

# DV

## Desert Voice Magazine

Serving U.S. and Coalition Forces in Kuwait

September 27, 2006



## Truckin' with the 594th Transportation Company Part I of II

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SOLDIER SURVIVES 3 SEPARATE IED ATTACKS

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Sgt. Keith Kaminski changes a tire  
on his M915A3 truck before going  
on a convoy mission into Iraq.

Photo by Sgt. Patrick N. Moes

## From the Top

### The NCO Corps: Officers, NCOs should be united in their leadership

Our men and women in uniform today, whether Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine or Coast Guard, comprise the best fighting force ever assembled. They serve honorable missions in places across our AOR.

As leaders, both officer and NCO, we need to constantly strive to achieve a seamless approach in our decision making processes.

The key to that seamless approach to decision making is the officer-NCO team.

Each depends on and compliments the other for support. Essentially, if one fails, then the other may fail ... and then the troops may fail and the mission may fail.

For the most part, each NCO and officer operates across the leadership spectrum.

Our NCOs must be able to fill in for their officer leadership at any given time, just as we expect our officers to know how their Soldiers perform their jobs.

This leadership solution is just as appropriate for combat missions as it is for our daily missions.

At a time when our forces are deployed around the globe, officers and NCOs cannot afford to be guessing what it takes to accomplish the mission.

This is in keeping with the essence of officer/NCO relationship in the NCO creed, "I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders."

Officers must train and mentor their NCOs and vice versa.



**Third Army Commanding General  
Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb**

We learn as we teach, and this is never more evident than in the officer/NCO relationship where effective, continuous communication is essential to the continued physical, mental and emotional development of the NCO and the officer.

The role of officers would not be complete without strong NCO leadership.

The role of NCOs would not be complete without strong officer leadership. Each must be able to work together to affect the whole. It is indeed at the core of leading troops.

Don't guess each others intent. Spend time together, not only at work but outside the organization as well. Share a meal at the dining facility, make a trip to the PX or run a few miles together.

If the only time you see each other is at work, you aren't going to see or understand the total picture.

You should know how each other thinks and would react in every given situation in order to become a more effective team.

I especially challenge our young officers to take advantage of the experience and wisdom of "your sergeant."

Just as my first platoon sergeant, Dick Sikes, trained me as a young 2nd Lieutenant, Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Ashe continues that officer education today.

This deployment is a unique opportunity to become the best leader, the best team you can – use it.

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**DV**  
Desert Voice  
Magazine



# Leaving no one behind

## Soldiers, Sailors train together to support theater mortuary affairs

**Staff Sgt. James E. Martin**  
377th TSC Public Affairs Office

**O**ne unavoidable consequence of fighting a war is casualties.

As Americans back home mourn the loss of courageous troops in this theater, servicemembers here must step beyond the grief and continue with the mission. For those serving in mortuary affairs, that mission is taking care of fellow Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines killed in action.

“The Army made its promise that it would bring every Soldier back from the battlefield. I take pride in that,” said Staff Sgt. Shellie Calhoun, a mortuary affairs specialist.

Calhoun is part of the 111th Quartermaster Company from Fort Lee, Va., charged with providing theater level mortuary affairs support to U.S. Army Central under the 377th Theater Support Command.

Soldiers in the 111th Quartermaster Co. recently trained Sailors who will be taking on the mortuary affairs mission as Camp Le Monier in Djibouti. Operated by the U.S. Navy, Camp Le Monier is an important point for the movement of remains from Africa to the United States.

During the training at the Theater Mortuary Evacuation Point at Mubarak Air Base, the Sailors learned about the mortuary affairs mission with instruction on proper etiquette for the transfer of remains from one location to another and how to catalogue a deceased servicemembers’s personal effects to ensure there is a complete chain of custody from the time items are received until they are transferred back in the United States.

“I want to cross train as many servicemembers who are involved in the mortuary affairs arena as possible,” said Lt. Col. Robert Hood, theater mortuary affairs officer, 377th TSC.

“With the dignity, reverence and respect we treat our fallen servicemembers, I want to make sure the people attending to them have the best training as possible,” he said.

This was the first time Sailors were taught mortuary affairs skills by Soldiers in Kuwait.

