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On the Cover
Empty desert near Camp Buehring.

Photo by Sgt. Matt Millham

518th disbands after one year

Built from the ground up in April last year, the Regulators leave it for the history books

Story by Spc. Brian Trapp

The 518th Gun Truck Company and its famed U.S. Regulators battle star rode for the last time last week, as the provisional unit was disbanded May 13, marked by a ceremony at Camp Navistar.

The Regulators were formed April 14, 2004, at Camp Udiari, commanded by their founder Capt. Rob Landry. He chose the numbers 5-18 to commemorate the May 18th birthday of his mother, who died in 1994. Since its inception, about 230 Soldiers have served with the company. The company has traveled more than a million miles, doing more than 350 escort missions, and it never lost a truck; they've towed them back, but they've never lost one.

Many of the Soldiers in the company as it disbanded came to the Regulators around Thanksgiving.

"They'll go back to their units, go back to being truck drivers or mechanics or whatever they were doing," said Sgt. 1st Class Ricky Rakes, first sergeant for the 518th. "To me walking away from here is kind of sad. We've had a good run. We did a good job, and I really liked the unit."

The soldiers who came to the 518th were hand picked for the job, chosen to go out on the roads to protect Soldiers in transportation companies like the ones they came from, said Sgt. 1st Class Louis Cass, first platoon sergeant with the 518th.

After a while, there were transportation companies requesting the Regulators to escort them. The 518th rode with a badge, like the sheriffs of the Wild West, painted on their trucks. The battle star emblazoned on the doors of all their vehicles was fabled to even stave off some attacks.

"Everybody knows who we are, both in the enemy world and in our own world," said Spc. Justin Bazan, who was with the 518th. Some of the Soldiers with the Regulators got the battle star tattooed on themselves during mid-tour leave.

Rakes wasn't as sure about the impact of the logo on the enemy. "Did it help? Were we attacked less because of it? Probably not," he said. "But it did raise morale, and the Soldiers liked having it on the truck."

The 518th Soldiers spent a lot of time riding behind the stars too. During the surge, the Soldiers were working with the motto "welcome back, don't unpack," said Sgt. Terrence Janicek, who was with the 518th.

The Soldiers lived out of their bags four or five days a week. They would come back



Photo courtesy of the 518th Gun Truck Company (Provisional)

A .50 Caliber machine gunner scopes out the road through night-vision goggles.

and get sent back out on the road the next morning, Rakes said. "They were run hard and put away wet."

Janicek said that once, between two missions he had during the surge, he had an 8-hour turnaround. "I just turned in my clothes to get washed, picked up some clean clothes, got four hours of sleep and headed back out," he said. "We were busy, but it helped make the time go faster."

The Soldiers knew why they were putting in the time for missions, because many of the Regulators were in truck driver positions before they switched over to the 518th. They were there protecting their fellow Soldiers.

"We didn't volunteer to make history; we did it to do our job and protect our own," Janicek said.

They protected their own with an aggressive "turn and fix fire" approach to convoy security where the Soldiers would either stop in the kill zone or go back into the kill zone and engage the enemy with everything they had. This stopped the threat from coming back a second time.

The tactic seemed to be effective for the Regulators when they engaged in a half-hour firefight known as the "Battle of Bismarck" by the Soldiers. The 518th, with the help of other units, killed 26 insurgents, wounded 7 and captured one. During the battle, one of the 518th Soldiers suffered an injury and is now recovering in the United States, said Spc. Brandon Dettman, who

was in the firefight.

"Convoy escort is not pretty. Asking Soldiers to turn and fix fire on the enemy, that's not pretty," said Capt. Thelonious McLean-Burrell, commander of the 518th who came off a convoy escort mission two weeks ago. "Nothing will compare to what this was for this rotation."

During Operation Iraqi Freedom 1 McLean-Burrell worked in Baghdad as a battle captain for the 7th Transportation Group. He was thankful that he came back and that his leadership chose him to lead the 518th. It gave him the chance to directly affect the things he saw as problems when he was here before, he said.

Many of the Regulators are going back to their units this week, and the battle stars will be painted over soon as the trucks are moved to other units. This doesn't entirely mark the end for some of the Soldiers. There are plans for about 50 518th Soldiers to go on to serve in a test platoon designed to review the need for an organic convoy escort platoon in transportation companies.

Despite the disbanding of the unit, the memory of the 518th will live on; the short-lived unit made history. And even though they've gone their separate ways, the Soldiers who had the honor of serving together in the 518th made lifelong friends.

Rakes said he plans to retire after redeploying home. "To end my career as the first sergeant of the 518th is a great way to go out."

48th BCT prepares for main body

Story by Spc. Almee Felix

On their way to replace the 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Brigade in Iraq, about 250 Soldiers of the 48th Brigade Combat Team's advance party arrived in Kuwait last week to meet the arrival of the unit's equipment at the Seaport of Debarkation.

The Georgia National Guard Soldiers waited for more than two hours as their vehicles were unloaded off a ship, and they took some of that time to talk about the lives they left behind.

