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# 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team uncases their colors

*Article and pictures by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito*
*29th IBCT Public Affairs*

**CAMP ARIFJAN (KU) –** The 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team uncased their colors in a ceremony held Saturday, Dec. 27th, 2008, in the Zone 6 TAC building on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, to recognize ownership of their mission in Southwest Asia.

The brigade – composed of approximately 1,200 Hawaii National Guard Soldiers and 500 Army Reserve Soldiers with 100-442nd Infantry – deployed to Kuwait in October to conduct convoy security operations within the Iraq Theater of Operation, as well as provide security forces to Area Support Group Kuwait.

Attended at the ceremony were representatives from all subordinate units: Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th IBCT; 1-299th Cavalry; 100-422nd Infantry; 1-487th Field Artillery; 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion; and 29th Brigade Support Battalion.

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*Above: The 29th IBCT Commander, Col. Bruce Oliveira (left) and Command Sgt. Maj., Edgardo Coronado (right), uncasing the brigade colors on Saturday, Dec. 27th, 2008 at the Zone 6 TAC building on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.*

*Top Left: The brigade colors post and Soldiers present arms for the playing of the National Anthem.*

# Happy New Year

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# COL. OLIVEIRA'S NOTES

29TH LAVA BRIGADE COMMANDER

**Colonel Bruce Oliveira**

**BDE Commander**

To the Warriors, Families, and friends of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team,

If you could see your Lava Brigade in action as I do everyday, you would be so proud. Our Soldiers continue to do a fantastic job of securing convoys throughout Iraq and sustaining Operation Iraqi Freedom from Kuwait. You should be proud to know that our Soldiers are representing the best values of our Army, and truly changing the hearts of many who come in personal contact with our Aloha Spirit.

Many of our Soldiers have taken the opportunity during the last 30 days to re-enlist in the Hawaii Army National Guard and Army Reserves. For a Soldier who has now spent time in a combat zone, to re-enlist speaks volumes about the pride that they feel in their unit and about their dedication to the country and to their fellow Soldiers.

These re-enlistments benefit the Lava Brigade. Every veteran that we retain is another tremendous asset to the future of our unit and the Hawaii Army National Guard. Throughout our train up for deployment, I watched as veterans of this organization stepped up to the plate and ensured that everyone in their unit received the proper instruction and training. Their experience was the decisive factor in the success of our training and continues to contribute to the success of our mission.

This month we officially recognized the newest combat veterans in the Lava Brigade. While a soldier technically qualifies to wear a "Combat Patch" on his right sleeve as soon as he enters the combat zone, units traditionally delay this rite of passage until they have been in country for 30 -60 days. Now a new generation of Lava warriors has earned the right to join the ranks of "Combat Veterans".

Of course many Soldiers focus on the additional recognition and respect engendered by this symbol of wartime service, but I ask you to consider the additional responsibility that you now carry. "The Greatest Generation" is a term used to describe those US citizens who fought in World War II, as well as those who kept the home front intact during that time. They truly saved the world and returned home to build the highest standard of living that the world has ever known. You will forever more be a part of the generation that fought the War on Terror, and your actions will reflect on everyone else who has earned the right to wear that patch. The public will be watching. I call upon you, our newest veterans, to consider the example of "The Greatest Generation" as you ponder the responsibility that you now bear as a member of that elite corps of Combat Veterans.

As I write this, our Soldiers continue to serve courageously and selflessly throughout Iraq and Kuwait. We could not serve and represent our country without the tireless and loving support of our Families. Thank you so much for all that you're doing to support freedom in Iraq and to help defend freedom everywhere.

As always, I want to thank all of those back home who continue to support the Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. I thank all of you who are working to make our Family Readiness Groups a success. Taking care of our Families makes it possible for our Soldiers to focus on doing their mission and returning home safe!

Continue to pray for safety for our Soldiers and wisdom for their leaders!

May God bless you with a wonderful new year.

# COMMAND SGT. MAJ. CORONADO'S COMMENTS

29TH LAVA BRIGADE SERGEANT MAJOR

## CSM Edgardo Coronado
## BDE CSM

The year has come to a close and the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team continues to move forward. It has surely been a year of continued operations for the brigade. Each of you should be proud of the accomplishments the brigade has completed and the very integral part you performed. Without each committed Soldier the mission would not be possible. I am honored to serve amongst you.

On the last day of the year I had an opportunity to visit Camp Virginia, where I observed the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 100-442nd IN, performing an APFT.

Executed in the cold of the morning with a motivated first sergeant and commander running beside their Soldiers – there was no better way to bring in the new year than to display physical readiness. The company finished the year the Infantry way! Hats off to the Command team that helped motivate Soldiers participating in this event.

Be assured that the rest of the brigade had no easier of a day. They continued to perform flawlessly around camps and the open road. Surely they thought about family members and the countless things they missed at home on this very special day. From Saipan, Tinian, Aguiguan and Ohio, we all collectively missed home.

By now, many of you have written countless letters and e-mails back home and probably made mistakes when writing the calendar year – I know that I have. Sometimes the days in the year blend together and next thing you know it's 2009, but you're still thinking 2008. This may take awhile to kick in but when it does it may be another reminder that you're away from your loved ones another year.

On this note, I ask you to begin the year with your mind toward safety in all that you do. So many of us have become accustomed to our surroundings, and from time to time we get overly confident and less cautious – hence the reason for close calls or accidents in theater. So please, let us all be cognizant in 2009.

Traditionally, most of us like to make some sort of resolution that we hope to achieve in the coming year. "I will loose 20 pounds, get married, finish a master's degree, have a baby" ... All these statements we have heard before. Each and every resolution is worthy of your time. However, it will remain just a resolution if you only talk about it and make no action toward completing it. Each of us must take the second step by developing our daily routine and make that resolution part of it. So go ahead! talk to your direct supervisor and let them know of your intent to become a better Soldier. Whether you are focused in education or taking that long trip to the Himalayas after deployment – go ahead and take the step.

While you proceed, know that this year has been declared by the Army as the Year of the NCO. Each one of us will look at this statement in various perspectives and make our opinions. You might ask – What does this statement mean to me? What am I supposed to do? What have I completed? Do I need to exercise more?

You need to make this statement a daily living creed.

To me it is simple. Each of us must decide to separate ourselves from what I call the E-mentality and begin to absorb the responsibility attitude.

As we develop young Soldiers into NCO's, we must understand that they will be faced with an excess of world experiences and will need all the training they can get. So go ahead and make the "NCO Journal" one of your favorites in your personal computer; pursue the S1 Net for the latest developments in the administration arena and take the challenge. Subscribe to a professional journal of your choice and read it! Yes, this is the Year of the NCO and no one will be more professional than I! I wish you well in these endeavors.

I'd like to close my comments this month with a sincere thanks to Lt. Gen. Joseph Peterson and Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua Savusa for their personal visits to our Soldiers. They exemplify true traits of leadership that keep this Army strong – were fortunate to have them visit us here in theater.