“The Army is charged with handling mortuary affairs and I like the fact all the services are engaged,” said Calhoun.

All the Sailors who took part in the training were volunteers.

“I’ve worked with a lot of Marines and it seems more and more like we are working with the Army and the Air Force, everybody is working together more these days,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Todd G. Lease.

The training did not give the Sailors the Army military occupational specialty of mortuary affairs specialist.

“Our main mission was to train them on all aspects of mortuary affairs. Just in case a death occurs they will know how

to react to it,” Calhoun said. “They can pass on the knowledge we gave them to other Sailors.”

The Sailors were able to practice the instruction they received when they attended to a simulated casualty.

“It always helps to do the hands on thing ... so when an occasion comes up, and I hope it doesn’t, you’ve seen it and know what to do,” Lease said. “I think it is good that we are all working together. It is going to make things easier in the future for all of us to get the overall job done knowing we can all work together as one.”



*Photo by Spc. Sarah B. Smith*

Petty Officer 2nd Class Todd Lease and Petty Officer 1st Class Douglas Sanders observe Staff Sgt. Shellie Calhoun as he documents the personal affects of a simulated casualty at the Theater Mortuary Evacuation Point at Mubarak Air Base, Kuwait City International Airport, during mortuary affairs training recently.

# Camp Arifjan:

## An expandable camp to meet mission requirements

**Maj. Gina Thisius**

ASG-KU Adjutant

During the last three years, Area Support Group-Kuwait has made tremendous strides in upgrading the Camp Arifjan quality of life, including new buildings for work and living, roads, motor pools and MWR facilities.

Many individuals who previously served at Camp Arifjan can remember Soldiers in Truckville, Arlington and Camden Yards living in open warehouses or tents scattered all over this camp.

Even with all the improvements, many personnel still wonder, many wonder why are there differences

between the various areas on the camp. ASG-KU officials recently addressed this issue.

“To understand why there are differences in the camp zones, one needs to know the history of how and why Camp Arifjan was constructed,” Lt. Col. Clinton

Pendergast, the Chief Of Staff, ASG-KU, said.

In September 1991 the Secretary of Defense signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Kuwaiti Ministry of Defense that provides for the Defense of Kuwait. The DCA lays out military to military coordination, area support and Installation Management, Rotational Training Task Force, Bilateral Training and the maintenance of a pre-positioned set of military equipment.

Prior to Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, almost all money spent in Kuwait by U.S. forces was provided by the Government of Kuwait, Pendergast said. The Kuwait Government did this with direct monetary contribution provided to the U.S. and something called Assistance in Kind. The monetary contribution is provided in

order to support the defense of Kuwait. Assistance In Kind is a capability that the Kuwait Government provides or contracts for, such services as, laundry, dining facility support and base maintenance support.

“With the start of OEF and OIF, the money spent in Kuwait, in support of the troops assigned here became more complicated,” said Pendergast.

Kuwait’s financial support is still linked to the DCA agreement for U.S. personnel. According to Pendergast, all other costs, for all other U.S. military personnel (OIF, OEF, ect.), are paid for with U.S. appropriated dollars.

For troops serving in Kuwait, the DCA may determine the location of living quarters, Pendergast said.

or removable structures.

“This is why Zone VI looks very different from the other Zones,” said Pendergast.

If Soldiers are on permanent change of station orders here in support of the defense of Kuwait, they will likely live in Zone I. If Soldiers are here on temporary change of station orders in support of OEF or OIF, they will likely be housed in Zone VI.

“This is because the KMOD expects we will use the facilities they built for our use as they were intended,” Pendergast said. “Hence the perceived differences in housing standards.”

Pendergast acknowledges that many ask why we can’t just build all new barracks for everyone.

“It is a complicated answer, but basically it boils down to all construction on Camp Arifjan has to go through an arduous approval process,” said Capt. Donald Hedrick, ASG-KU Engineer.

“Final approval for any building project rests with the KMOD as part of the DCA.

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“To understand why there are differences in the camp zones, one needs to know the history of how and why Camp Arifjan was constructed.”

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**- Lt. Col. Clinton Pendergast  
ASG-KU Chief of Staff**

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A large portion of the Camp was built by the Kuwaitis, for U.S. use, in support of the DCA. With the start of OEF and OIF, U.S. forces were allowed by KMOD to construct temporary/removable facilities on Arifjan to support the liberation of Iraq, said Pendergast.