Spc. Leroy Robinson, a transportation specialist with the 48th BCT, said this is his first deployment, and it will also be his last.

"Well, I've been counting down my [expiration of term of service] date for a couple of years now, and it's passed, and I'm here," said Robinson, who was extended for this deployment after his eight-year contract with the National Guard ran out in April.

In what his buddy refers to as "real life" Robinson is the warehouse manager for a pharmaceutical company in Decatur, Ga., where he lives with his wife and two daughters ages 13 and 15. "They hate that I'm here," Robinson said.

Spc. Anthony Simmons, who was at the SPOD waiting with Robinson and the rest of the advance party for the unit's vehicles to offload, seconded Robinson's feelings, but added, "Hey we all volunteered for this, you know?" Simmons said this isn't the life he wants for his children, and he will do anything he can to ensure his 12-year-old son grows up to be "a college educated man," he said.

"I'm looking forward to this deployment," Spc. Matthew Sanders said enthusiastically. After the laughter of his buddies subsided, Robinson asked Sanders how long he's been in the Guard. Sanders answered that he's been in three

years. And Robinson responded, "No wonder he's so 'hooah,' he's still wet behind the ears."

Aside from his newness, Sanders' excitement has much to do with the fact that in Iraq he'll be doing the same thing he enjoys doing as a civilian. In the civilian world, Sanders is a paramedic; in the Army he's a medic.

On the other hand, fellow advance party member Spc. Tim Whitehead, a corrections

"I've been with the same unit since I graduated high school 18 years, 3 months and 17 days ago."

- Spc. Clayton Jenkins



Photo by Sgt. Matt Millham

Sgt. John Little ground guides a Humvee off of a docked ship at the Seaport of Debarkation May 13. Little, a supply sergeant from Festus, Mo., was one of about 250 48th Brigade Combat team advance party members awaiting the unit's equipment at the SPOD.

officer back home, will drive trucks in Iraq. While not overflowing with the same enthusiasm Sanders is, Whitehead is proud of the responsibility he'll have delivering much-needed supplies all over Iraq to elements of the 48th. His biggest fear is "driving through a shootout or an [improvised explosive device], and turning to find my buddy dead on the passenger seat." The comment provoked Sanders to give Whitehead a hug, which provoked a chuckle among the group but was welcome and comfortable. Sanders' biggest fear is for a wounded Soldier to die while under his medical care, he said.

Spc. Clayton Jenkins, a supply specialist with the 48th, shared the fear of losing a fellow Soldier. But despite his concerns, Jenkins was glad to have longtime friend Whitehead there to keep him company. "I've been with the same unit since I graduated high school 18 years, 3 months and 17 days ago," Jenkins said, and ever since Whitehead joined the unit eight years ago, they've been friends.

"Having my buddy there is what's going to keep me going," said Whitehead, who expects to have some emotional times in Iraq since his wife will soon give birth to a set of twins, expected in July.

While there will be tough times, and the

Soldiers will undoubtedly miss their families, like Sanders who will miss his three-year-old son walking around the house saluting and saying, "I want to be a Soldier just like daddy," they will have each other, said Jenkins.

Aside from the already established friendships, Maj. John Davis, an information officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 48th BCT, attributes the tightness of the group to the fact that they trained together. For the National Guard, pre-deployment training means being away from family an extra four months. The 48th mobilized in December and trained together at Fort Stewart, Ga., and at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif.

When the 48th BCT's main body of more than 4,000 Soldiers arrives in Kuwait this week, the unit will undergo more training, Davis said. Soldiers will qualify with their weapons, go through convoy live-fire training, IED training, mortar training and Bradley Fighting Vehicle training, Davis said.

The well-rounded training will benefit members of the 48th as the unit will be spread out all over Iraq, said 1st Lt. Chris Kehl, with the 1st Battalion, 108th Armor Regiment, attached to the 48th BCT.

The preparations for the main body are going well thanks to the help of the 3rd Infantry Division liaisons and Coalition Forces Land Component Command, which will take care of up-arming the 48th BCT's vehicles, Davis said.

Fighting fire with prevention

Firefighters on camps across Kuwait take on the responsibility of stopping the fire before it starts

Story and photo by Spc. Curt Cashour

While most deployed servicemembers are accustomed to long hours, few can relate to Sgt. Joshua Budden's schedule. A typical shift for Budden and his Soldiers lasts 72 hours.

Budden leads a group of four firefighting Soldiers tasked with responding to fire and medical emergencies at Camp Arifjan's Zone 6. The four-man team is just a small contingent of the civilian and military firefighting forces protecting servicemembers in Kuwait.

Although the word "firefighter" may evoke images of soot-covered figures battling blazing infernos with hoses and axes, the focus of firefighting operations in Kuwait is prevention rather than suppression.

A normal day for Budden, a member of the 295th Ordnance Company, a Reserve unit from Hastings, Neb., that also has a four-man firefighting team at Camp Navistar, includes a range of activities such as vehicle maintenance, job-related training and tent inspections. What it doesn't normally include is putting out fires.

