



M
E
L
E
K
I
K
I
K
I
M
A
K
A

Happy Birthday Army National Guard

By: Maj. Pamela Ellison, PAO

29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) Soldiers celebrated the National Guard's 372nd Birthday in many different ways on Saturday, Dec. 13th:

from morning till night, our Soldiers displayed their pride in being Citizen Soldiers.

The morning started with a cake-cutting ceremony led by Lt. Gen. James J. Lovelace, the Army Central (ARCENT) Commanding General, along with the oldest and youngest Guardsmen at Camp Arifjan doing the honors of cutting the cake. HHC 29th IBCT's own Spc. Johnny Choi, the youngest Guardsman on Camp Arifjan, assisted in the cake cutting as

well as participating in the final event of the night - the donning of the Former War-Time Service Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (FWTS-SSI) - for Soldiers who are first

time deployers. During the FWTS-SSI ceremony, Spc. Choi was presented his 29th IBCT "combat patch", as it is more commonly referred to, along with eight other HHC, 29th IBCT Soldiers.

Back in Hawaii, there was a

the 29th IBCT Commander, Col. Bruce E. Oliveira, along with a rendition of "I am the Guard" presented by Soldiers throughout the Brigade and a music/picture presentation.

In his written address to the

Citizen Soldiers of the ARCENT Area of Responsibility, Lovelace highlighted the long and distinguished history of the Army National Guard. Since December 13, 1636, when the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony ordered the militia companies to form into three distinct regiments, till the expanded mission shift from a strategic to opera-

tional reserve of today's Army National Guard - our Citizen Soldiers' commitment to serve remains unified and strong.



Youngest and oldest Guardsmen on Camp Arifjan, Spc. Jonny Choi (left) and Chief Warrant Officer Albert Harwood (right) cut the National Guard Birthday cake with ARCENT Commander Lt. Gen. James Lovelace.

celebration of the National Guard Birthday with a Birthday Ball held at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel. Highlighted at the Ball was a video and message from



Table of Contents

| | | | | |
|---------|------------------------------|--|---------|-----------------------|
| Page 1 | National Guard Birthday |  | Page 14 | BSTB TOA |
| Page 2 | Table of Contents | | Page 15 | A Day with BSTB |
| Page 3 | Col Oliveira's Notes | | Page 16 | E/FSC, 29th BSB |
| Page 4 | CSM Coronado's Comment | | Page 17 | Xmas In Kuwait |
| Page 5 | 1-299th CAV "Solo" Mission | | Page 18 | Xmas in Hawaii |
| Page 6 | Convoy Escort Team "Pics" | | Page 19 | Thanksgiving Review |
| Page 7 | 1-299 CAV TOA | | Page 20 | FRG |
| Page 8 | A Soldiers Journey | | Page 21 | Kuwait Current Events |
| Page 9 | 100-442nd IN TOA | | Page 22 | World Current Events |
| Page 10 | Camp Virginia Base Overview | | Page 23 | Hawaii Current Events |
| Page 11 | 1-487th FA TOA | | Page 24 | General Reference |
| Page 12 | 29th BSB TOA | | Page 25 | Shout Outs |
| Page 13 | A/BSB Security & 1-487th Run | | Page 26 | PAO Comment |

Congratulations to the following 29th IBCT Soldiers.....

PROMOTIONS:

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| COL Kenny Hara | SSG Paul Malala | SGT Joshua Crabtree | SGT Louis Solaita |
| SFC Caoagadan Renante | SSG Julian Manglona (Co E/100-442) (Posthumous) | SGT Luis Deleonguerrero | SGT Laauli Tima |
| SFC Louis Soares | SSG Kiliona Mataiumu | SGT Raymond Deleonguerrero | SGT Damien Tua |
| SSG Julius Amisone | SSG Mark Moana | SGT Alexander Fuata | SGT Joshua Umaga |
| SSG Anthony Chung | SSG Curtis Pepe | SGT Joseph Ioane | |
| SSG Aaron Emery | SSG Jedediah Rashid | SGT Phillip Moates | REENLISTMENTS: |
| SSG Lafaele Faatamali | SSG Roy Silva | SGT Conle Mongami | CSM Philip Umali |
| SSG JV Fuamatu | SSG Savaiki Sua | SGT Michael Orcino | SSG Amy Aguil |
| SSG Pedro Justin | SGT Willaim Chewning | SGT Thomas Sablan | SSG Michael Keopuhiwa |
| | | SGT Christopher Santos | SPC David Kamaka |

Notes from the Commander

29TH LAVA BRIGADE COMMANDER



Colonel Bruce Oliveira
BDE Commander

This holiday season, like the deployment in 2005, we find ourselves back in the Middle East in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Being deployed in harm's way is always a sacrifice for a Soldier and when these deployments coincide with the holiday season the sacrifice is even greater. Our service during this time of year is in keeping with the yuletide goal of establishing peace on Earth. Our efforts in defense of our nation, and freedom for people everywhere, is a special gift to all this holiday season. Many will miss midnight Mass or the tree lighting festivities at Honolulu Hale. Many will not hear the sounds of delight from their children on Christmas morning. Many will sing neither carols nor hymns. Instead, we serve halfway around the world to honor a pledge we made to our country to continue to give the gift of freedom.

