3.50 per day
CZTE – Amount equal to federal taxes on LES; Officers cannot exceed Sergeant Major of the Army Pay plus HFP (do not include Medicare and social security taxes in this amount).

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those buildings, and all of a sudden we're getting shot at," Coash said. "So we started to work this in to get them trained to try and get away from that to where they can operate safely and accurately." At the end of the day, Coash wanted them to be more confident. Placing the focus on hitting what they aimed for, he advised them that the goal is one shot, one kill.

"One well-aimed shot is better than 30 unaimed shots," Coash told Iraqi police. Moving out to the range, the IPs split into two groups; with one group firing while the second group participated in police training. Those on the range were advised to adjust some other shooting factors, such as their breathing, trigger squeeze and muscle relaxation, based on where their rounds were hitting the target.

Through some basic verbal instruction, body language and interpreters, American Soldiers and Iraqi police practiced their communications and marksmanship skills on the rifle range. Patience was required by all as instructions from the tower were relayed through interpreters who in turn passed them on to the IPs.

Safety was the main emphasis throughout the day. Examples of unsafe acts were explained to the IPs. They were warned that involvement in any such acts would result in them being removed from the range. "The range was good, they gave us a lot of information that we didn't know before," said Ibrahim Hussein, who has been on the police force for two weeks since returning from training.

Police-procedures training was conducted for the group that wasn't firing by Sgt. Dan MacDonald, CAT A-2 Team, 3-8 Cav., a police captain with the Philadelphia Police Department. MacDonald spearheaded the concurrent police training, according to 1st Lt. Ralph Rafaelian, the team leader of the CAT A-2 Team, 3-8 Cav. Instruction included proper procedures for stopping a vehicle, arresting a person, cuffing a person, weapons retention and using a nightstick or baton. CA Soldiers demonstrated the most effective way to perform each task while maintaining officer safety at all times.

"We're hoping to continue this over the course of the time we're here, for the whole time we're here and expand on it a little bit," MacDonald said. "With practice they'll get better and better."

Before leaving the range, Coash gathered the IPs and commended them on their performance during the day. He also advised them that they had one last task before they were allowed to leave the range, policing up the brass.

Chaplain's Column: Leaving home is not easy

By
Chap. (Maj.) Blake Bowers
4th Brigade Chaplain

Leaving home has never been easy for most people. Remember the days when you muttered under your breath, 'I just can't wait to get out of here'. You were willing to go anywhere or any place just so it was out from underneath your parents or guardians. Even if it meant joining the army or heading off to college and then joining the army -- you couldn't wait to get away.

Now look at us. Single or married, most of us are saying under our breath 'I really do not want to get on that plane and head over to Iraq'. For some of you it makes for the 2nd or 3rd time. Yet out of a sense of duty, or by force of sheer will, by the grace of God or perhaps a combination of things with some anxious moments we will get on the plane and go.

How do we handle this! Leaving is so hard. Perhaps we can look back in the annals of faith and find help.

A teen named Joseph, the youngest in his family was forcefully separated from his mother and father after being sold into slavery. A mother placed her oldest son in a basket to travel down the Nile River because she didn't want him killed. King David had to flee his house and separate from his family while engaged in military battles with his enemies. Joseph and Mary fled their home in Nazareth going to Egypt under a death threat with the young child Jesus. Then, years later, after Jesus had built a close relationship with 12 men, he announced he had to leave them. In all these circumstances none of it was easy. Lives were changed forever.

From these examples we can find some help. What did they do that made a difference?

First, they prayed. Sounds too simple doesn't it? Too glib! Yet they did and when they did God heard their cries. He heard their fear of the unknown, the loneliness, the grief of loss, and the heart ache of not being with their loved ones. God met their basic needs, helped with the heartache and provided comfort in the loneliness.

Secondly, they picked themselves up by the boot straps and went on with their life. They settled into a routine, and avoided dwelling on what could have been and the past. They realized they had a life and did basic everyday things. They made what positive contributions they could. They lovingly raised their children and developed them.

Change was embraced. Jesus' council of 12 came from behind closed doors and went to proclaim his message of love, hope and forgiveness. Moses' mother watched with hope as her son led a nation out of poverty and into a new way of life for a new people. After a time of exile, Joseph and Mary were able to return home and build a family business in carpentry.

In some circumstances they forgave a wrong. Joseph forgave his brothers. David forgave those in his family who turned on him. He deeply mourned their loss at their death. Mary and Joseph, although in a dire situation, came to understand the greater purpose, of God's plan.

When we must leave our families, friends and those we love, each of us can do very specific things that will help us in the long run. Pray and pray often.

Move on with your life and make positive contributions and help your children even in the routine aspects. Accept change, work with it, learn from it and let it help you grow. Then forgive where forgiveness is needed. Forgiveness provides healing, gives room for hope and provides for growth and worthwhile change. Yes leaving is hard, but we can survive leaving.