The difference between the permanent construction and temporary construction is easily seen when you look at the different “zones” on Arifjan. Zones I-V facilities are permanent facilities built by KMOD to support the Ready Brigade in the defense of Kuwait. Zones VI and VII house the temporary/removable structures built to support the forces that are here for OIF. Therefore, those facilities that support DCA will normally be a more permanent type of construction while facilities that are temporary in nature, like those designated or support to OEF and OIF, will be done with tents

As guests in the sovereign nation of Kuwait and as good stewards of the resources we are given and team players with our host nation, we must follow the process which requires the U.S. to use certain means of construction depending on the mission of the facility,” Pendergast said.

“The leadership is constantly looking at ways to improve the quality of facilities while adhering to the constraints we work under,” said Pendergast.

“This is immediately evident if you look at the new style tents, pre-constructed buildings, re-locatable buildings, Kirby style PX and gym facilities in Zone VI. All of these structures are temporary and removable if needed, but greatly increase quality of life and increase mission readiness by having safer, more reliable facilities for personnel supporting OIF,” Pendergast said.

# Airman presented Purple Heart

## 70th Medium Truck Detachment truck commander honored for bravery

### Staff Sgt. Ryan Hansen

386th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

On July 21, Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Stewart, a truck commander with the 70th Medium Truck Detachment, and his wheelman, Airman 1st Class Joshua Collins, were on the job cruising down the highway in the lead truck on a convoy mission about five miles north of Balad Air Base, Iraq.

This night was starting out the way most 'normal' nights do in the AOR for members of the 70th MTD.

They, along with the 424th MTD, belong to the 586th Expeditionary Mission Support Group, who support USARCENT in theater.

These two Air Force detachments conduct medium truck convoys for the Army on a daily basis, transporting equipment into the Iraqi theater of operations.

However, as the two transporters led the convoy north towards Mosul, Stewart spotted a possible IED in the center of the road.

It was at that moment the night became anything but 'normal' for members of the 70th MTD, when in the blink of an eye the IED exploded.

"I was just reaching over to (call it in) when it hit," Stewart said. "My initial thought was that we were going to be able to make it past it without it going off and we'd be able to get the rest of the convoy stopped, but everything happened so quickly."

As the smoke cleared from the blast Stewart quickly gathered his thoughts. He yelled at Collins, who is known as "Cowboy" to his friends, to see if he was injured.

"Cowboy just kept saying, ouch, ouch, ouch," Stewart said.

Stewart, not realizing he was hurt as well, moved over to check on Collins and was met by the convoy commander, Tech. Sgt. Esteban Ochoa and Airman 1st Class Clyde Rankins.

Collins had taken quite a hit in the leg and the team had to work quickly to



**"This is what these guys face everyday on the road. They never know what they'll encounter. It's a dangerous business."**

**— Air Force 1st Lt. Joe Barber,  
70th MTD Commander**

stabilize him by performing combat life support.

"Everyone did their job," Ochoa said. "I've never been more proud in my Air Force career than how everyone reacted that day."

With Collins being transported from the scene by helicopter to the Air Force Theater Hospital at Balad, the 70th MTD worked to get their convoy out of harms way.

They quickly got the situation under con-

trol and then worked their way towards Balad as well.

There they could find out how their comrade was doing, get Stewart checked out and make the necessary repairs to get the convoy back on the road.

Luckily for Stewart, his injuries were not as bad as his friend's, Collins.

"The IED came right through and clipped my ear," he said. "But I told them I didn't need any more holes in my head, so they just put some strips on there and sent me away."

For his actions that night Stewart was presented a purple heart.

"We're here today to honor Staff Sgt. Stewart for his bravery," said the, Col. Paul Curlett, the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing commander, during the presentation.

"Just take a look at this truck. This is what you all face on a daily basis and you truly deserve our thanks and praise," he said.

After Curlett presented Stewart with the Purple Heart, all of his comrades from the 70th and 424th MTD lined up to give him a hug and shake his hand.

"This is what these guys face everyday on the road," said 1st Lt. Joe Barber, 70th MTD commander. "They never know what they'll encounter. It's a dangerous business."