I would like to talk about the gift that our Warriors have given and continue to give. First, our Warriors of

Christmas past, like the Minutemen of Lexington and Concord, the first Hawaii Guardsmen were born in revolution and civil turmoil. Our command has deep roots formed and forged in Hawaii's Provisional Government. The Infantry Brigade Combat Team traces its roots back to 1923 when Oahu units became the 298th Infantry Regiment and the neighbor island units became the 299th Infantry Regiment. During World War II, when the 299th Infantry was inactivated, over one thousand enlisted men and twenty-eight officers of Japanese ancestry were transferred from the Guard and organized into the 100th Battalion, later to become the Army's most decorated unit. The 298th Infantry served with the Army's 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions and later with the Fourth Island Command in New Hebrides and Guadalcanal. The 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was organized as a major unit in the Hawaii Army National Guard in January 1959. On May 13, 1968, the 29th Brigade was the first of only two Army National Guard Infantry brigades called to active duty for the Vietnam War. More than 1,500 soldiers from the 29th Separate Infantry Brigade, Hawaii Army National Guard served in Southeast Asia. In 1993, the brigade was designated as one of the fifteen Enhanced Army National Guard (ARNG) Brigades, becoming the only multi-state and multi-component enhanced brigade in the Nation. August 16, 2004, the brigade was called to active duty to support the Global War on Terrorism, serving in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq. These patriots gave us the present of our Country.

How about our Warriors of Christmas present. Our Convoy Escort Teams protect convoys in Iraq while bracing themselves against daily attacks through some of the most dangerous places on earth. The medic required in attendance during any hazardous mission initiating medical treatment at the accident or injury location, maintaining medical treatment during evacuation to healthcare facilities, and providing medical treatment in the medical facilities. The Soldier at the entry control point

saving lives by reacting to fire, hostile local civilians, searches of hundreds of personnel and vehicles every day or providing assistance to civilians who approach the gate. The mechanic who ensures the success of our mission by keeping our armored vehicles in top working condition through thousands of miles and severe conditions. The Tactical Operations Center personnel, serving in the unit's nerve center commanding, controlling, and synchronizing operations efficiently and effectively as a team in a fast-paced, unforgiving environment. Or the Family taking care of the home waiting for the day their deployed Soldier returns. They all give the gift of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. By your efforts you continue to give the priceless gift of freedom.

And we have the Warrior of Christmas future. Privates and Specialist highly proficient in leveraging the technological advances we have and will continue to make. New technologies that give conventional systems more capability and new technologies that provide unconventional capabilities. Facing many challenges in the future, we are engaged on multiple fronts fighting against terrorist threats, and we are transforming to meet future threats. All these challenges and many more, could distract you from taking the time to reflect on the importance of this holiday season. But they should not.

Our gift of freedoms are precious, our Soldiers who sacrifice to provide them are honorable, and all that came before, and the future generations will continue to be grateful.

So, on behalf of the 29th Brigade leadership, I want to thank you once more for your service and wish you and yours a very Mele Kalikimaka e Hau'oli Makahiki Hou!

LAVA!

Command Sergeant Major's Comment

As the year draws to an end everyone seems to, by default, reflect on the previous 11 months of the year. I sit and ponder about how proud I am to be assigned to this Brigade with so much history before me and the history that there is yet to write.

This year, without a doubt, has been an incredibly active year for the Brigade. Our Soldiers and Officers have traveled from Indonesia, to Fort Hunter Liggett, to the Philippines, to our mobilization station at North Fort Hood, to our current mission in Kuwait and Iraq. The Soldiers and Officers from the brigade have performed without rest; all willing, all ready, to train and perform, a seamless transition of mission; an example of the great discipline and dedication of all of the leaders that we have within our formations.

This year countless will remember the Brigade Departure Ceremony in Hawaii, the eternal sounds of the 100-442nd IN at North Fort Hood, our Farewell Ceremony in Texas and those precious extra days some of us were able to enjoy with our Families; our first day in Kuwait, the entry into the ancient country of Iraq, the chill of the night, the darkness of the sky on your first mission north to a land unseen. The first guard post at the SPDD, the first ECP duty at KNB. All these memories will be remembered in countless books and in letters to our Family and friends. The Veterans will see the hesitant moves of Soldiers and Officers alike and will probably say "here let me help you" this is the way it is done here. You are the great Ohana and helping one another is the mantra you live by.

The pace fast and what seemed at times unending. On top of it all they continued performing their civilian jobs and attending military and civilian schools, until we left Hawaii.

Add Family responsibilities and you have a full plate. The average citizen can not fathom all these accomplishments in such a short period of time.

Meanwhile our Families, employers, friends and educators alike collectively stand at our side to assist us in being successful. Without them, we, the Soldiers and Officers, could not do all of this. Our hats are off to them for their continued support!

The year will be ending soon and individually we will reflect on our individual accomplishments.

Each one of us will reflect and think about our Families and the great sacrifices they continue to endure during our absence in the performance our wartime missions. Our gratitude and love to all of them.

The Soldiers of the Brigade are performing all types of duties that are critically important to not only their base camps, but to the war effort as a whole. So wherever you are on duty during the holidays, know that thousands sleep well because the 29th IBCT is there. Every Soldier, NCO and Officer is critically important. The Cavalry and the Infantry are protecting millions of dollars in equipment and goods to keep the Theater functioning. The BSTB, BSB and Hiki-No are managing small cities all without a hiccup.

Only in the Guard can you see this type of talent and knowledge. Company E, 29th BSB, of the Arizona Army National Guard's 1-158th IN, has landed at Camp Bucca and is performing a very demanding and unique mission that requires absolute accuracy in all they do. We are proud to have them join us in Theater. We welcome them aboard.

The Soldiers at the Brigade Headquarters are performing a mission that requires twice the amount of Soldiers then there is assigned; and they're doing it without missing a step. To every staff member I am proud to serve with you. You are the reason why the organization keeps rolling.