Lastly, my hats off to Command Sgt. Majs. Erik Frey and Clyde Mitchell, for their direct involvement with Savusa's visit. Surely you will enjoy Sgt. Carpenito's article of his visit. I know that I did.

As always our thanks to our families and friends – your support keeps us Army Strong!

Gracias and Mahalo

# 29th IBCT uncases colors

Continued from page 1:

Special guests included the USARCENT Commander, Lt. Gen. James Lovelace; Commander of the 311th Sustainment Command, Brig. Gen. William Frink, Jr., and Hawaii's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Robert Lee, and Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Chief Master Sgt., Denise Jelinski-Hall –who traveled from Hawaii to visit with the brigade Soldiers and pass out gifts during the holiday season.

"The Soldiers of the brigade are terrific, they don't need very much time to catch on to their mission," said Lee at the ceremony. "What I'm most impressed about is how quickly the brigade Soldiers have modified what they have to do to make the mission accomplishment even better – and that's typical of the 29th Brigade Soldiers."

This is the brigade's second tour to Southwest Asia – the first was in support of OIF III 2004-2006.

# Hawaii Soldier's holiday brightened by Operation Gift Lift

*Maj. Gen. Lee , Command Chief Master Sgt. Jelinski Hall, and Soldiers of Company A, Brigade Support Battalion, hold up goodies and holiday greeting cards from home.*

*Article and Photos by: Maj. Pam Ellison*
*29th IBCT Public Affairs*

Hawaii Soldiers serving in Kuwait as part of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team received local goodies collected by Operation Gift Lift just in time for the holidays.

The gifts were personally delivered by Hawaii National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Robert Lee, and Senior Enlisted Leader, Command Chief Master Sgt. Denise Jelinski-Hall, who spent two days traveling throughout bases in Kuwait in late December.

"It was absolutely an honor to come here," said Jelinski-Hall. "We were able to bring lots of tastes of Hawaii back with us out of the generosity of all the people from Hawaii."

In the weeks leading up to the holidays, Operation Gift Lift received hundreds of donations from state employees and Hawaii residents at large, including $2,000 in AT&T phone cards, 2,000 cards made by kindergarten through intermediate school students statewide, and generous donations of food, CDs, DVDs and other items.

There were still more goodies to be delivered, as Lee and Jelinski-Hall could not bring it all with them; later that week a C-17 delivered the remaining goodies and cards that didn't make the first trip, with 12 more duffle bags filled with goodies for all the brigade units.

"I think [the Soldiers] always appreciate a touch from home, not only the local goodies, but the cards and well wishes from the kids," said Lee who promised to make it his first priority upon returning home to tell the Families and friends how much the Soldiers appreciated their Aloha.

*Maj. Gen. Lee handing Capt. Haz Anguay, Company D Commander of 100-442nd IN, boxes of goodies for his Soldiers.*

*Maj. Gen. Lee and Chief Master Sgt. Jelinski Hall speak to the Soldiers of 1-299th CAV before handing out goodies.*

# Maj. Gen. Lee and Chief Master Sgt. Jelenski-Hall visit 29th IBCT

# Savusa visits 100-442nd IN Soldiers from his home town in Samoa

*Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua Savusa, a native of American Samoa, poses for pictures with Soldiers from 100-442nd Infantry Battalion , also from American Samoa, at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, on Sunday, Dec. 28th, 2008.*

**CAMP VIRGINIA (KU) —** In a time of war, when the closest thing to home is a familiar face, nothing helps the day go by a little quicker, a little easier . You can see the truth in this as the eyes of many Soldiers looking upon his face began to sparkle. The Soldiers feel a certain pride for him – one that can be compared to the pride people of Hawaii hold in knowing their new president-elect Barack Obama originates from the same island.

It was the face of Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua Savusa, International Security Assistance Force, U.S. Forces – Afghanistan, arriving in Camp Virginia, Kuwait, to pay tribute to Soldiers of the 100-442nd Infantry, Dec. 28, 2008.

"It's an honor to visit troops from a unit with a very historical lineage. A unit that's known for heroism and their commitment to the fight, and today we still have Soldiers that are in that unit that's a part of that lineage," Savusa said.

The U.S. Armed Forces recognizes the 100-442nd IN as the most highly decorated military unit in history for their honorable service in World War II – earning more than 18,000 individual decorations for bravery, 9,500 Purple Hearts, seven Presidential Distinguished Unit Citations and 21 Medals of Honor.

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*Savusa greets the Soldiers of 100-442nd IN with warm hugs and hand shakes during his visit to Camp Virginia, Kuwait, on Dec. 27, 2008.*

# A visit with 100-442nd IN

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Once comprised of Nisei, 2nd generation Japanese American Soldiers and volunteers, the battalion presently consist a majority of American Samoans.

"I'm very proud to be here as well to visit with 100-442nd, where the Soldiers are from my home island in America Samoa," Savusa said. "Just to see them today makes the heart warm with what they're doing."

In the battalion there are many Soldiers carrying the same family name – cousins and brothers alike. Savusa's visit was an opportunity to reunite with some of his own relatives, who are platoon sergeants and first sergeants within the battalion.

With so many American Samoans proudly joining the battalion ranks, it would appear to be a tradition; however, it's mostly an opportunity for them to serve, said Savusa – one that he did not have when the island lacked a reserve unit.

"It's an island that loves to serve others. So, if there's any tradition, their tradition is in serving," Savusa said.

Since arriving in Kuwait in October 2008, the Soldiers are constantly busy conducting sustainment missions throughout Kuwait, as well as some into Iraq. They say they put their lives in God's hands everyday in order to protect the individuals they escort. Needless to say, a spiritual visit to church is one they deserve – and one Savusa chose to join.

Resembling the feeling you get as a kid when you came home to the smell of chocolate chip cookies baking in the oven – the religious service was comforting and familiar. But it wasn't the cookies that brought back memories of home – it was hymns – hymns of hope and gratitude.

You could hear the voices of warriors so strong, harmonizing to produce sounds as beautiful as a pink sunset, escaping through cracks in the church windows.

Unable to control his desire, Savusa shut his eyes and began singing with the Soldiers to "Faafetai I Le Atua" (Praise God) and "Ua So'ona Olioli" (Glory, Glory, Hallaluyah) – two of many traditional Samoan hymns.

"It just make the heart feel good to listen to the hymns and hear it in your own native language," Savusa said. "It was a blessing for me just to be there and listen to all of them."

Proceeding the church services and lunch in the DEFAC, the Soldiers got together in the last moments of his visit to hear Savusa speak of his life's experiences in their native Samoan language.

"Basically I was encouraging them," Savusa said. "I let them know my humble beginnings in the Army and how I got where I'm at today and the fact that they can also achieve those things … if they are committed and patient ."

Coming from a place with close to nothing, in a time when opportunity was scarce, it was the Army that began opening the doors to new life for Savusa – a life now serving as an example for other American Samoans and Soldiers alike.