"Staff Sgt. Stewart is the epitome of an Air Force staff sergeant and he really represents what these transporters are all about," said Chief Master Sgt.

Tony Killion, 70th MTD chief. "They love doing this and can't wait to get back out there."

Looking back at the event, Stewart said he was thankful for the training they were given and said he was proud of all the Airmen in his detachment.

"I really have to thank Airman Rankins for reacting as quickly as he did," he said. "We have a really tight team here and I love working with all of them."



# On the road again

## 7 days with 594th Transportation

Story and Photos by

**Sgt. Patrick N. Moes**

*Desert Voice*, Editor

Part I of II

*Editor's note: All call signs and supply routes have been renamed for security purposes.*

**A**s many Americans woke to their morning coffee, newspapers, preparing kids for school and daily routines, Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division's "Deuce Wild" 2nd Platoon, 594th Transportation Company stationed at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, gathered for a 3 p.m. intelligence briefing on their upcoming mission. The temperature for the day exceeded 120 degrees with humidity so thick you could swim in it, but the Soldiers were inside an air-conditioned tent filled with fold-out chairs, maps hanging on the sides of the tent and models of Improvised Explosive Devices scattered along tables.

The Deuce Wild Soldiers sat slouched in their chairs talking and joking with each other until the briefing began. They sat up and listened a little more carefully when the slides showed how many attacks had occurred on their route within the past month. Convoy Commander, Staff Sgt.

Daniel Akins, briefed his Soldiers on the reactions he expected in the event of an attack like an intricate game of chess as he demonstrated them on a 4-foot by 8-foot board with miniature models. Akins concluded his brief by telling his Soldiers with a stern voice to be ready to draw their weapons at 3 a.m. the following morning and dismissed them to take care of personal business.

**Sept. 7**

With the humidity still lingering from the previous day, the "Professionals," the unit motto of the 594th, began their morning preparing for the mission around 2 a.m. like their previous two tours in theater at Camp Navistar and Camp Taji, respectively. They collected ice for their coolers, performed Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services on the M915A3 Freightliner Tractor Trailers and received their M16A2 rifles with ammunition. Once everything was ready to go and their bags were secured within the vehicles, they lined up awaiting the orders to leave.

The Soldiers conducted radio checks with each other while on line waiting to leave. "Tango wun two, this is lima tree niner radio check over. Lima charlie out." The scratchy sounds were repeated down the line of trucks as each Soldier ensured they could communicate with the next.

Shortly after 3 a.m. the order came to roll out. The convoy began its departure to its ultimate destination of Baghdad International Airport, commonly referred to as BIAP, as ground guides walked in front of the trucks to the edge of the motor pool. But before the convoy would make its way to BIAP, they had to go to pick up additional trucks and drivers from IAP Worldwide Services, a civilian contractor.

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**"I wanted to do my part to make sure they come home OK."**

- Spc. Jermain Jackson

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The convoy, now complete with the IAP contractors, was ready to depart toward Camp Buehring, Kuwait, to pick up their load, helping U.S. Army Central support its mission of sustaining warfighters in Iraq. The load for this mission would be equipment from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

Arriving at Camp Buehring, the Soldiers talked to the Movement Control Team to find out where to go to receive their loads. The MCT, with a liaison from 10th Mountain Division, directed some of the trucks to pick up HMMWVs and others to receive containers. Nearly six hours later, the convoy was loaded and ready to move. After MCT went through each truck verifying the paperwork was complete, the Deuce Wild Soldiers were cleared for movement to their next stop.

The convoy trudged down Alternate Supply Route Viking trying to avoid the potholes, cracks and parts of the road that had simply disappeared as they departed Camp Buehring. A few hours later, the convoy arrived at Camp Navistar, Kuwait.

Refueling the convoy was the first priority for the 594th Soldiers. Entering the loading area, clouds of dust rose into the hot air as truck after truck maneuvered into the fuel point. This continuation of dust and truck movement lasted for more than 30 minutes. After the refueling was completed,



Spc. Tara Gillespie cleans the windshield on her M915A3 Freightliner truck shortly before crossing the Iraqi border on a convoy mission Sept. 8.