In addition, we have Soldiers from various states that chose to stay with our Brigade for another year; from Arkansas to Ohio they are here with us. Yes, these great Citizen Soldiers are performing well. Most, if not all, Soldiers are well accustomed to the daily battle rhythms of the mission at hand.

All of these great Soldiers continue to impress me on a daily basis.

In this Christmas edition of the *Lava Flow*, I want to personally extend my sincere thanks and congratulations to each Soldier that has decided to continue serving in this great Ohana. During a time of peace, it is not an easy decision to re-enlist, but



CSM Edgardo Coronado
BDE CSM

during a time of conflict, with repeated deployments in dual fronts, this decision must be carefully weighed. Those Soldiers and their Families that compose our Brigade that have decided to continue their service have my greatest of admiration and endless appreciation for their continued support to the war effort.

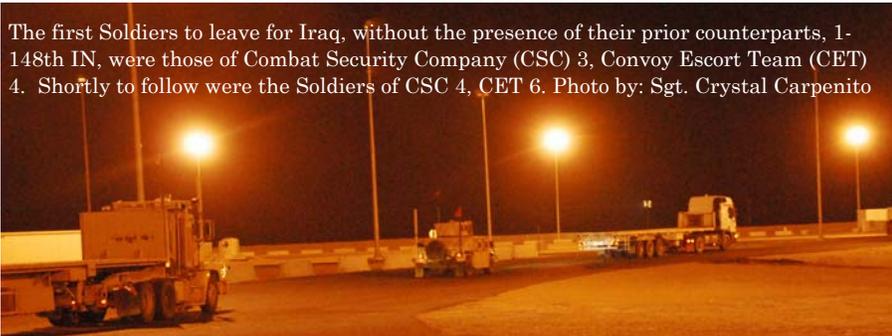
Lastly, to all the fantastic young leaders and officers that have received their promotions since our mobilization our sincere congratulations.

Again, wherever you are when you read this message, I ask your acceptance of my sincere thanks for being "Always Ready, Always There"; "Twice the Citizen"; and always the Soldier. The Nation, state and your communities are better places to live because you are part of them. Please take the time to read the list of names for promotions and reenlistment on Page 2.

Gracias, Mahalo
Edgardo A. Coronado
CSM, HIARNG
HQ 29th IBCT Task Force Lava

1-299th CAV: First "Solo" Mission into Iraq

The first Soldiers to leave for Iraq, without the presence of their prior counterparts, 1-148th IN, were those of Combat Security Company (CSC) 3, Convoy Escort Team (CET) 4. Shortly to follow were the Soldiers of CSC 4, CET 6. Photo by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito



Staff Sgt. Arcangel Natal gives his CET one final brief before leaving Kuwait. Photo by: Maj. Pamela Ellison

By: Sgts. Tracy Ellingsen, 311th ESC, and Crystal Carpenito, 29th IBCT, Public Affairs

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait -- The Soldiers of Company A, 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion and Battery A, 1-148th Field Artillery, who are attached to the 1-299th Cavalry, were anxious to get on the road. They decided to forgo dinner and instead eat the midnight meal served at the next base they were going to. After all, it was their first convoy escort mission up to Iraq that they would be performing without the watchful eye of their predecessors.

"I'm very proud right now," said Capt. Timothy Spencer, Alpha Battery Commander. "It was a long process coming here and I'm glad to be doing the mission we trained to do."

The Hawaii based National Guard units are now poised to conduct convoy escort missions, as well as other security operations, throughout Iraq and Kuwait. In a few months leaving for another mission may feel a little

routine for the teams, but departing for the 1-299th Cavalry's first "solo" mission was anything but.

This wouldn't be the first trip to Iraq for either unit; each Convoy Escort Team (CET) previously traveled on a training mission with their counterparts 1-148th Infantry Battalion from the Ohio National Guard, and the 1-126th Cavalry from the Michigan National Guard.

"Right now the difference for us is just confidence," said Staff Sgt. Arcangel Natal, leader of CET 4. "We know the job and we know there's a challenge in front of us but this CET, these guys, we've always been able to do it."

Training for months before arriving boots on ground in Kuwait surely built their confidence but could not compare to the unexpected training Soldiers of Alpha Battery experienced while traversing the roads of Iraq.

"They got hit on their first convoy," said Spencer, referring to a small arms attack the unit encountered. "First time out and they already saw action."

For this mission both unit commanders and first sergeants were on hand to check and double check the equipment and safety measures the Soldiers take for each and every escort.

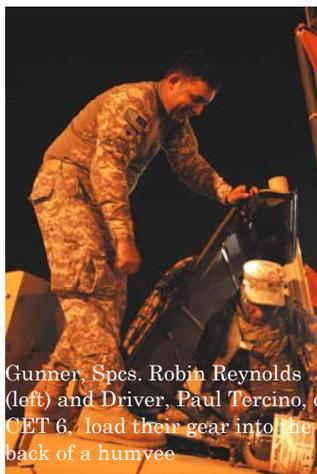
Before heading out Soldiers posed for pictures while standing in front of and on top of their humvees—it was a moment they could never relive— but could always remember and share with a photograph.

The leader of CET 6, 2nd Lt. Bingham Tuisamatatele Jr., gathered the Soldiers in a huddle for a prayer; by that time CET 4 had already said their prayers and pushed forward to take the lead for this long-haul mission. Then CET 6 packed their gear in the vehicles and headed down the road, a cloud of dust left in their trail.