*Article and Photos by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito*
*29th IBCT Public Affairs*

*Command Sgt. Maj. Iuniasolua Savusa sings along to Samoan hymns with Soldiers of the 100-442nd Infantry Battalion at the Camp Virginia chapel in Kuwait, Sunday, Dec. 28th, 2008.*

# 29th IBCT newly deployed Soldiers now wear their combat patch

*Left: Nine-first time deployed Soldiers of HHC, 29th IBCT receive their combat patches. From left to right: Sgt. Kimo Wong, Spc. Chelsea Stansbury, Lt. Col. Lionel Payes, Spc. Cherise Okikawa, Staff Sgt. David Kainoa, Capt. Edgar Garcia, Chief Warrant Officer Ronald Faull, Spc. Johnny Choi and Master Sgt. Kandee Almond.*

Very few achievements are able to be showcased on your sleeve like that of the combat patch – or shoulder-sleeve insignia (SSI) – recognizing "former wartime service." Now the majority of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team wears their combat patch, including nine newly deployed Soldiers of the brigade's Headquarter and Headquarters Company.

*Command Sgt. Maj. Coronado pats Sgt. Kimo Wong on the shoulder after he receives his combat patch.*

Soldiers of HHC gathered together in the brigade Tactical Operations Center on Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, Dec. 14, 2008 – the 372nd birthday of the Army National Guard – to recognize these Soldiers for their participation in OIF 08-10.

Soldiers who received the patch were: Lt. Col. Lionel Payes, Capt. Edgar Garcia, Chief Warrant Officer Ronald Faull, Master Sgt. Kandee Almond, Staff Sgt. David Kainoa, Sgt. Kimo Wong, and Spcs. Cherise Okikawa, Chelsea Stansbury and Johnny Choi.

The 29th IBCT Commander, Col. Bruce Oliveira, spoke about the brigade's history prior to rewarding the Soldiers with their combat patch.

"Our roots go way back," he said, referring to when the brigade was called to serve in support of Vietnam, World War II and OIF III. "That's why with all that history – all that combat history and the roots that we have – that I am very proud to wear our patch."

The 29th IBCT patch is unique and can be distinguished from all other patches by the blue colored-barbed cross within a white arched shield. Both blue and white colors are symbolic to Infantry – with the cross suggesting Hawaii's nickname "Crossroads of the Pacific" and the barbed ends representing the protective mission of the brigade. Wavy blue and red bars below the cross symbolize the ocean and represent the location of Hawaii – the red, blue and white colors also appear on the Hawaiian flag. The colors of the SSI can only be seen when using a dress uniform and are subdued – to foliage green, light-brown, and black – for use with the Army Combat Uniform.

Origins of the patch date back to the 81st Infantry Division – said to have been the first U.S. Army unit authorized to wear it in October 1918. The unit wore an olive felt patch with the silhouette of a wildcat – their nickname – adopted from Wildcat Creek, a stream that flows through Fort Jackson. When they sailed for France during World War I, Soldiers of other units challenged their patch. But Gen. John J. Pershing authorized its use, and by World War II most army units had established their own SSI. However, the use of such a patch was not mandatory until July 1, 1970, during the Vietnam War.

*Col. Oliveira, 29th IBCT Commander, speaks to HHC Soldiers on the significance of the brigade patch before presenting it to them.*

# 1-299th CAV conducts uncasing and patch ceremony

*1-299th CAV Commander, Lt. Col. Rudolph Ligsay, and Command Sgt. Maj. Craig Ynigues, uncasing the squadron colors.*

*Article and Pictures By: Capt. Wayne Anno*
*1-299th CAV Public Affairs*

On Dec. 20, 2008 1-299th Cavalry of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team officially arrived in the Kuwait Area of Operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Even though the unit had "boots on ground" for over a month, the uncasing of the unit's colors marked the official rite of passage from a unit in training to a unit ready to conduct combat operations in Iraq.

This ceremony was also an opportunity to present the right shoulder Sleeve Insignia, or Combat Patch, to newly deployed Soldiers.

The Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Ligsay Rudolph, gave a short speech on the history of the 29th IBCT patch and his honor in wearing it on his right shoulder — a tradition dating back to World War II.

Guest included Col. Bruce Oliveira, the 29th IBCT Commander; Col. Kenneth Hara, 29th IBCT Deputy Commander; Command Sgt. Maj. Edgardo Coronado, 29th IBCT Command Sergeant Major and representatives of the battalions under command of the brigade.

*1-299th CAV Soldiers receiving combat patches from their company commanders and first sergeants following the uncasing of the squadron colors.*

*Pictures by: Maj. Pam Ellison and Sgt. Crystal Carpenito*

# A/BSB Soldiers are honored by receiving combat patch

*Company Commander places the 29th IBCT combat patch on the right shoulders of Sgt. Henry James (left), First Sgt. Joshua Amano (middle), and Spc. Daisey Dulatre (right).*

*Article and Pictures By: Staff Sgt. Lorajan Basuel,*
*29th BSB Public Affairs Representative*

**CAMP ARIFJAN (KU) —** Platoons stood in formation after accomplishing another cold 8 hour shift. Their eyes were heavy with exhaustion. Several Soldiers were called in front of the formation; Soldiers whose eyes were still virgins to the desert sands.

On Dec. 27, 2008, Soldiers of Company Alpha, 29th Brigade Support Battalion, received their honor; an honor that is appreciated and revered. On that day, these newly deployed individuals were given their combat patch and joined an extensive list of the many Soldiers who have made these countless sacrifices before.

"I am proud to receive a combat patch. I now wear a patch like everyone else that deployed," said 2nd Lt. Alexander Ladao.

This is a first deployment for Ladao. After being in the Army for 18 years, he decided to join the Officer Corps and define himself as a leader. He stood proud in front of his fellow veterans.

Company Commander, Capt. Doreen Uehara, fastened the brigade patch to Ladao's right shoulder; a salute was rendered; and applause was heard.

This is a first deployment for some Soldiers. For others that returned as veterans, it has been equally as difficult to be separated from loved ones as it was the first time.

# 29th BSTB honors newly deployed Soldiers with Combat Patch

*By: 1st Lt. Allen Tudela, 29th BSTB Public Affairs Representative*

**CAMP VIRGINIA (KU) —** On Jan. 1, 2008 the 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, conducted a ceremony in front of the Mayor Cell on Camp Virginia, in order to welcome the battalion's newest members to wear the brigade combat patch.

Lt. Col. Moses Kaoiwi Jr., and Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Umali, proudly placed the combat patch on 17 BSTB Soldiers after they received authorization to wear it due to their current deployment in Kuwait.

Welcoming the new Soldiers, amongst returning veterans, was a splendid way to bring in the new year of 2009.