# ion Company

the Soldiers staged their convoy once again for movement into Iraq. Working for more than 15 hours already, the Soldiers' final task of the day was to change the tire on Sgt. Keith Kaminski's truck before they could rest. He had noticed a slow leak while at a brief stop on ASR Viking. The Soldiers bonded together to expedite the process and less than 20 minutes later, Kaminski's tire was replaced.

Kaminski, a Sidney, Ohio, native, entered the active Army ranks early this year after several years in the Ohio National Guard. He said he was unhappy with civilian life and was "spinning his gears for nothing" after returning to Ohio after his first deployment to the theater for Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Wanting to provide a better life for his wife of 10 years and two daughters, Kaminski added "I was raised military; it's what I'm used to."

The Soldiers walked to their tents, exhausted as they dropped their bags on the nearest green cot they could find and headed out to the Morale, Welfare and Readiness facilities to pass their time and help them stay awake and adjust to working the night shift.

Keeping in touch with friends and family through the MWR facilities helps the 594th Soldiers cope with the sacrifices they make by serving in the Army. Spc. Jermain Jackson, a cook with the 594th, said time away from his family is the ultimate sacrifice he makes while serving here. "There's nothing like the sound of kids running around when



Spc. Grant Howell uses his leg to tighten the last bit of chain tying down his load while preparing for his convoy mission at Baghdad International Airport on the fifth anniversary of 9/11.

you wake up," Jackson said. "It gives you place and purpose."

Jackson wanted to deploy with the unit because he said it's all about taking care of Soldiers. "I wanted to do my part to make sure they come home OK."

### Sept. 8

The Soldiers began preparing for their mission by freshening up, eating at the dining facility and celebrating one of their birthdays. Spc. Sophia Gore, a truck driver with the 594th, had her 21st birthday. Gore, a Houston, Texas, native is on her second tour to this theater. She joked about getting to go to Iraq for her birthday as she prepared to leave.

After all the preparations had been completed, the Soldiers made their way back to the convoy two hours before the scheduled departure. While Jackson was busy getting supplies for the mission such as ice and water, Sgt. Austin Berry, a truck driver with the 594th, took care of the logistics at the

billeting office. Once everything had been cleared at Camp Navistar, the Soldiers began the nightly ritual of receiving their convoy briefings by Akins.

With eagerness in their eyes, the Soldiers appeared to be excited about being on the road again. Kaminski said it was the freedom of the road which he looked forward to on these missions. "We get to go to different places and see different things. You're not confined and you don't feel like you're cooped up."

The freedom of the road came when the Soldiers heard the words to roll out shortly before midnight. Crossing the border into Iraq, chatter continued to come across the radio informing the Soldiers of the latest intelligence and alerting them of potential risks along Main Supply Route Gopher.

Everything was going according to the original plan until a mechanical failure occurred on one of the Soldier's trucks.



# Unbreakable Soldier sur

**Sgt. Thomas L. Day**  
*Desert Voice Staff Writer*

As morning newspapers list a daily roll call of Soldiers who did not survive an Improvised Explosive Device attack, one U.S. Army Central Soldier has survived three.

Sgt. Raymond Boze is on his second tour in Kuwait, having deployed in August of 2001 for what he thought would be a six-month tour manning the Iraqi border. "I didn't get off on time that day," Boze jested, referring to Sept. 11, 2001. The next four months of his tour in Kuwait were spent supporting the initial incursion into Afghanistan.

He redeployed home to Fort Sill, Okla., in February of 2002 to his wife, Jennifer, and his son, Colten. A year later, Jennifer gave birth to his daughter, Kinsey. Boze

would be back in Kuwait before Kinsey's third birthday.

As Boze remembers it, "they gave me a good seven months before they started hitting me." He arrived in Kuwait in October of last year, avoiding any trouble until this past April, when his Heavy Equipment Transporter truck was hit with an roadside bomb placed alongside a highway leading to Tikrit, Iraq.

"It was in a pot hole in middle of the road," Boze recalled. "I sat up in my seat because I saw something that didn't look right. Before I knew it, bright flash, loud bang."

Boze and his driver avoided injury in the attack; the tractor his HET truck was carrying, however, was instantly destroyed.