Spencer looked on with an obvious sense of pride and likened watching their departure to watching one's children leave for the first day of school. "I have a lot of confidence in them," he said. "They trained hard."



Soldiers of CET 6 conduct final Pre-Combat Checks and Inspections at the border crossing before leaving into Iraq. Photo by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito



Gunner, Spcs. Robin Reynolds (left) and Driver, Paul Tercino, of CET 6, load their gear into the back of a humvee



Spc. Jonathan Bautista, a gunner in CET 4, loads his weapon into a humvee turret. Photo by: Maj. Pamela Ellison

CONVOY ESCORT TEAMS



**1-299th CAV
CSC 1 CET 4
(Their 1st Solo Mission)
Tuesday, December 2, 2008**

**100-442nd IN
CET 2A
(Their 2nd Solo Mission)
Tuesday, December 2, 2008**



**A/1-487th
CSC 4 CET 6
(Their 1st Solo Mission)
Friday, November 29, 2008**



**A/29th BSTB
CSC 3 CET 4
(Their 1st Solo Mission)
Friday, November 29, 2008**



Task Force Koa takes the reins

By: Maj. Pamela Ellison, PAO

On Dec. 2nd the Commanders of the 1-299th Cavalry (CAV) and the 1-148th Infantry (IN) finalized Transfer of Authority (TOA) of the Convoy Escort Mission by signing the TOA document; doing the honors were 1-299th CAV Commander, Lt. Col. Rudolph Ligsay, and 1-148th IN Commander, Lt. Col. Brian Tackett.

The signing ceremony was the culminating event of the evening, as the Commanders, their staffs, and the leaders from each of the respective troops/companies shared dinner together in the Zone 6 Dining Facility (DFAC) Auxiliary Room.

Commanders from both commands agreed that the training conducted during the Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority (RIP/TOA) process was invaluable for the Soldiers of Task Force KOA; with Lt. Col. Tackett highlighting how much they would have liked to have received the same training when they assumed the mission.

Now officially responsible, Ligsay commented that he expects that Task Force KOA will pick up where the 1-148th IN left off and continue to successfully provide security for the convoys as they take their valuable cargo to locations throughout Iraq.



Lt. Col Rudolph Ligsay (left) shakes hands with 1-148th IN Commander, Lt. Col Brian Tackett

Below: Lt. Col Rudolph Ligsay (left) signs the Transfer of Authority document, officially taking over the mission from 1-148th IN



Making history — A Soldier's story — driving through the roads of Iraq



By: Spc. Reed Kotake
299th CAV Public Affair Representative

The first thing that came to mind as we closed the doors to our humvees was the classic AC/DC song "Highway to Hell."

The day was Nov. 29th 2008 and the mission was to secure over 1,000 miles of hostile territory. None of us really knew what to expect. It was the culmination of five months of intensive training; an end to one phase and the beginning of another. It was hard to believe that we would be the first.

"Well it is great actually to be with a bunch of guys from the 487th, a field artillery unit attached to the cavalry unit, and to know that the king of battle really does lead the way," said Sgt. Kekoa Lucas. We all echoed his sentiments, nervous but proud to be a part of history in the making.

After our pre-combat checks and inspections it was time to roll. The team gathered for prayer and our huddle ended with a rally cry of our platoon call sign "Monster." The gravel crackled underway and the dust kicked up like a rooster tail. We were off.

Time seemed to stretch as we made our way to the Arifjan Entry Control Point. For many of us this was a second time around; a return to a country that we had traveled before. I wouldn't call it a homecoming, but it seemed as if we were coming back to someplace that we knew well. With the lights of Arifjan fading into the distance and the yellow streetlights of the highway whizzing by, we knew we were stepping into uncharted territory for the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. This was the first time the brigade received a convoy escort mission.

My thoughts turned to those that had been here before us. I uttered a silent prayer for our brothers that passed, asking them to watch over our small Convoy Escort Team (CET). Names like Parker, Cariaga, Lieto and Jack were heroes of our last deployment, and I asked that they watch our "six o'clock" as we drove through Iraq.

The boarder crossing loomed in the distance. It's the final pit stop in Kuwait; the place

where we make sure all the T's are crossed and the I's dotted. One more check; radios are good, fuel is topped off, and weapons are mounted and lubed. This is the place where we link up with the rest of our convoy. We meet the men and women who we have to escort. It is an Air Force convoy led by Tech Sgt. Steele. He is calm and jovial, and you can see in his demeanor that he has done this before. After a short safety brief and another prayer for those who just joined us, we take off.

I could hear the voice of 2nd Lt. Bingham-Tuisamatatele, our Escort Commander, crackle over the radio, "start point time now, weapons red amber green, combat locks engaged."

The drivers pick up speed to 45 mph as the trucks roll out toward the Iraqi border.

We cross into Iraq.

The first thing I notice about Iraq is the smell. It is a smoky, dusty and putrid scent that I remember so well. Everything here smells burnt. "I'm finally back" rings in my head as I look out the window at the darkness. In the distance, the smoke stacks of an oil refinery light up the horizon with a bright orange glow. It's the flame that gives us the send off into Iraq, as well as the beacon to guide us back to base. The rest of it is nothingness.

Our trucks had taken fire on one of the training missions. A bright silver dimple gleamed on the door like a shiny new dime. It was a constant reminder to not become complacent but to not become overconfident either, because we were stepping into harm's way. The harassing fire of one insurgent would not break our resolve as artillerymen and U.S. Army Soldiers from completing the mission at hand. We are here to safely escort millions of dollars of supplies and equipment to the men and women that need it all over the country. We are the bloodline of the army right now, and we will complete our task.