Every month, Budden and his crew inspect more than 400 tents in Zone 6 for fire hazards, running through as many as 65 tents per day. Similar routines play out at U.S. camps across Kuwait, with fire department staff and camp leaders partnering to ensure fire prevention receives the attention of every servicemember.

Budden and his Soldiers augment a team of Combat Support Associates contractors who handle the bulk of firefighting operations at Camp Arifjan, as well as the departments at Camps Victory and Virginia. CSA even employs a dedicated fire prevention officer, Ron Swartz, who works with units and leaders to ensure new construction projects are free of fire hazards, conduct fire hazard inspections and administer fire prevention education classes.

As director of fire and emergency services for KBR in Kuwait, Jody McKanna oversees fire department operations at the Seaport of Debarkation, Camp Spearhead, Camp Buehring and Udairi Army Air Field. He said the focus on prevention is one of the main reasons there are fewer fires on military installations than in civilian circles.

Even with all the attention on stopping fires before they start, camps in Kuwait have had some incidents. The SPOD/Spearhead department receives an

average of two calls a month, most of which involve vehicles that have caught fire due to electrical problems, McKanna said. Budden has helped put out five fires since he arrived in Kuwait last September – mostly small dumpster-based blazes, he said.

But perhaps the most bizarre of all fires have occurred at Camp Buehring. Four of the camp's portable toilet units have had brushes with fire since last December. Two have even burned to the ground, "Toilet seat and all," said Marshall Fiedler, chief of the Buehring and Udairi Army Air Field Fire Department.

Department officials investigated the blazes and determined that, in some cases, the fires were started by people burning incense in the units. Although he discourages burning anything inside the portable toilets, Fiedler said he understands the motive behind lighting the incense.

"The odor isn't exactly good when it's 130 degrees out," he said.

So if they only occasionally battle blazes, what do firefighters do all day? In addition to their fire suppression duties, crews are also on call to respond to servicemember and civilian accidents on and off post and help provide first aid services during medical emergencies, said Grover "Sonny" Partridge, assistant chief of operations for the fire departments at Camps Arifjan, Virginia and Victory.

With shifts that range from 24 to 72 hours, firefighting crews inevitably encounter times where they're simply waiting for the call. During lulls in the action, crew members work out, watch television and even sleep. But when they receive a call, teams must immediately spring into action.

"Yesterday, we had a guy in the shower when a call came through. You just jump in your clothes wet and go," Budden said.

The rest of the time, firefighting teams work on maintaining their skills.



Arifjan Fire Department Lt. Govardhan Garji, a native of Kathmandu, Nepal, dons his bunker gear May 18.

Kuwait camp Fire department phone numbers

The dispatch hub for fire and emergency services is located at Camp Arifjan. In case of an emergency the staff there will notify the proper authorities depending on the location of the emergency. To contact the hub to report an emergency, contact one of these numbers:

**From cellular phone:
389-9911**

From DSN line: 911



Lull? What Lull?

Roughly \$25 million will be spent on improvement projects at Camp Buehring this year, and most of the construction is happening now.

Story and photos by Sgt. Matt Millham

Since the massive rotation of forces to and from Iraq are referred to as The Surge, one would think that the time between surges, when deployment and redeployment operations grind nearly to a halt, could reasonably be called The Lull.

So why are those who run the deployment and redeployment camps so busy?

"The common impression is that during the summertime, the troops [at the redeployment camps] are not busy and are looking for things to do," said Capt. Kevin Fabrizio, the operations and intelligence officer for Camp Victory.

But for those who run the camps that bear the brunt of troop rotations, the lull is a time to reset for the next surge. That means the camps are coordinating millions of dollars in construction and reconstruction projects that are intended to make life easier during the next surge.

"Our surge, for my staff and the engineers on [Camp Buehring], actually started about the end of February, first part of

March, because our busy time isn't when the Soldiers are actually here," said Lt. Col. Phillip Lamborn, who is the commander of Camp Buehring and of the 317th Quartermaster Battalion, which runs the camp.

The changes in the U.S. footprint in Kuwait has something to do with the flurry of activity at Buehring, Victory and Camp Virginia, which together will serve the bulk of troops rotating to and from Iraq.

"With the closure of Doha and of New York, the bed down capacity at the remaining camps is increasing to accommodate the next troop rotation," said Fabrizio, whose unit, the 395th Quartermaster Battalion, runs Victory.

The projects already begun at Buehring will increase that camp's capacity by an estimated 33 percent, said Maj. Nick Tymchenko, who works at Buehring as an engineer with Field Engineering Team 24. At the same time, he said, the camp's useable land area is increasing by about 75 percent as berms are pushed farther into the desert.

Tent capacity is the biggest project Buehring is tackling before the next surge begins, said Tymchenko. During the last surge, Buehring's expected capacity was exceeded by as much as 20 percent, said Capt. Stu Wolfer, the operations officer for Buehring and a member of the 317th.

The closing of New York, a former deployment camp, and Doha, which also handled some rotating troops, means that the next surge will hit Buehring – as well as Virginia and Victory – even harder than the last, said Lamborn. To meet the increased burden on Buehring, 15 new tent pads with a total of 180 new fest tents capable of holding 60 or more troops each are going up.