Those presented with the 29th IBCT patch were: Capt. Ralph Hasegawa, 2nd Lt. Erica Salvador, Chaplain Ronaldo Pascua, Sgt. Tiffany Medina, Spcs. Joyce Guieb, Leticia Timothy, Cwislyn Walter, Taira Siemsen, Sara Hoffman, Esther Cho, Geoffrey Gabayan, Linsey Lafitaga, Jeffrey Palomares, Daniel Ramos, Terina Blue, Lillian Park, and Michael Yamaguchi.

# 1-487th FA medics train to save lives in MASCAL exercise

*By: Spc. Courtney Chang, 1-487th FA Public Affairs Representative*

*"Wounded Soldiers" from the 1-487th FA, are being pulled from the wreckage by combat medics after their bus crashes.*

**CAMP PATRIOT (KU) —** On Dec. 27, 2008 Soldiers of the 1- 487th Field Artillery Battalion participated in a mass casualty (MASCAL) exercise at Camp Patriot. This was the first time for some Soldiers to train with personnel from the Navy, Fire Department, EMS and Security Forces. Twelve Soldiers from the battalion participated as casualties, while the other seven were combat medics from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

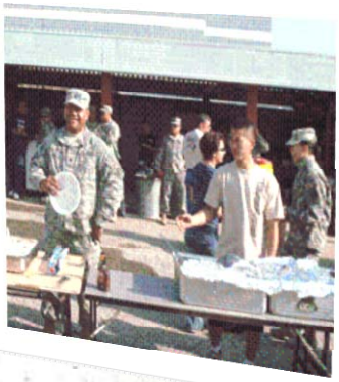
Each Soldier playing a casualty was given a Navy Desert Combat Uniform (DCU), a pouch of fake blood – connected to a pump could be squeezed to make blood appear to ooze from a wound, and a piece of paper that indicated what kind of "injury" the Soldier suffered from. The Soldiers got into character once they dressed in the torn and bloody DCU's by rehearsing their injuries.

The scenario was that Soldiers received injuries when two buses transporting them collided. The objective of the exercise was to practice response time for first responders and train to standard on communication procedures, so when real accidents are reported, the combined services on Camp Patriot are trained and ready to save lives.

*Spc. Malia Siangco, from HHB 1-487th FA, plays a casualty with an amputated leg during the exercise. Photos by: Terry King, 1-*

Once medics arrived on scene they broke through the bus doors and pulled the "wounded" from the wreckage. They immediately performed medical aid, applied tourniquets to those with severe open wounds and amputations, bandaged deep cuts and skin lacerations, administered intravenous drips to replenish lost electrolytes and comforted the Soldiers by assuring them they would be okay.

# 1-487th FA holiday cookout



*By: Spc. Courtney Chang, 1-487th FA Public Affairs Representative*

**CAMP PATRIOT (KU)—**On Dec. 28, 2008 the 1-487th Field Artillery Battalion welcomed friends and service members of neighborhood units to celebrate the battalion's first Christmas cookout in "Hiki No" land, Camp Patriot, Kuwait.

The event began at 1 p.m. and lasted nearly three hours. Entertainment included live music, trivia games, food, drinks, prizes and gifts. Master of ceremonies, Staff Sgt. Lonenoa Faoa, of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, featured local Hawaiian music and mainland classics like "Under the Board Walk."

Organizations, such as Operation Beanies for Service Members, donated more than 100 knitted beanie caps for the troops; and Operation Christmas Basket, donated more than 100 goodie bags filled with genuine leather wallets and games that the Soldiers greatly appreciated.

Along with gifts, the Soldiers enjoyed local style dishes, as many went back for seconds just to get a taste of home again.

*Left: Spc. Denise Chincio, receives an iPod for Christmas. Middle: 1-487th FA Soldiers performing live music. Right: Sgt. Vaatofu Fai and Spc. Matthew Migita serving food .*

# Lt. Gen. Peterson re-enlists HHC Soldiers on visit

*Article and Photos by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito*
*29th IBT Public Affairs*

*Sgts. Balbin (back right) and Ibera (front right) raise their hands and repeat the enlistment oath after Lt. Gen. Peterson (right).*

**CAMP ARIFJAN (KU)** – On Jan. 11, 2009 Lt. Gen. Joseph Peterson, the Deputy Commander of Forces Command, visited with fellow Soldiers of Hawaii and took part in the re-enlistments of Sgts. Jerome Balbin and Norison Ibera of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

"Lt. Gen. Peterson being one of the highest Army Officers of Hawaiian decent is a pretty big deal to me. I think it's one experience I can never forget," Balbin said about his first re-enlistment in the Army National Guard.

It's the life of a Hawaii Guardsmen that continually appeals to both Soldiers, even though money had a lot to do with their decisions to continue serving.

Ohana, a native Hawaiian word describing Family, is a cherished part of their culture that emphasizes the close bonds formed even among non-blood related islanders .

"Ohana plays a big part in the Hawaii Guard, and the past two years I built good relationships with the Soldiers I work with," Ibera said.

Peterson echoed his sentiments and told the Soldiers how proud he was of them for honorably representing the islands, as well as the Ohana.

"A lot of people don't understand the significance of Hawaii … and the Hawaii team. I think you guys do."

Prior to the re-enlistments, Peterson reflected back on two historic dates: June 14, 1775, the birth date of the Army, and July 4, 1776, the birth date of the Nation.

It took a strong Army to form the basis of the nation, Peterson explained.

"Soldiers are the core of our Army and without [them] we don't have an Army, he said. "That's why I consider this a personal privilege to have the opportunity to re-enlist great Soldiers who have the potential to do great things."

He expressed his hopes that they would continue to serve in the Army and make Hawaii proud in possible future positions as Deputy Commanding General of FORCOM or the Sergeant Major of the Army.

*(Right to left): FORCOM Deputy Commander Lt. Gen. Joseph Peterson, Sgt. Norison Ibera, 29th IBCT Commander Col. Bruce Oliveira, Sgt. Jerome Balbin and Command Sgt. Maj. Coronado, posing for a picture after the re-enlistment ceremony.*

# 29th BSTB wins DFAC award

*By: 2nd Lt. Allen Tudela*
*29th BSTB Public Affairs*

**CAMP BUEHRING (KU)—**"Let's Go Eat!" That is a common phrase used here by Soldiers of the 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion when it is time to head to our award winning Dining Facility (DFAC) on Camp Virginia, which serves over 21,000 meals per week.

On Dec. 25, 2008 the USARCENT Commander, Lt. Gen. James Lovelace, and Command Sgt. Maj., John Fourhman, came to Camp Virginia to proclaim the facility winner of the Lucky Diner Competition award. He presented the award, along with his coin, to Sgt. 1st Class Randall Inafuku and his staff: Sgts. Joel Burdett and Christopher Nakama, Spcs. Ernest Fejes and David Ross, and Terina Blue. The citation on the award read:

"For outstanding Food Service Support to the war fighter. This facility was selected based on the appearance of the dining room and serving line, the initiative, and creativity of the DFAC staff and service offered to the customer."