"The first one wasn't anything compared to the other two," Boze's platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Robert



**Spc. Raymond Boze checks the connections of an air line hose on a Heavy Equipment Transporter truck recently at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. Boze has served 11 months of a 12-month deployment where he survived three separate IED attacks. Boze is a member of Battery B, 1/77 Field Artillery from Fort Sill Okla.**



# Survives 3 roadside bombs

Coates, recalled. Boze's last two convoys into Iraq, both in early August, would go through different routes but encounter the same insurgent mode of attack.

Along a median, hidden among charred debris from a previous IED attack, was the second roadside bomb that would detonate underneath Boze. Two weeks later, only hours after crossing the Iraq-Kuwait border, Boze's vehicle was hit with an IED once again.

Of the third attack, Boze was taken completely by surprise: "I never saw anything, just dirt on my windshield."

All three times, Boze was able to escape his burning vehicle and avoid injury. Every other Soldier involved in the three attacks came away from the attacks with, at most, only minor cuts and bruises.

The Wagoner, Okla., native credits his up-armored vehicles for saving his life, though none of the three HET trucks saw another convoy after the attacks.

Coates, and the rest of his Bravo Company know all about the advantages of an uparmored vehicle. According to Coates, of the nearly 100 HET trucks the company deployed into Kuwait in 2005, six have been destroyed in IED attacks (including the three involving Boze). Only one Soldier has been medically redeployed from the battle-tested company, leaving the theater with shrapnel in his leg.



*Photos by Sgt. Patrick N. Moes*

**Sgt. Raymond Boze, a Multiple Launch Rocket System Automated Tactical Data Systems Specialist opens the door of a Heavy Equipment Transporter truck recently in his motor pool at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.**

**Camp Arifjan**

# Opportunity knocks

## ASG-KU, Kuwaiti Soldiers explore joint training capabilities

Story and Photo By

**Capt. Martin Cheman**

ASG-KU Public Affairs Officer

As part of an initiative to explore shared training opportunities, Soldiers from ASG-Kuwait and a team of 14 training officers from the Kuwait Land Forces, Air Force, Navy and Amiri Guard (special guard force) embarked on a joint information exchange Aug. 28 at coalition camps in Kuwait.

The exchange came after Brig. Gen. Mohamed Mubarek, the Director of Military Cooperation at the Kuwait Ministry of Defense, inquired last June about possible joint ventures. Mubarek has since retired, but his idea has come to fruition.

Joint events such as this one serve as a way of furthering relations between the U.S. and Kuwait militaries, said Director of Host Nation

Affairs Maj. Rodney Rose.

Taking advantage of opportunities to learn from each other reaffirms our commitment to work closely with our Kuwaiti counterparts and forge a lasting partnership, said Area Support Group - Kuwait Commander Col. John Alexander.

The team discussed joint capabilities with U.S. Army Central training officers and observed coalition forces undergo a lane simulating a vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Device on training lanes between Forward Operating Bases Dagger and Yankee.

Participants were not limited to briefings and discussions. Team members were able to test their skills behind the wheel for the Army Safe Driver Training Program at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, which targets U.S. military drivers but is also available to coalition forces. Drivers tested their mettle during emergency

braking maneuvers, slalom driving, emergency backing, off-road shoulder recovery and the ever popular "Skid Monster" - a modified Chevy Trailblazer which simulates driving on ice.

When asked what he learned from the exercise that he could take back to his servicemembers, team member Lt. Col. Sabah responded "Safety is first - it's important to know how to react in different situations and how vehicles behave on different roads and in emergencies."

Area Support Group - Kuwait Safety Officer John Hutchison expanded on that by saying "The Army Safe Driver Training Program builds confidence and enables drivers to react quickly and properly evade danger in combat operations when seconds count. Vehicles used in the theater include (nontactical) vehicles and tactical vehicles, to all of which this training applies."



William Kennedy, a contractor with MPRI, briefs the J3 team on the capabilities of the vehicle-borne IED lane as a unit prepares to enter it for training.



## Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates cultural contributions to America's future

**Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin B. Stuart**  
1st Medical Brigade Command Sergeant Major

By Public Law 100-402, the U.S. Congress sets aside the period from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 each year for our nation to celebrate National Hispanic heritage Month. The theme for this year's observance is "Hispanic Americans: Our Rich Culture Contributing to America's Future." Whether through food, music, arts and sciences or business and trade, the cultural exchange is rapidly occurring and Hispanic Americans through their strength are interwoven in the fabric of our country.