Even the new tents, though, probably won't be enough to keep the camp from exceeding capacity again, Lamborn conceded.

At Virginia and Victory, where camp capacities will increase by roughly 45 percent each, new tent projects are also underway. Some of Virginia's new tent pads were completed in time to catch part of the last

surge, and an additional nine pads are being added. At Victory, the permanent units' living quarters are being changed out from the Bedouin fest tents to polyvinyl domed tents with 7-foot walls, said Fabrizio.

Meeting the needs of the additional troops requires much more than just tents, though. Each new tent pad at Buehring gets either two or three new shower trailers, and 750 new portable toilets have already arrived to meet the increase in surge capacity.

The swell of troops for the surge used to mean long lines at Buehring's dining facility. Though those lines won't be eliminated, a new DFAC will double the dining capacity of the camp. Victory and Virginia will also get an additional DFAC each.

For those who thought the lines at Buehring's DFAC were bad, troops waiting to get through the camp's single entry control point during the last surge found themselves waiting for upwards of two and a half hours. An additional ECP dedicated to military vehicles and convoys will reduce the amount of time spent at the gate and shield troops from long-term exposure in an unsecured area.

Not all the projects are directed at convenience – some will just make camp life more endurable. At both Victory and Buehring, the majority of generators are being consolidated into a single area to provide what the camps are calling prime power. The biggest benefit of this move is that it will reduce the amount of background noise on the camps, according to Wolfer.

At Victory, the move to prime power has

been preceded by the burying of power lines. At Buehring, the process has been a bit more complex as they have been busy constructing a network of concrete manholes and ducts for their underground utilities.

The permanence of the infrastructure there is to support Buehring's role as an enduring camp, which means it will be around at least until the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said Lamborn. Virginia is also an enduring camp, and the new tent floors there and at Buehring are made of concrete. At Victory, which is not an enduring camp, the tent floors are still made of wood.

In all, Buehring has about 50 projects underway at a cost of about \$25 million, said Tymchenko. Of those projects, 13 are for hard buildings. Some of those buildings will house activities that are moving out of Doha, such as the Direct Support Maintenance facility, which will support all the northern camps with major equipment repairs. Other buildings, like a new gym, and morale welfare and recreation center, will make life for everyone living at or transiting through Buehring more enjoyable.

The flurry of construction has created some minor headaches at the camps as it diverts roads, closes throughways and causes some troops to move from one side of camp to another. But without the lull, many of these improvements would be difficult if not outright impossible.

"If we had people here now, we'd have to be shifting them from one pad to the next," said Master Sgt. Chris Calvert, the noncom-

missioned officer in charge of operations at Virginia and a member of the 687th Quartermaster Battalion, which runs the camp. "We have to do that a little bit even now with the permanent party folks."

Still, even with all the construction, the slowdown in troop rotations has allowed those who run Virginia to take some much-needed personal time and given them a window to take rest and recuperation leave.

Calvert said during the surge he worked anywhere from 12 to 18 hours a day. Since troop rotations slowed, though, his hours are comparable to what he puts in during a regular workday at home in Bowling Green, Ky., where he is an art teacher.

The lull has another benefit that probably wasn't planned for: since the number of troops eating there is a small fraction of those served during the surge, the food seems to have gotten better. One of the few units rotating through Kuwait right now, the Georgia National Guard's 48th Brigade Combat Team, is enjoying the cuisine, unaware of the hourlong lines that met hungry troops during the last surge.

"It's funny – we had to go to a country halfway around the world to get decent chow," said Sgt. 1st Class Vincenzo Battaglia, the NCOIC of the Headquarters Company for the 108th Armor Regiment's battalion aid station.

Battaglia said he and his troops endured five months of eating terrible food at Fort Stewart, Ga., the National Training at Fort Irwin, Calif., and Fort Gordon, Ga. "In a roundabout way, we're happy to be here," he said.



Left: Generators will be consolidated to decrease noise around Camps Victory and Buehring. Right: Utility lines and concrete manholes will serve the lasting infrastructure at Buehring, which is an enduring camp. Below: Camp Virginia's new tent pads have concrete floors because it, too, is an enduring camp.



Caring for the insurgency

Story by Spc. Almee Felix

A detainee patient missing a leg and an arm was brought to the Abu Ghraib prison hospital for a checkup. He lost the limbs to a bombing gone bad.

The first thing Romanian doctor Master Sgt. Sargeo Chivu asked him after examining him was, "How will you raise your family now?" The patient spat at him. Chivu didn't reprimand him. He just paused, let the detainee cool down and continued caring for the wounded terrorist who eventually became more cooperative, at least cooperative enough to respond to Chivu's last attempt at getting personal. "What will you do when you get out of here?" Chivu asked. With a tone of sincere conviction Chivu described as eerie, the detainee answered, "I will find a car and kill all of them and me."