*(Top right) Sgt. 1st Class Inafuku with Lt. Gen. Lovelace. (Top left) Sgt. Burdett and Spc. Blue with Lt. Gen. Lovelace. (Bottom left) Lt. Gen. Lovelace presenting award to DFAC staff.*

# 100-442nd IN receives holiday gifts from home

*By: Capt. Timothy Zeisset*
*100-442nd IN Public Affairs*

*Above: Soldiers receive gifts from the Hope Chapel, located in Waikele, on Oahu . Below: Soldiers of the 100-442nd IN pose with gifts following the distribution on Christmas Day .*

**CAMP BUEHRING (KU)**—Christmas time is traditionally one for families and friends to come together to share the spirit of giving and of enjoying each other's company. In 1944, the Soldiers of the famous 100th Battalion spent their Christmas in France, preparing to fight the Germans – a sacrifice whose gift continues to give.

Presently deployed in Kuwait, the Soldiers of 100th Battalion spent the holiday season away from their family, friends, and loved ones to once again aid in the gift of freedom. But their sacrifice was not forgotten – they received care packages from home, friends, and well-wishers, all of whom were glad to spread the Christmas cheer.

On Christmas day the Soldiers gathered together to collect and open their gifts – many were just returning to Camp Virginia from missions the previous day, and others were getting ready for missions later that day. For all of them, the prospect of receiving a gift on Christmas was special and dear to their hearts.

"It's nice to know that we are appreciated" said one Soldier.

After a brief ceremony, the presents were handed out, and pictures were taken. Then once again everyone returned to work.

# New Year—new home and mission: Spc. Kuahine's journal

*By: Spc. Charlie Kuahine*
*Bravo Troop, 1-299th CAV contributor*

The New Year is finally upon us, whether we believe it or not. It's a main point of discussion found in most smoking circles, dining tables, weapon cleaning stations, and PX checkout lines alike.

As last month's Christmas carols, warm wishes and gifts for one another brought 2008 to a jubilant end, it also served as the beginning of Troop Bravo, 1-299th Cavalry's convoy security mission in support of OIF VIII.

The training we've endured this past eleven months is now complete and our relief in place/transfer of authority with the Ohio National Guard, 1-148th Infantry Battalion, has been met with a healthy eagerness to learn. From their strengths and weaknesses we were able to better examine our own procedures to identify parts that may need more or less implementation—or none at all— and maximize our combat effectiveness, along with our morale and well-being.

By the time this newsletter finds itself into your mailbox – along with Christmas cards or e-cards from loved ones and payment notices from credit card companies – we should be settled into our official home away from home, in a cozy little dustbowl called Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

The amenities here are more than sufficient. One of the camp dining facilities (DFAC), where Soldiers eat their meals, is located just a few hundred feet away from our billeting area. There are a variety of mini food courts offering: Subway, Starbucks, Baskin Robbins, and KFC. That's just a few – believe me there are more. Of course there are PX and MWR facilities, computer labs with internet access, AT&T phone centers, and a fitness center and gym.

There's a ton of sand in these parts – Camp Buehring no exception – providing enough running routes to challenge a runner of any fitness. As for our billeting, we have a community hygiene area with running water, toilets and showers, as well as a community laundry room. Our rooms offer bunk beds, central air and a fair amount of power outlets. So far Buehring has been treating us nicely and I trust we will do the same.

Life on the road is an entirely different animal, and like most animals it has teeth. But these teeth are sharp ones. Imagine driving a gun truck weighing nearly seven-and-a-half tons – on arguably the most dangerous roads on earth – in the middle of the night with two or three of your friends. Do what you can to avoid debris and roadway obstructions; potholes, road kill, concrete barriers, roadside bombs and whatever else that could place your vehicle or the convoy in jeopardy. Keep your eyes open and do what you can to stay awake. Sure, we estimate the trip to take a few hours, but that could change quickly depending on what happens on the road.

Imagine riding in the passenger seat surrounded by knobs, switches and joy sticks. If you use them properly the gun truck will resemble a cop car on steroids. Your job is to scan the road for threats and obstructions, serving as the driver's second pair of eyes. Pay close attention to your real-time GPS map and make sure your radios are working properly. Set the tempo in your gun truck and maintain the cross-talk between yourself, your driver and your gunner. Keeping everyone on the same page throughout the mission keeps you that much safer depending on what happens on the road.

Imagine sitting in the turret of a gun truck, behind a weapon capable of spewing hundreds of bullets from its barrel, as you actively scan the landscape to either side of the road. The threat can come from anywhere because the landscape is so diverse. You laugh at the irony of it all as you overhear your friend in the passenger seat say the heat coming from the vehicle's air vent is causing him to sweat – meanwhile Mr. Frost continues to smother your upper body with the cold desert air. It's uncomfortable to say the least, and you wonder how long it will take to acclimate to these sorts of chilly temperatures. How long you're exposed to the cold depends on what happens on the road.

A nice warm shower and a sleeping bag would do the trick right about now. But you know that your weapon is caked in sand and dust, so before the shower and the trip to sleepy town, you'll have to clean it.

Based on prior missions, you estimate the drive to take over an hour, but no more than two. When you arrive at your destination you wonder if the DFAC will still be open. Then you realize you've never been to that particular camp before and have no idea where the DFAC even is, much less the tents where you and your team will be sleeping that night. You know that you will have much to do once the convoy arrives, yet the question on your mind is "will the DFAC be open?"

To understand our mission is to understand this one general premise: it all depends on what happens on the road.

# 29th BSB Soldiers go on security patrol with LSA Viper teams

By: Capt. Michelle Puesta
29th BSB Contributor

**LSA (KU)—** Soldiers of the 29th Brigade Support Battalion, Capt. Michelle Puesta and Sgt. Raena Madeira, joined Life Support Area security force viper teams on a familiarization ride outside the base, Dec. 16, 2008. The opportunity gave both Soldiers – as the command cell's intelligence support – a situational awareness needed to plan and execute local measures for camp protection.

The viper teams consist of Air Force personnel and interpreters that conduct patrols 24-7 in order to discourage intruders and threats presented outside the base.

The familiarization ride included a close look at the sand berm located 2km from base – designed to stop unwanted traffic from getting close to the LSA. The viper teams act as the first line of defense when Kuwaitis cross over the berm and provide LSA tenants with peace of mind to know they are safe.

During the colder months, November through February, Kuwaiti's frequently set up campsites to revisit their roots. The campsites are located outside the berm, but are in close proximity to the LSA. The Viper teams frequently visit these campsites to show their presence in the area.

"I wouldn't call it camping. The campsite we visited had a satellite dish and television," Sgt. Madeira said. "We watched Fantastic Four for about half an hour. It was great."