Once on our route, the monotony is broken by the sounds of other convoys crossing our path. The roadways are marked with glow sticks and we crossover from lane to lane like giant caterpillars following a trail of food. The desert is empty but there are many things to see on the road along the way. We pass civilian truckers hauling gravel and other supplies up and down the highway even though the roads are suppose to be closed at night due to a local curfew. Many are stopped on the sides of the road at makeshift truck stops. The stops are nothing more than a place to sleep, furnished with tables and

umbrellas. Strangely enough, they remind me of the tables you would see on the beach at Ala Moana or the front of Kahala Mall.

We continue north, our first destination is Camp Scania. We are almost there when a report comes over the radio. Another convoy has been delayed by enemy action; we are to immediately stop, and cannot continue on our route. We decide to stop at Camp Cedar. Cedar is cold and quiet as we pull in. The lights of other convoys that were delayed start pulling in behind us. We barely notice them as we unload our trucks and head to our beds.

The push to Scania and further is uneventful. Our final destination is Taji and we all know what that means; we are going to drive straight through Baghdad. As the lights of Baghdad loom ahead our normal playful banter in the truck gets slower. We are focused ahead and around. In today's three-dimensional battlefield you never know where that next attack is going to come from. With our outside remote control lights flailing around like an octopus, we push into Baghdad. The smoke from burning trash and tires is almost incapacitating. Our visibility drops to about thirty feet and our eyes strain to see what lies beyond. The highway here twists and turns just like any other major metropolis, but you still cannot mistake this place. The destruction of war is apparent as you look around. Many places still bear the scars of battle. We pass a gaping hole in an overpass. I conjecture that its damage from years of neglect.

"It's probably a hole from a bomb," chimes in the driver, Sgt. Daniel Keliikoa. I hate to admit it, but I think he's right.

The smoke fades as we move away from the city. Within a couple of hours we reach Taji. It's nice to be at our final destination. Heading for a well-deserved day of rest, we offload the trucks and secure our gear. We will have ten hours to rest and then we do it all again. It's all in a day's work. Luckily this one ended safely and uneventful. We had completed the first leg of our first mission. All that was left now was to turn around and get back to base.

When all is said and done, we will have been on the road for six days and traveled over 1,000 miles. The supplies and equipment we transported made it safely and without incident to where it needed to be. But most importantly, Battery A, 1-487th Field Artillery, CET 6 of Convoy Security Company 4, came together as a team and stepped into history.

100-442nd IN accepts mission to "Go for Broke"



Picture by: Sgt. Crystal Carpentio, PA

100-442nd IN BN Commander Lt. Col. Michael Peeters (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Glenn Gomes uncase the colors.

By: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito, Public Affairs

Training is complete and the warriors of "One-Puka-Puka" - puka meaning "hole" and in this case symbolizing the zeros in 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment - are out on the Iraqi roads conducting their convoy escort missions.

Though running these missions for days prior, the Transfer of Authority was made official on Dec. 1st, with a ceremony held in front of their new command post at Camp Virginia, Kuwait; "a proud moment for the Battalion," said 100th Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Glenn Gomes.

Replacing the 1st Squadron, 126th Cavalry Regiment, the 100th Battalion is now responsible for securing and escorting convoys traveling into southern Iraq.

"I think they're going to do great," said 1-126th Cavalry Command Sgt. Maj., Michael White. "I think there will be no problems."

This is the second deployment for the 100th Battalion; adding to their long lineage of history dating back to 1942.

The 100-442nd IN Battalion is the most decorated unit in the U.S. Army, originating as the

Nisei—Japanese-American—Battalion and Regiment of World War II, explained Cpt. Timothy Zeisset, Tactical Operations Center (TOC) Battle Captain and Battalion Civil Military Officer.

This time around the area of operation is less hostile than when the 100th Battalion conducted combat operations in Balad during 2004-2006, OIF III, Gomes said.

"It doesn't matter what the mission is. We always will do our duty and do our mission to the best of our ability, and Go for Broke!" said Gomes.



Photo by: Cpt. Kevin Gilbert

100th Battalion representatives stand in formation following the uncasing of their colors

GO
FOR
BROKE



Photo by: Pfc. Joshua Blow

The 1-126th CAV Commander and Command Sgt. Maj. pass over the mission as they case their colors

Welcome to Camp Virginia, Kuwait: Home to HHC 29th BSTB & 100-442nd IN



The USO provides Soldiers with morale lifting activities such as these video game stations where they can sit on beanbags and play their favorite video games after work.



The USO is a nonprofit organization, which uses donations from companies such as Walt Disney to provide Soldiers with a small movie theater, couches, TVs, tables and more.



In MWR, Soldiers spend their free time playing billiards, Ping-Pong, foosball, cards, video games, watching movies or just sitting around a table and talking with friends.



There are two gyms on base that Soldiers visit to get in shape. Fitness equipment includes treadmills, elliptical trainers, free-weights and various weight machines.



McDonalds, along with Taco Bell, Charlie's, and Subway are some of the hot spots to eat.



Within the outdoor food court is a Kuwait gift store where Soldiers may buy cultural souvenirs.



AAFES PX provides for anything from clothes and hygiene products to snacks and electronics.



Within the dining facility is a dessert bar where Soldiers can choose from a variety of cakes, pies & even Baskin-Robbins ice cream, all free of charge.



Soldiers sleep in two-person rooms with full-size beds, wall lockers, AC/Heater, and miscellaneous furniture, including: refrigerators, chairs and night-stands.