After seven months of providing health care to would-be suicide bombers and other insurgents in Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison hospital, alongside the American's 115th Field Hospital, Chivu and his 26-person medical team returned to Camp Virginia, two weeks ago on their way back to Romania.

While it might seem difficult to provide medical aid to insurgents – the same kind of insurgents who kidnapped three Romanian journalists in March – the Romanians maintained their professionalism. In fact, most of them found the question of how they felt about giving aid to terrorists irrelevant.

"My job is to be a doctor, not a judge," said Alina Cimpoca. Cimpoca was one of 16 civilians in the medical team.

Before deploying, the civilians worked for a military hospital in Romania. They volunteered for the mission at Abu Ghraib, and the Romanian army gave them rank according to their work experience. Cimpoca was designated a sergeant first class because of her civilian experience as a nurse in Romania.

One of the reasons Cimpoca volunteered is because her husband began attending the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy in El Paso, Texas. "I had to do something, you know, to prove [to] myself how strong I am," said Cimpoca. She also did it to improve



Photo by Marine Sgt. Luis R. Agostini

Army Spc. Raymond Doyscher, 29, a lab technician the 115th Field Hospital, reads along with Romanian Army Master Sgt. Sargeo Chivu, at a religious service, at the Abu Ghraib prison hospital in Iraq.

her English.

"Their English got better from when they were last here," said Sgt. 1st Class Kurt Hoehn, Camp Virginia's noncommissioned officer in charge of coalition forces. Hoehn, a member of the 678th Quartermaster Battalion, worked with the Romanian medical team when it was at Virginia six months ago, on its way to Iraq. When the team arrived at

Virginia, the Romanians requested to work with Hoehn specifically.

This type of friendliness and familiarity is probably what charmed the American medics from the 115th Field Hospital who held four farewell and awards ceremonies for the Romanians when the team was about to leave.

"They gave us ceremonies and awards, but for me, seeing the tears in their eyes when we were leaving ... that was the major award for me," said Romanian Lt. Col. Julian Tanase, commander of the medical team.

In a command update letter on the 115th's website, Capt. Steven Stovall, commander of the 115th's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, offered a personal thank you to Tanase for his support and hard work. He also wrote, "It will be difficult to say goodbye to them after serving with them as part of our team for the past seven months."

Tanase and his team felt the same way about the Americans. "It was just a fantastic

experience. I will never forget it or the friends I made," said Tanase. At first, he thought it would be hard to work with the Americans for the simple fact that the U.S. Army is so large. "But my old boss was right. He said the Americans would be easier to work with than the French, Spanish or Germans."

The bond between the Americans and the Romanians solidified during a heavy mortar attack on the prison in April, said Tanase. "I suddenly realized we were mutually fighting for the same noble cause," he said. The Romanians and the Americans stood side by side defending their hospital with a tangible feeling of fraternity in the air, said Tanase.

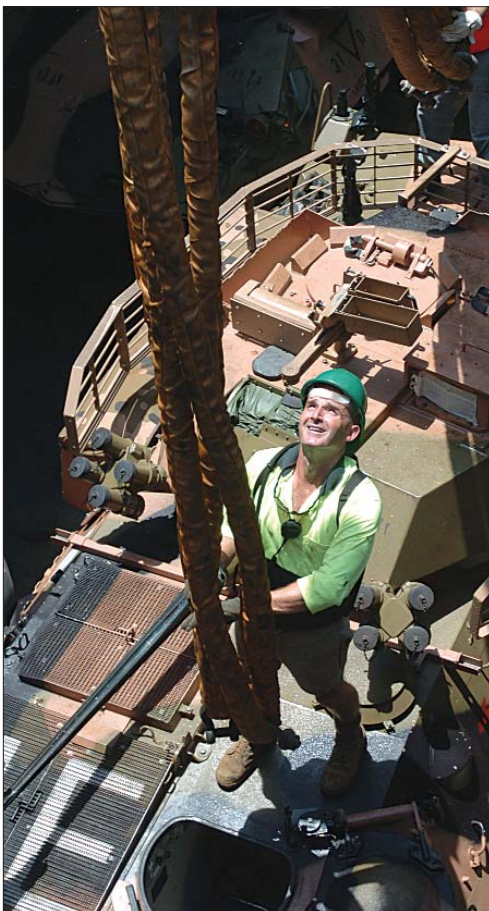
Cimpoca was on the Internet April 2, watching her family on a webcam celebrate her 9-year-old son's birthday, when suddenly she heard the explosions. The prison got mortared regularly – almost daily – Tanase said. But this was different; this was bigger. Approximately 40 to 60 insurgents were mortaring Abu Ghraib, and within fifteen minutes the medics and nurses got organized and began treating 69 victims – 44 Marines and 25 detainees – in two hours.

After this experience, a lot of the civilians in the team are staying in the Romanian army and walking away with great friends from the 115th. "It was like I had known the colleagues for years," said Cimpoca. "They treated us like VIPs; it was great to be appreciated ... with all those ceremonies, and [the appreciation] was sincere."