I hope people of our nationalities and ethnicities take some time this year to observe National Hispanic Heritage Month. You see, the term "Hispanic" was created to describe the different people of Spanish speaking heritage.

Hispanics have made an indelible mark on the history and culture of the United States. They have made significant contributions to the development of America for many years and play an increasingly important role as we continue to grow as a nation. They are leaders from art to agriculture, in the classrooms of our educational institutes, in business, in the halls of our Congress, in the medical and science fields, economics, entertainment, sports, military and every other endeavor you can imagine. One can clearly see the Hispanic American's rich culture and how they continue to contribute to America's future.

Generations of Hispanics have served and sacrificed at all levels in the United States Armed Forces. This proud tradition is reflected by scores of veterans, in which some are Medal of Honor recipients and others have achieved general officer and senior enlisted ranks. The vision for the future will probably see even more Hispanics to take up arms and follow in those heroic footsteps with the projection of a larger population.

Fiestas and cultural activities are staged coast-to-coast to demonstrate diverse Hispanic Americans representing more than two dozen countries of origin, as well as U.S. territories and states, and live virtually everywhere in the country. Hispanic culture is so prevalent that according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2005), Hispanics constitute 14 percent of the nation's total population, making people of the Hispanic origin the nation's largest race or ethnicity.

This past decade has brought unprecedented opportunities for Hispanics, due in part to their ballooning population, growing representation in local and federal politics, and an emergence in all sectors of American enterprise. With this growth comes a renewed responsibility for Hispanic leadership to strengthen not only their culture's future, but America's future as well.



## Hometown Hero

**Petty Officer 3rd Class Corntassel**  
Naval Mobile Construction Battalion  
Tool Room Operator, Camp Arifjan

Corntassel helps his fellow service-members by providing them with the tools they need to complete their jobs.

**Talks about what he misses about his hometown, Sacramento, Cali.**

**"I miss the California state fair and boating with my grandfather on Folsom Lake."**

## Just One Question...

**Why are you proud to serve in the military?**



**"I saw (our) opportunities threatened on 9/11. I saw our country hurt and pull together strong."**

Seaman Daniel Hernandez  
Construction Electrician  
Naval Mobile Battalion 21  
New York



**"Because I am protecting not only my country, but my friends, family and my way of life."**

Private 1st Class Darryl Bell  
Transportation Specialist  
217th Transportation Company  
Denham Springs, La.



**"It gives you a sense of pride and accomplishment to know you're doing something that will affect history."**

Staff Sgt. Donnell Arnold  
Combat Convoy Transporter  
424 Medium Truck Detachment  
Columbia, Md.



**"I have been serving 28 years now. Two more to go to reach 30."**

Sgt. 1st Class Ruben D. Rocha  
Senior Maintenance Supervisor  
335th Theater Signal Command  
San Antonio, Texas



**"It's a family tradition. My father was a chief torpedo man. I was raised in the Navy."**

Senior Chief Edward Whited  
Operations Senior Chief  
Romeo Customs Battalion  
San Diego, Calif.

# **The History of Taps**

**Taps began as a revision to the signal for Extinguish Lights (Lights Out) at the end of the day. Up until the Civil War, the infantry call for Extinguish Lights was the one set down in Silas Casey's (1801-1882) Tactics, which had been borrowed from the French. The music for Taps was adapted by Union General Daniel Butterfield for his brigade (Third Brigade, First Division, Fifth Army Corps and Army of the Potomac) in July, 1862.**

**General Butterfield was not pleased with the call for Extinguish Lights feeling that the call was too formal to signal the days end and with the help of the brigade bugler, Oliver Will Cox Norton, wrote Taps to honor his men while in camp at Harrison's Landing, Virginia, following the Seven Day's battle. These battles took place during the Peninsular Campaign of 1862. The call sounded that night in July, 1862, soon spread to other units of the Union Army and was even used by the Confederates. Taps was made an official bugle call after the war.**

**“Day is done, gone the sun,  
from the lake, from the hills, from the sky.  
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.”**