The Education Center provides Soldiers with such academics as Math 103 and Sociology 100.

1-487th FA makes a bittersweet return to Kuwait



Photo By: Maj. Pamela Ellison, PAO

The 1-487th FA stands together at their Transfer of Authority ceremony

Article and pictures by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito
Public Affairs



Staff Sgts. Roger Uganiza (left) and Joseph Alpuro stand beside the Hawaiian flag



Lt. Col. Robert Lesher (2nd to left) salutes the Commander of Troops before uncasing the colors

This month, two years ago, they were leaving Camp Patriot on their way home; the thought of sunny days at the beach in Hawaii close to becoming reality.

Little did the Soldiers of 1-487th Field Artillery Battalion know that they would return again; their mission to take responsibility of the Command Cell and provide security for the base, as well as southern Kuwait.

On Nov. 25th, the Soldiers reunited within the grounds of Camp Patriot, Kuwait, in a ceremony held to recognize the transfer of authority from one unit to their own.

With the casing of their counterpart's colors, the 1-134th Field Artillery passed on the torch to the islanders, who showed acceptance by uncasing their colors thereafter.

"I feel excited to get started and do what's right for our brigade, our battalion and our nation," said 1-487th FA Commander, Lt. Col. Robert Lesher.



Above: Staff Sgt. Rodney Alesna (left) and Spc. Joseph Guieb fly the Hawaiian flag



1-134th FA Soldiers fold the Ohio Flag



1-487th FA Soldiers painted the Hawaiian flag and battalion and brigade crests on a Camp Patriot barrier in 2005



The colors, including 1-487th FA Soldier Spc. Flor Velasco (2nd from the right), present arms for the National Anthem

HHC, 29th BSB accepts command responsibilities of LSA



Photos by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito, Public Affairs

29th BSB Commander and Command Sgt. Maj., Virgine Kanoa, uncase the colors after HHC BSB accepts mission from 37th.

By: 1st Lt. Christine Leimbach
29th BSB Public Affairs Representative



37th STB Commander and CSM case their colors. The casing symbolizes the end of a mission successfully completed and the beginning of the units redeployment home.

HHC, 29th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) completed their Relief in Place (RIP)/ Transfer of Authority (TOA) with Special Troops Battalion (STB), 37th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), of the Ohio Army National Guard, which was recognized with a ceremony on Nov. 24th at 3:30 p.m.

The ceremony was held at the Life Support Area (LSA) Command Cell courtyard in Kuwait. Distinguished guests included Area Support Group-Kuwait Commander Col. Christopher Hoffman, Kuwait Army Commander Brig. Gen. Khaled Al Dae, LSA Base Commander Col. Paul Feather, 37th IBCT Commander Col. Richard Curry, 29th IBCT Commander Col. Bruce Oliveira and other guests.

Before 37th STB took over the LSA Command Cell, it was managed by the Air Force for three years. During their tour the 37th STB Commander, Lt. Col. John Dernberger, and his company overcame many obstacles. Collectively each section within the Command Cell accomplished individual projects as well as major camp

projects. Some of their accomplishments made on the LSA include: improvement of force protection and design of the initial Entry Control Point (ECP); management and accountability of the installation property; supply of water and communication services to Soldiers; and organization of special observances, ceremonies and extra-curricular events.

Since they arrived into Theater the Soldiers of HHC, 29th BSB have absorbed all knowledge bestowed upon them by those of the 37th STB; it was a difficult task since they had a little more than two weeks to learn what the 37th STB did in 10 months.

"To the 29th BSB Soldiers, we have been given an immeasurable amount of historical knowledge covering LSA operations during the Relief in Place process, with the 37th coaching, teaching and mentoring us every step of the way. We are now charged with sustaining the same level of excellence, established by Lt. Col. Dernberger and his staff," said BSB and LSA Camp Commander Lt. Col. Keith Yoshida.



By: Staff Sgt. Lorajan Basuel

A/29th BSB Public Affairs Representative

As the sun peaks over the horizon, Soldiers of Company A, 29th Brigade Support Battalion slowly begin to arrive. A Soldier carries their gear; dressing warm for a chilly shift. Others begin to line up behind the vault door to secure their weapons. Their leader calls them into formation to disperse current information.

This is a normal day for the Soldiers of 3rd Platoon. Our company has been given the responsibility of securing one of the gates in Kuwait. This is a tiresome task but also a necessity. Soldiers endure hours of searching vehicles and personnel; without them, maintaining security on the base and its outskirts would be impossible. It is a job that has pride instilled within it.

It's been almost two weeks since the company has taken over this responsibility.

Soldiers of the Ohio National Guard passed on a large amount of experience and

A/29th BSB conducts security



Sgt George Tumbaga from 3rd Platoon takes suspected terrorist down in battle drill.

knowledge; tools needed to carry out a great mission and be successful in executing it.

Soldiers are optimistic about the deployment. They continue to keep themselves occupied productively; some are keeping in shape by heading to the gym and others choose to relax by popping in a DVD.

During this holiday season, our Soldiers are highly encouraged to communicate with their loved ones at home. Platoons will be having Christmas parties for their Soldiers to lift spirits during this holiday season. Hawaii's Family Readiness Group and other friends and families have sent numerous packages containing an abundance of local snacks and clothes. Our Soldiers expressions show great appreciation and contentment. It surely reminds them that they are not forgotten, especially during this holiday season.

1-487th FA runs 5k for Pearl Harbor attack in 1941

By: Spc. Courtney Chang

HQB, 1-487th Public Affairs Representative

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion 487th Field Artillery conducted a 5k run at Camp Patriot on Dec. 7th in commemoration of Pearl Harbor.