Unloading the HMAS Tobruk

Australian troops meet up with gear for Al Muthanna mission

Photos by Sgt. Matt Millham



Top left: Tugboats guide Her Majesty's Australian Ship Tobruk into the Seaport of Debarkation May 9.

Left: Royal Australian Navy personnel guide lifting cables down to an Australian Light Armored Vehicle in the hold of the Tobruk. The Tobruk is the first purpose-built major amphibious ship in the Royal Australian Navy with a heavy lift capability. It is capable of transporting 18 Leopard Main Battle Tanks in its Tank Deck and 40 ASLAVs on its Vehicle Deck.

Top: Though she has bow and stern loading and unloading capabilities, the SPOD lacks the facilities the Tobruk needs to pull off this task. Instead, she uses a giant onboard crane to offload 20 - Australian Light Armored Vehicles at the SPOD May 9. The crane can lift up to 70 tons of cargo at a time.

Above left: An Australian sailor's brassard shows off his country, ship and rank, as he helps to stabilize an ASLAV as it is low-

ered off the Tobruk.

Above right: During World War II the Australians, who were with Allied Forces, used Italian vehicles. The Italians, though, were members of the Axis. To keep American and other allied forces from getting confused and shooting at them, the Australians painted large, white kangaroos on the sides of their vehicles. The practice carried over to Vietnam with a red kangaroo and continues today in Iraq with the Australian's Al Muthanna Task Group, which operates in southern Iraq. The Australian name for their operations in Iraq is Operation Catalyst. The ASLAVs the Australians have brought with them are similar to the American Stryker, but have firepower similar to that of a Bradley Fighting Vehicle. Bar armor, similar to the cage armor used on the Stryker, has been fitted onto the ASLAVs, which also have chain guns similar to the Bushmaster chain gun on the Bradley.

Freedom isn't free, religion is

Regardless of faith, servicemembers with special religious needs can go to chaplains for assistance even Druids and Wiccans

Story by Spc. Curt Cashour

A Presbyterian minister and a Druid walk into a military command cell and ask permission to start a fire for a Pagan worship service. No, it isn't some kind of joke.

The situation actually occurred at Camp Arifjan in March, when Chaplain (Capt.) Timothy Fary, the Presbyterian, and Staff Sgt. Robert Levin, the Druid, stopped by the Zone 6 command cell to make arrangements for an April 30 worship service celebrating the Pagan holiday Beltane, hosted by Levin.

Levin and Fary, both members of the 844th Engineer Battalion, a Reserve unit from Knoxville, Tenn., had no trouble getting permission to hold the service or start the fire. The reason: the First Amendment of the Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to all U.S. citizens, including deployed servicemembers.

Regardless of their faiths, servicemembers with special religious needs can go to chaplains for assistance. In turn, the chaplains work with unit leaders to try to meet those needs.

From common persuasions such as Roman Catholicism to less prevalent faiths like Buddhism, the Army Chaplain Corps is authorized to include chaplains from nearly 250 religions. Although the corps presently comprises only about half that many faiths, it's the duty of every chaplain to ensure servicemembers have the right to participate in their religion of choice, said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Cook, deputy Coalition Forces Land Component Command chaplain.

"We are not here just for our own faith.

We are here to guarantee every Soldier's First Amendment right to the free exercise of religion," said Cook, who is a Southern Baptist.

"We've got an incredible variety of faith groups represented. One of the jobs I have is to make sure that each of those Soldiers, regardless of their tradition, gets the same kind of support," Fary said, adding that his battalion includes Soldiers of Wiccan, Native American and Islamic faiths.

Throughout their careers, Cook and Fary have worked with leaders of different units to meet the religious needs of Soldiers from various faiths.

When Cook was stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C., a Muslim Soldier was scheduled to participate in a field exercise during Ramadan, the holy month in which Muslims are required to fast during daylight hours. Cook worked with the Soldier's command to get him a job working evening shifts throughout the length of the exercise.

Another time in Hawaii, Cook met with a Soldier who was interested in hosting a Satanist worship service. Although the Soldier didn't follow through with his plans, Cook informed the Soldier of the steps necessary to lead a service.

"If he wants to worship Satan, that's something he's entitled to do, and it's something that I am required to support," Cook said.

The support chaplains provide comes in many forms and can include everything from securing special meals and worship materials to finding a suitable meeting place for a particular group.

In the case of Levin's Beltane circle, the Pagan word for worship service, Fary

assisted Levin with finding a meeting place and getting the required approval for the service's ceremonial fire, Fary said.

Although chaplains are required to assist servicemembers of all faiths with their worship needs, they cannot participate in or administer worship services for faiths that conflict with their own beliefs. Such is the case with Fary, who helped Levin prepare for his Beltane celebration, but merely supervised the event from the sidelines.

When an individual or group doesn't have access to a chaplain of their own faith, a servicemember of that persuasion may apply to become what's called a distinguished faith group leader.

The application process requires approval from the local chaplain and verification from the religious organization's headquarters that the person meets the qualifications to preside over worship services, Cook said.

Fary is currently working on getting Levin approved as a distinctive faith group leader. Judging from the reactions he's received from those around him, Levin is optimistic about his chances at gaining approval.