The Soldiers felt privileged to have visited one of the campsites as the family was hospitable, courteous and presented a second invitation

# 100-442nd IN meets with Sheikh for Iraqi Highway Police assistance

*From Left to right: Capt. Jeff Wyatt, Lt. Col. Michael Peeters, Maj. Allaa of the IHP, Sheikh Mahmoud,Command Sgt. Maj. Glenn Gomes, Capt. Tim Zeisset holding a meeting*

*By: Capt. Timothy Zeisset*
*100-442nd IN Public Affairs*

**CAMP CEDAR (IRAQ) —** New Year's Day, 2009, Camp Cedar, Iraq. Winds were driving the sand at more than 30 mph, with the temperature hovering around 38 degrees. Capts. Jeff Wyatt and Tim Zeisset, along with members of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, met with Sheikh Mahmoud Al Ghezzie and Maj. Ahmmad Al Ghezzie in the Camp Cedar dining facility. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the assistance of the Iraqi Highway Patrol (IHP) in preventing local civilians, who live around the Camp Cedar area, from interfering with 100th Battalion convoy escorts.

Wyatt thanked Sheikh Ghezzie and Maj. Ghezzie for their assistance and gave Maj. Ghezzie 20 reflective belts to enhance the safety of his men during hours of limited visibility. Wyatt presently works with 100th Battalion liason at Camp Cedar. As a civilian, he is a sheriff's deputy for the Jacksonville, Fla., Sheriff's Office.

After the initial meeting, an informal meeting took place where the 100th Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Michael Peeters, and Command Sgt. Maj. Glenn Gomes, reiterated their appreciation for both Sheikh Al Ghezzie and Maj. Al Ghezzie. Peeters stressed the importance of such meetings as he shared cigars with both gentlemen.

"We need to encourage the Iraqis to solve these problems themselves," Peeters told them.

Peeters believes in "leaning forward in the foxhole" on issues – the issue of route security and self-sustainment for the Iraqi people is no exception.

"Whatever we can do to facilitate and enhance the ability of the Iraqi Highway Patrol and the Iraqi Army we need to make happen," Peeters further explained.

Wyatt echoed Peeters' sentiments by saying, "Everyone wins in this situation: Our convoys travel unmolested and the IHP learns how to be more effective, leading to a safer environment for all."

All gentlemen agreed that working together in this mission would make the job easier for everyone.

"The 100th Battalion will continue to encourage and support relationships with the local populace and IHP in the Camp Cedar area," Peeters said

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# The bigger picture; what it means

*By: Maj. Pam Ellison*
*29th IBCT Public Affairs*

USARCENT/CFLCC, ASG-KU, MNF-I, MNC-I…. the list of initials can go on and on endlessly. But what do they all mean, where are they all located and how do they all fit together?

USARCENT/CFLCC stands for US Army Central/Coalition Forces Land Component Command and is based out of Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Ga., but has been continuously forward deployed since 2001. It is the only Army-level, expeditionary, war-fighting headquarters offering full spectrum capabilities, from humanitarian assistance to combat operations. It is the Army Service Component Command of Central Command. CENTCOM is based out of MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla., supporting ground operations throughout the 27 Nations of the Central Command Area of Responsibility stretching from Kenya to Kazakhstan.

ASG-KU stands for Area Support Group – Kuwait, and is based out of Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. It was formed by USARCENT/CFLCC to provide Army forces within CENTCOM with garrison and area support for all Army installations in Kuwait. It is a separate subordinate command of USARCENT/CFLCC.

USARCENT/CFLCC and ASG-KU are based in Kuwait with an emphasis on providing support to the units based in Kuwait, and those units provide the logistical support necessary to win the war-fighting effort in Iraq. The Iraq AOR is controlled by Multi-National Forces – Iraq (MNF-I) which is broken down into many subordinate commands comprised of:

- MNSTC-I, Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq who is responsible for organizing, training, equipping and mentoring Iraq Security Forces (ISF) throughout the country.

- JBB, Joint Base Balad, formerly Logistics Support Area Anaconda, the Army's largest Army supply center, now home of 3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command, who is responsible for providing logistics support throughout theater.

- MNC-I, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, who is the Tactical Unit responsible for command and control of Operations in Iraq. It's subordinate units are:

- MND-B, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, whose major area of responsibility is the city of Baghdad.

- MND-N, Multi-National Division – North, whose area of responsibility includes the cities of Balad, Kirkuk, Tikrit, Mosul and Samarra.

- MNF-W, Multi-National Forces – West, whose area of operations includes the cities of Ar Ramadi and Fallujah.

- MND-C, Multi-National Division – Center, assists ISF with security and stability missions in the area south of Baghdad ranging from Najaf to Wasit provinces.

- MND-SE, Multi-National Division – South East, operates in the southern most portion of Iraq including the cities of Basrah, An Nasiriyah and Al Amarah.

So, how does all this information tie back to us, the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT)?

From our locations at camps throughout Kuwait, we all fall under the responsibility of USARCENT/CFLCC or ASG-KU and either provide support to the troops in Iraq through our convoy escort security missions, or provide direct support to the troops based in Kuwait through camp security or command and control.

Most of us understand that connection very clearly. However, what many may not understand is that as our Soldiers provide convoy security to the convoys going into Iraq, they are traveling through all the different areas of responsibility under MNF-I. Therefore, they interact with all the different commands throughout Iraq; from simply remaining overnight at one of the locations along their routes, to getting security support provided by a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) based out of one of the commands along their routes if needed – our Soldiers are part of a much bigger picture in the Global War on Terrorism fight.

# Bravo Troop Soldiers makes New Year's Resolutions

Hello to our Troop Bravo, 1-299th Cavalry Family and friends! The New Year has arrived—accompanied by a chicken-skin tingle that happens only at this time of year. This tingle quickly blossoms into an idea; one that steadily matures into possibility, and later bears the fruit of opportunity to test one's character and self determination. Behold, it's the making of a new year's resolution.

If you've made one then stay on course and have fun with it. Most resolutions fail because people tend to see them as chore-like in nature, not as something fulfilling and enjoyable. If you don't have one, don't feel left out! Here are some resolutions we came up with:

1. Write a letter at least once a month**.** Go a little old school and bust out the pen and paper for this one. E-mailing is quick and easy but lacks the personality and intimacy of an honest handwritten letter from that special someone.

2. Find a hobby (or rediscover one). Devote a few hours every week to your after-school or after-work activity. Just remember to keep the hobby what it is—a hobby—and not let it interfere with other necessities like brushing your teeth.

3. Strengthen your vocabulary. Before your day begins, open a dictionary to a random page and choose a word you don't recognize. Then find a way to use your word in conversation with a co-worker or a friend.

From all of us here at Bravo Troop, we offer warm wishes in everything 2009 brings you and best of luck with your resolutions, whatever they may be! — Spc. Charlie Kuahine

## What is your New Year's Resolution?

"To quit smoking by the end of this deployment."

— Spc. Malia Siancgo, 1-487th FA

"To fall asleep less at work."

— Capt. Edgar Garcia, HHC, 29th IBCT

"Start class here while I'm deployed."