More than 200 civilian contractors and servicemembers from all branches of the armed services participated. The registration separated the participants according to age groups. Before the event began, service members huddled and stretched in small groups to keep warm in the cold Kuwaiti air.

As the participants gathered at the start line, you could feel the anticipation among them.

The run was dedicated to the events of Dec. 7th 1941, and to all those who were involved in that historical date. On that day, Pearl Harbor, located on the island of O'ahu, was attacked by the Japanese. That attack resulted in the loss of 2,402 Soldiers and wounded 1,282 others. It was



B/1-487th FA, Spc. Mako Arakawa came in 2nd place during the event and received a 1st place award for fastest runner in his age group.

a deciding factor in the United States involvement in World War II.

All those who took part in the run received a T-shirt signifying their completion. Awards were given by age group to the fastest of those runners.

Spec. Mako Arakawa, of Bravo "Primo" Battery, came in 2nd place and received a medal

after he ran the course in 18 minutes, 43 seconds.

Although some individuals had fun competing to cross the finish line first, others enjoyed being outside to view the sunrise and scenery.

Since the course stretched across the camp, areas of the route bordered the Persian Gulf and reminded Soldiers of home. Pfc. Roberto Ramilo said, "It was to feel the ocean breeze out on the run, it almost felt like running at Ala Moana Beach Park."

The event started at 5:30 a.m. and finished promptly at 6:42 a.m. Those who finished early went back to encourage their fellow Soldiers, and make sure no one was left behind. Once finished though, not everyone was quick to leave, there were refreshments and fresh fruit served afterwards to go with the T-shirts and medals given out.

HHC, 29th BSTB's first deployment as a company



29th BSTB Commander, Lt. Col. Moses Kaoiwi and Command Sgt. Maj. Phillip Umali, uncuse their colors

By: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito, PAO

They were just under 24 months young, when Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (HHC, 29th BSTB) — comprised of Soldiers previously from HHC, 29th Separate Infantry Brigade — was called upon to deploy for the first time.

After months of training, HHC Soldiers stood ready to uncuse the colors in front of them, and finally accept their mission as the Command Cell at Camp Virginia, Kuwait. The acceptance of their

mission was recognized on Nov. 24th, with a ceremony held to transfer authority from the 237th Brigade Support Battalion to the HHC, 29th BSTB.

Just like a mayor's responsibility in the running of a small town—some of their new responsibilities will include providing billeting and food services to Soldiers, maintenance of facilities and organizing morale functions.



Lt. Col. Gerard Garvey and Command Sgt. Maj. William Horne case their colors



Sgt. Lorinda Ballesteros and Sgt. Sheryllyn Banday present arms.



All in a Day's work: the 29th BSTB

By: Major Shawn Tsuha

It's dark and a little cold, as you rustle in your bed trying to adjust your blanket to cover the exposed part of your body. In the quiet of early morning you hear the hum of generators providing electrical power; it's always in the background. And then you hear the squeal of metal against metal as truck drivers slowly apply their brakes to line up for another convoy going north into Iraq. At that moment you say a little prayer for your brothers-in-arms because you know they travel in harms way to secure logistical convoys.

Everyday Soldiers from Samoa, Guam, Saipan, Hawaii, and other states as well, provide the muscle to ensure everything from beans to bullets get to their destination on time.

It's all a part of what we do here at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, also called "The Happy Village".

As you step outside, to go to the shower trailer, the cold desert air knocks the sleepiness right out of your system. Night comes quickly in the desert, and the temperature drops even faster, staying at 40 degrees or colder all night. You push on because you have to get to work, the more vigorously you walk the less time you're exposed to the cold. You're reminded of all the simple things in life you take for granted, like being able to walk barefoot in your underwear to your bathroom at home. After quickly washing up and getting dressed, Reveille is playing. The familiar bugle notes remind you of common military heritage as you take a quick look at the Stars and Stripes flying next to the flags of South Korea, England, Tonga and the State of Hawaii.

Camp Virginia is home to troops from the U.S., South Korea, and England. It is also where units transition from Iraq before going home. Soldiers from the countries of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Tonga have all stopped at Camp Virginia before going home.

As the "Mayors Cell" for Camp Virginia, the Hawaii Soldiers provide all the Command and Control, Coordination and Support functions. But, it's a team effort with contractors from all over the world, including the generous support of our host nation, Kuwait. Virginia is called the "Happy Village" because here it's all about working together to get things done. Everything is geared toward supporting the troops traveling through and supporting the logistics pipeline.

There to greet you is the night shift; Staff Sgt. Michael Moore, Sgt. Robin Tuaniga and Pfc. Esther Cho provide a report on activities that occurred overnight. It reminds you that for the Soldiers of the 29th

Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB) and the 100-442nd Infantry (IN) Battalion, it's a 24-7 job.

On the road, Soldiers from the 100-442nd IN, the 1-299th Cavalry, A/1-487th Field Artillery and A/29th BSTB are alert and ready, scanning the road ahead and to the sides, while they secure the Iraq-bound convoys. Their mission incomplete until reaching their northern destination and returning south to Camps Virginia and Buehring.

The day shift for the Mayor's Cell; Sgt. 1st Class Pelias Espinosa, Spcs. Joyce Guieb and Lillian Park, and Pfc. Leticia Timothy are filtering in, getting their morning briefing. Then they start to work myriad issues every small town has; things like electricity out at this tent, water leaking from this shower trailer, job orders to be completed. Breakfast is for later, when things slow down a bit. The day dawns and you start to warm up, and the camp comes to life with Soldiers getting breakfast, leaving for home, or just arriving.