"I've got nothing but support from my battalion, all the way down to my company, right down to my squad," he said.

Once Levin attains group-leader status, he'll be able to lead future Pagan circles at Arifjan without Fary's supervision, provided he meets with Fary for regular counseling sessions.

Levin and Fary are currently holding Pagan gatherings on an ad hoc basis, and both say celebrations are planned for future Pagan holidays.

Safety Corner

Hotter weather increases your chances for a heat injury. Avoid heat injuries by using the acronym WATER.

Work and rest cycles

Acclimatization

Take in fluid

Exercise

Rest and recovery

W- Work and rest cycles. Know the heat category, and follow the guidelines for work and rest cycles.

A- Acclimatization. Full acclimatization takes about two weeks. Moderation is key to a successful transition.

T- Take in fluid; hydrate. Add electrolytes and salt during acclimatization. Water is the best. Avoid carbonated and caffeinated beverages.

E- Exercise and physical fitness. Physical fitness greatly improves the body's ability to handle heat stress and improves acclimatization. Moderate exercise in the heat will

allow the body to adjust to the climate.

R- Rest and recovery. Heat stress is cumulative, adequate rest and sleep are needed to allow the body to properly recover. Allow the body to recover from heat stress and make sure to follow a good diet to replenish electrolytes and calories.

If you have any questions or comments about this information, please refer them to the 377th Theater Support Command Safety Office's Maj. Phelps at DSN 430-6113 or 1st Lt. Surgi at 430-5414

Community

happenings for May 18 through May 25

Arifjan

Wednesday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
Texas Hold 'Em Poker, 7 p.m., Zone 1
Community Center
Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex
8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight
training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Thursday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1
Community Center
Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8
a.m. Circuit Weight Training 3 p.m., Zone 2 gym
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Friday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 gym
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Interval training, 5:30 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.
Zone 1 gym

Saturday

90s Music Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community
Center
Audie Murphy Club study sessions, 3 p.m.,
Building 508 Room 25B
Country Western Night, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 MWR
stage
Circuit weight training, 5:30 a.m., 8 a.m., 1 p.m.
and 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

Sunday

Spades Tournament, 7 p.m., Community Center
Salsa Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8
a.m., Circuit Weight Training, 1 p.m., Step
Aerobics, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Monday

Arifjan Boxing Team, 7:30 p.m., Zone 6 gym
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex
8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight
training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Tuesday

Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool
Cardio kickboxing, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and Flex, 8
a.m., Circuit Weight Training, 1 p.m., Step
Aerobics, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym

Wednesday

Country Western Night, 7 p.m., Zone 6 stage
Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Zone 1 Community Center
Legs, butts and guts, 5:30 a.m., Stretch and flex
8 a.m., Step Aerobics, 1 p.m., Circuit weight
training, 3 p.m., Zone 1 gym
Lap swimming, 5 to 7 a.m., pool

For more information call 430-1202

Buehring

Wednesday

Softball league game, 4 p.m., (Call for info)
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell
flagpole
Massage Therapy, 9:30 a.m., MWR Tent 4
Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

Thursday

Karaoke Night, 9 p.m., MWR bunker
Soccer league game, 4 p.m., (Call for info)

Volleyball league game, 4 p.m., (Call for info)
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell
flagpole

Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

Friday

Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell
flagpole

Saturday

Spa Day, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., MWR Tent 1
Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

Sunday

Walking Club (10 miles), 5:30 a.m., command
cell flagpole

Monday

Softball league game, 4 p.m., (Call for info)
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell
flagpole
Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

Tuesday

Soccer league game, 4 p.m., (Call for info)
Volleyball league game, 4 p.m., (Call for info)
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell
flagpole
Tae-Kwon-Do Class, 7 p.m., MWR Tent 1

Wednesday

Softball league game, 4 p.m., (Call for info)
Walking Club (5 miles), 5:30 a.m., command cell
flagpole
Massage Therapy, 9:30 a.m., MWR Tent 4
Aerobics, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m., MWR Tent 4

For more information call 828-1340

Kuwaiti Naval Base

Saturday

Barbecue, DFAC (Call for info)

For more information call 839-1063

Navistar

Wednesday

Pool Tournament Practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball
court
Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., Game tent

Thursday

Pool Tournament Practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Friday

MWR representative meeting, 1 p.m., MWR
office

Pool Tournament Practice, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent

Saturday

Pool tournament, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m., Rec. tent

Sunday

Pool tournament, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m., Rec. tent
6 p.m. - 10 p.m., MWR game tent

Monday

Horseshoe Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10
p.m., MWR game tent
Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent
Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball
court

Tuesday

Horseshoe Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10
p.m., MWR game tent
Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court
Smoking cessation classes, 10 a.m., Rec. tent
Education/Awareness/Prevention, 1 p.m., Rec.
tent
Karate Class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball court

Wednesday

Horseshoe Tournament practice, 8 a.m. - 10
p.m., MWR game tent
Self Defense class, 9 a.m. and 7 p.m., basketball
court
Aerobics Class, 6 p.m., MWR game tent
For more information call 844-1137