— Sgt. Sharde Marshall, 29th BSTB

# Family Readiness Group

From Care Packages to Holiday events, and plenty of visits from Santa Claus, the Holidays came with a flurry of activities and fun for the Brigade Ohana at home. FRGs on all the islands worked closely with community partners to put together the enormous amount of care packages for more than 1,500 deployed Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. UH-4H, recruiting and other partners also participated in Holiday Events that brought fun, laughter and presents for brigade kids with a mom or dad away on deployment. Looking ahead to 2009, many FRGs are already planning activities, fundraising and welcome home events. Activities in February include half-way parties, valentine's day events, movie days for the keiki and much more! **~ 29th Brigade Family Readiness Support Assistant**

# VA health enrollment to rise; lawmakers shrug off CBO

*By Tom Philpott, Special to Stars and Stripes Pacific edition, Saturday, January 10, 2009*

An estimated 258,000 middle-income veterans with no service-connected health conditions will be allowed by late June to enroll in the VA health care system. Enrollment means access to VA health care in exchange for modest co-payments, and also valuable discounts on prescription drugs.

The Department of Veterans Affairs unveiled its schedule for reopening VA healthcare to a quarter million new "Priority Group 8" veterans Jan. 5 -- ironically as President-elect Obama warned of trillion-dollar-year budget deficits and a new report of cost-cutting health care options by the Congressional Budget Office included ideas for tightening access to VA care.

In expanding enrollment, VA is acting at the direction of Congress. Last year, Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas) fought successfully to add $350 million to the VA budget so income thresholds that bar Priority 8 veterans could be raised 10 percent to allow more middle income veterans access.

Phillip Matkovsky, deputy chief business officer for the Veterans Health Administration, said veterans with 2008 incomes "10 percent or less" above current Priority 8 thresholds will be able to enroll in VA health care when revised regulations take effect sometime before June 30. The new income thresholds will range from $32,342 for an unmarried veteran and adding $2,222 for each dependent. Geographic income ceilings also will rise.

Veterans who applied for VA enrollment on or after Jan. 1 this year, and were rejected as Priority 8 veterans, need not reapply. Their applications, which already show their 2008 incomes, will be reconsidered and, if they fall under new higher thresholds, enrollment will be approved.

Applicants denied enrollment for having Priority 8 income before 2009 will have to reapply because VA needs to see income information for 2008.

More details on enrollment eligibility expansion are available online at www.va.gov/healtheligibility or by calling 1-877-222 VETS (8387).

# Army paying $17.7M for training game

*By Seth Robson, Stars and Stripes European edition, Tuesday, January 6, 2009*

GRAFENWÖHR, Germany — The Army is shelling out nearly $18 million for a new training simulator game that will allow soldiers to drive virtual vehicles, fire virtual weapons and pilot virtual unmanned aerial vehicles in combat situations.

The contract for "Game After Ambush" was awarded late last month to software developers Laser Shot, of Texas, Bohemia Interactive, of the Czech Republic, and Australia-based Calytrix Technologies.

The new simulator — a modification of the commercial "Virtual Battle Space 2" — will replace the Army's official video game "DARWARS Ambush," which the service uses to train soldiers for combat.

Since 2006, the Army's Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training, and Instrumentation, or PEO STRI, has fielded more than 3,000 copies of "DARWARS Ambush" to the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Homeland Defense Department, according to spokeswoman Kristen Dooley McCullough.

In an e-mail, McCullough said the contract included $10.7 million awarded on Dec. 19, with another $7 million in options.

PEO STRI officials said earlier the new game will replicate what soldiers encounter on today's battlefield — from fighting in urban terrain and convoy operations to reacting to contact and ambush operations.

The game will be able to interact with the Army's battle command systems used by soldiers in the real world to track equipment as well as enemy and friendly forces. It also will include tools that will allow the Army to modify terrain, scenarios and missions, officials said.

The Army plans to field 70 gaming systems in 53 locations in the United States, Germany, Italy and South Korea between February and September 2009, according to Leslie Duvow, project director for gaming at PEO STRI.

"Each system will consist of 52 computers with ancillary equipment including steering wheels, headsets and mice," she said.

Soldiers will be able to drive virtual vehicles, fire virtual weapons, pilot virtual unmanned aerial vehicles and do "most anything a soldier does" in a virtual battle space as large as 100 kilometers by 100 kilometers, Duvow said.

Laser Shot's "Tactical Weapon Simulator" and Calytrix's "LVC Game" will be added to the VBS2 software to tailor the game to the Army's needs.

The Texas firm is the prime contractor for the production, fielding, training, software updates, technical support, and Web portal, in support of the game, according to a Laser Shot news release.

"Our company has extensive experience in supporting training for the soldiers of the U.S. Army, as do our partners Bohemia Interactive and Calytrix," said Christopher Chambers, Laser Shot's president.

The Army already uses VBS2 for convoy training alongside several other games at the Joint Multinational Simulation Center at Grafenwöhr.

The game has a strong reputation as a flexible, interactive, three-dimensional tactical training and mission rehearsal tool, according to Bohemia chief executive Pete Morrison. Bohemia sells a range of military-themed titles such as "Operation Flashpoint" and "ArmA: Armed Assault" for PCs.

"VBS2 is, without a doubt, the best military-grade game-based simulation on the market today," he said.

The PEO STRI contract provides for fielding and training for "Game After Ambush" and associated tasks for one year, with an option to extend the program for four more years, the Laser Shot press statement said.

# Hawaii's Pearl Harbor to become hub for new nuclear subs

*By **William Cole***
*Advertiser Military Writer*

*The Virginia-class attack submarine USS Hawaii was commissioned in 2007 in Groton, Conn. It will move to Pearl Harbor in late June.*

*Advertiser Library Photo*

Two-thirds of the Navy's new Virginia -class submarines initially will be based at Pearl Harbor, making Hawai'i the main hub for the advanced attack submarines, Navy officials said yesterday.

The Navy plans to build 30 of the nuclear submarines, which cost up to $2.5 billion apiece, carry torpedoes and missiles, and can drop off commandos close to shore.

The Navy isn't releasing the exact number or arrival schedule for subs coming to Pearl Harbor beyond the USS Hawaii, expected in late June, and the USS Texas, scheduled to arrive in late October or early November.

U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawai'i, previously has said the USS North Carolina also will be homeported here.

The Navy revealed the Virginia-class submarine distribution information yesterday at an annual military update for the Hawai'i business community.

Capt. W. Scott Gureck, a spokesman for the U.S. Pacific Fleet, said Virginia-class submarines initially will be homeported in Groton, Conn., and at Pearl Harbor. At least four that are in active service have operated temporarily out of the East Coast.

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, a 20-year planning roadmap for the military, called for 60 percent of attack submarines to be based in the Pacific and 40 percent in the Atlantic.

"The initial (Virginia-class) homeporting will indeed be at Groton and Pearl Harbor, but eventually they will be everywhere we currently have Los Angeles-class (subs)," Gureck said. "It's just from a parts standpoint and maintenance standpoint, you don't want to put a couple Virginias in all the locations. You want to put them where you have critical mass."

The overall number of attack submarines at Pearl Harbor — about 15 — will not change, Gureck said. The new Virginia class will replace existing Los Angeles-class submarines as the older class reaches the end of its lifespan, he said.

The Virginia-class arrival is good news for Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, the state's largest industrial employer, with 4,200 civilian workers.

About 90 percent of the yard's work has been on the aging Los Angeles-class attack submarines, including maintenance as well as nuclear reactor refueling and defuelings.

**MORE SHIPYARD JOBS**

Capt. Gregory Thomas, who commands the shipyard, yesterday said the switch to Virginia-class work "keeps us focused on what's been our principal product here for the past 10 years — which is submarines."

"It's a very smooth transition," Thomas said, adding that the workload should mean an increase to about 4,400 shipyard workers by 2013. The bulk of the work was non-reactor servicing, and that will continue with the Virginia subs, he said.

Northrop Grumman is producing the Virginia-class submarines in a teaming arrangement with General Dynamics Electric Boat. The Virginia class is ultimately expected to total 30 vessels.

Ten of the vessels have been delivered or were already under contract before a December award of a $14 billion contract for eight more of the submarines, according to Bloomberg News.

The contract calls for construction of one submarine in each of the years 2009 and 2010, and two per year from 2011 to 2013.

The submarines are 377 feet long and have a beam of 34 feet. They can operate at underwater speeds of more than 25 knots, dive more than 800 feet and stay submerged for up to three months at a time.

The submarines also are equipped with a lock-out chamber large enough for nine commandos, more than triple the capacity of older submarines.

To read more visit the honoluluadvertiser.com

# Bush praises troops in radio address

*Stars and Stripes*
*Mideast edition*
*Sunday, January 11, 2009*

**WASHINGTON —** In his second to last radio address, President Bush on Saturday praised U.S. servicemembers for their commitment and sacrifice, and called on the American public to "remain vigilant" in the face of potential threats from terrorists.

The president also noted something he said "almost no one thought possible" — that after more than seven years, there has not been another significant terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

Bush said that he has had no higher honor than serving as commander in chief to those who deployed within weeks of 9/11 to Afghanistan, who deployed multiple times to fight in Iraq, and who made his "troop surge" into Iraq "one of the great successes in American military history."

The full address follows:

Good morning. This week, I gave my official farewell speech to the men and women of America's Armed Forces in a ceremony at Fort Myer, Va. For the past eight years, I have had no higher honor than serving as the commander in chief of these brave patriots. And when Laura and I depart for Texas later this month, we will take with us many inspiring memories of the valor that we have seen these brave Americans display time and again.

We saw their valor on September the 11th, 2001, in servicemembers rushing into smoke-filled corridors to save their colleagues at the Pentagon, and in planes patrolling the skies above New York City and Washington D.C.

We saw their valor in the days after that attack, when Americans crowded into recruiting centers across our country, raised their hands to serve, and pledged to defend our people and our freedom.

We saw their valor in the forces who deployed to Afghanistan within weeks of 9/11, closed down the terrorist training camps, and drove the Taliban from power.

We saw their valor in the fearless troops who stormed across the Iraqi desert — and destroyed a regime that threatened America.

We saw their valor in battle-tested warriors who signed up for a second, or third, or fourth tour — and made the troop surge in Iraq that I announced two years ago today one of the great successes in American military history.

America's Armed Forces have liberated more than 50 million people around the world — and made our nation safer. They have taken the fight to the terrorists abroad so that we have not had to face them here at home. And the world has seen something that almost no one thought possible: More than seven years after September the 11th, there has not been another terrorist attack on American soil.

This is no coincidence. In addition to our military, many other Americans have worked tirelessly to ensure our safety in the years since 9/11. Law enforcement officials have worked to secure our country and remained watchful against future attacks. Intelligence analysts have tracked information that allowed us

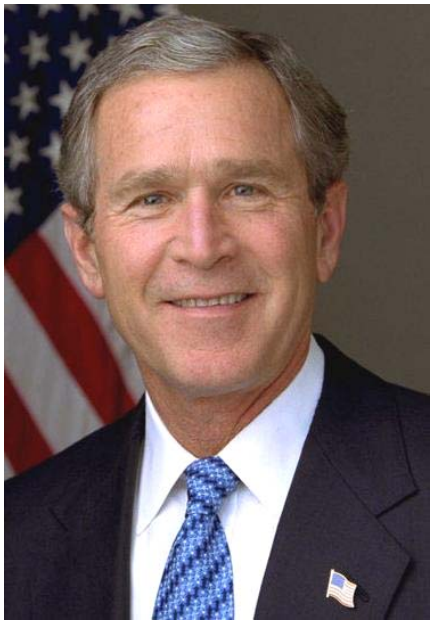

*Photo from: www.pbs.org*

to disrupt terrorist plots before they reached our shores. And homeland security agents have worked to secure our ports, our borders, and our skies.

We owe a debt of gratitude to all of these patriots. Because of their devotion to service, many Americans live their lives without the fear and uncertainty that they felt in the days just after 9/11. This continued safety has been a blessing — but we must never allow it to foster complacency. America still faces sworn enemies intent on striking our nation and our people. And we must remain vigilant for as long as that threat remains.

I know that our men and women in uniform have remained vigilant. These Americans answer the call to defend freedom when it is under attack. They put their lives on the line to defend democracy and keep our country safe. And they inspire a nation with their selflessness and their courage. I am proud to have served as their commander in chief.

**29th IBCT**

We'd like to hear from you!

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# PAO Comment

Here we are coming into a new year – 2009. If nothing else, we can be happy that this allows us to talk about returning to our homes "this year" and marks another "milestone" which we have completed that puts us a bit closer to being home again with our Families.

I have had the good fortune of being on my R & R leave these last two weeks, which has given me the opportunity to catch my breath a bit and spend time with my loved ones and reflect on all the things that I am appreciative for as I think about the differences of being deployed and being at home.

One thing I realize is how many things I take for granted that come easier than here than when I'm deployed. Let's just say that I have caught up on eating all the I have missed over these past months of our deployment. Sleeping in my own bed, and a bit on my own time table, is another one of the things I realize I take for granted back home. But, there is no doubt the most significant thing we take for granted is the time we spend at home relaxing and truly enjoying being with our Families and friends.

As each of you take your R & R leave, I encourage you to truly slow down and cherish every possible moment that you have to spend with those who mean the most to you. The time goes by very fast, but the benefit of getting the recharge that comes from being around those you love is priceless.

Enjoy your time and keep safety in mind as you do – your unit needs you to return refreshed and recharged and all in one piece. Although I'm very sad to think of leaving my loved ones in the coming days, I am ready to come back and get back into my daily routine and successfully complete our mission in the manner that only LAVA can!

—Maj. Pam Ellison