Spearhead/SPOD

Thursday

Hip Hop Dance Night, 9 p.m., South DFAC
Bingo Night, 7 p.m., Tent T-32 and 8 p.m., South
DFAC

Friday

Hip Hop Night, 8 p.m., MWR area
Movie Night, 8 p.m., Outdoor Movie Theater

Saturday

Movie Night, 8 p.m., Outdoor Movie Theater

Monday

Horseshoes, 7 p.m., MWR area

For more information call 825-1302

Victory

Tuesday

Movie Night, 8 p.m. (Call for info)

For more information call 823-1033

Virginia

For more information call 832-1045

Doha/Arifjan Shuttle Schedule

Departs Doha Stop 1*	Arrives Doha Stop 2*	Departs Doha Stop 2*	Arrives Arifjan	Departs Arifjan	Arrives Doha
			0545		
0700	0715	0830	0845	1000	
1015	1025	1040	1200	1300	1430
1445	1450	1505	1615	1630	1745
1900	1910	1925	2045		

* Stop 1 is behind the Building 6 PAX Tent
Stop 2 is between Buildings 28 and 31

Are you holding an event you'd like to see listed in the Desert Voice?

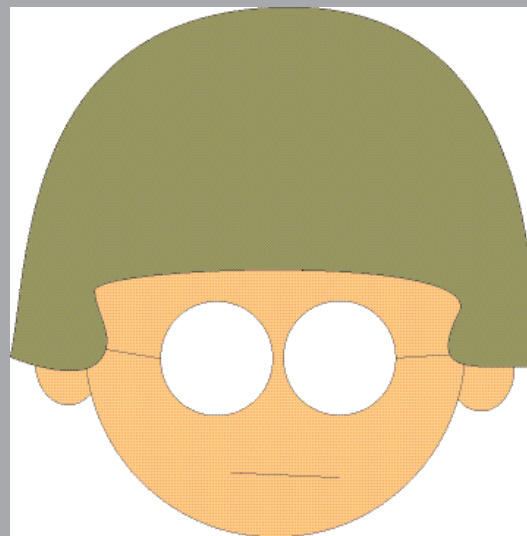
Send your event listings to the Desert Voice editor at the e-mail address listed on the back page of this issue.

The Pains and Hopes of Deployment

By 1st Lt. Anthony Osborne
Task Force Green Mountain
Vermont Army National Guard

She had a smile on her face
But I could not see it
She wore her favorite dress
But I could not touch it
She cooked her favorite meal
But I could not taste it
She said a prayer for me
But I could not hear it
Lastly, she cried because she was alone
But I could not even reach out to hold her
Because I was not there

I talked to her on the phone
And it made me smile
She told me about her favorite memory of us together
And it was the highlight of my day
She laughed over something silly I said
And it made me feel like she wasn't so far away
We talked about our future, our dreams and hopes
And the distance between us seemed not so great
We shared "I love you's" over the phone
And I almost felt like I was holding her hand
We shared a nightly prayer to God together
And He heard us and made life bearable
We were apart for a year
And learned what it was like to live without the sun
At last we came back together again
And shared a love and reunion others will never know
We learned that time and space may temporarily distance
But within the heart those who know true love can never be separated
My wife I love you with a love that can never die
May God bless you till we meet again



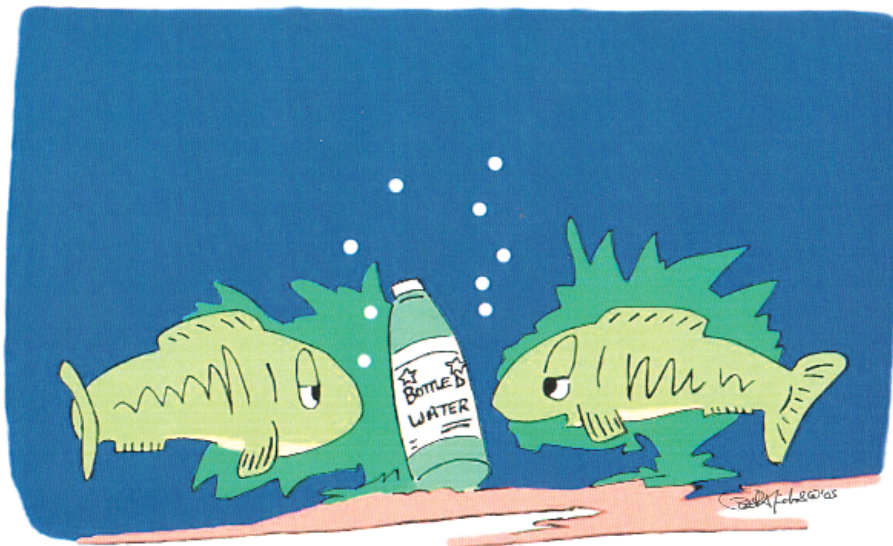
Send your
submissions to:

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Find us online at
www.dvidshub.net

NATURE CALLS



"I don't think I'll ever understand."