Staff Sgt. Damien Lariosa, and Spcs. Aldrich Tumamao and Richmond Penales are getting ready for an MWR Cultural Awareness trip to Kuwait City. Sgt. 1st Class Carmen Kanei and Spc. Christopher Smith are at the motorpool dispatching vehicles, while Sgt. 1st Class Sueann Kauanui, Staff Sgt. Amy Aguil, Sgt. Sherylyn Banday and the Supply section are opening up shop. Let's not forget the dining facility crew; Sgt. 1st Class Randall Inafuku, Sgts. Joel Burdette and Christopher Nakama, Spcs. Ernest Fejes and David Ross and Pfc. Terina Blue, because they're making sure food is ready for thousands of Soldiers and contractors.

2nd Lt. Allen Tudela's section, with Spc. Jeffrey Palomares, is busy tackling important issues like pay, benefits, rest and recuperation leave, and other administrative functions. Meanwhile our hearts and prayers follow Sgt. 1st Class Lei Watson, who is on Emergency Leave back home in Hawaii.

Strolling by their office you see Sgt. Lorinda Ballesteros and 1st Sgt. Christopher Tourtellot, hard at work tracking and inputting hundreds of job orders every week. 2nd Lt. Erica Salvador, Sgt. 1st Class Marc Britos, Staff Sgt. Christian Calaveras and Spc. Geoffrey Gabayan are busy prioritizing the work orders to ensure all communication and computer equipment is operational.

The Chaplain, 1st Lt. Christopher Pascua, and his assistant, Spc. John Olipani, have opened the worship facility and are ready to minister to the spiritual needs of anyone who wants it. Many would agree that's a difficult job in these circumstances, with war and the separation from loved ones back home.

Sgt. 1st Class Tobias Boyce just had his

birthday. On that day he stepped into an office of pink balloons and then settled down to begin managing the Tent Pads along with Staff Sgts. Ivan Avilla and Justin Aeto, Sgt. Clifford Gardenas, and Spcs. Martin Makuaole and Jeffrey Ulep.

Environmental Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge, Staff Sgt. Sharde Marshall, is on the job checking out a rodent complaint from one of the tent pads. Spcs. Demetrius Monico and Taira Siemsen are already getting tasked by Command Sgt. Maj. Phillip Umali. The S2 section is headed out the door to make an important meeting and check up on three 29th BSTB Soldiers working at Camp Arifjan; Spcs. Christopher Meana and Nicole Harper and Sgt. 1st Class Carlito Rabanal.

Before you know it the evening crew, including Staff Sgt. Ryan Baqui, Spcs. Linsey Lafitaga and Cwislyn Walter are getting briefed. Now the sun is setting in the desert sky and the temperature drops again. Desert sunsets can be so clear and beautiful; it reminds you of the sunsets back home, the bluest of blue and the red-orange color that artists struggle to imitate.

Then, after another 12-hour shift, you share the day with your friends over dinner, go back to wash up or work out, and just unwind before you sink into your bed.

For most of us this tour is a lot different from the last one and a whole lot safer. But the commitment to do your best, no matter the task, is always there because we represent the U.S. Army, the Hawaii National Guard, the 29th IBCT, the 29th BSTB and the people of Hawaii. In places like Arifjan, LSA and Camps Buehring and Virginia, the sons and daughters from Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, Saipan, Micronesia and the States in-between are working hard everyday to support the Soldiers on your left and right.

You take one last look at the pictures of your loved ones, switch off the light and arrange your blanket so you're covered up good. You're planning every minute for when you get back home because time is precious, and you can never set back the clock. You'll never take for granted your loved ones, or clean water, or that cold beer during the Family Luau. You will always remember those that died serving our country because to serve is not an abstract concept for us.

In the darkness you hear the humming of the camp generators and the squealing of truck brakes as another convoy gets ready to go. I'm thinking about Huli-Huli chicken, Lomi salmon, sticky rice and a chocolate shake. I say a prayer for my comrades-in-arms and for our loved ones back home and for America.

29th IBCT company from Arizona meets BDE CDR COL Oliveira



29th IBCT Commander, Col. Oliveira, speaks to the Soldiers of E/29th BSB about the 29th IBCT's important contribution to the Army National Guard.

Photos and story by: Sgt. Crystal Carpenito, PA

It was a moment you experience upon meeting a long lost family member for the first time. The faces were unfamiliar but you knew they were family, because on their right shoulder sleeve was an arched shield insignia with a barbed cross. Symbolizing Hawaii's nickname "Crossroads of the Pacific," it is the patch worn by all who swear to serve under the protective mission of the 29th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

On the afternoon of Nov. 29th a bridge was formed between two echelons, previously separated by miles of Pacific Ocean, when the

Soldiers of Company E, 29th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) met a man some look to as the father of the 29th IBCT.

The 29th IBCT Commander, Col. Bruce Oliveira, took advantage of the rare opportunity to meet those E/29th BSB Soldiers after they arrived at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

Attached to the 1-158th Infantry Battalion in Arizona, E/29th BSB was stood up when the 29th IBCT transformed from a separate infantry brigade to a brigade combat team upon its redeployment from Iraq in 2006. Although the FSC was designed to move supplies and services forward to combat units on the battlefield, E/29th

BSB deployed separately from the brigade with a mission to conduct detainee operations at Camp Bucca, Iraq.

During his speech, Col. Oliveira taught the Soldiers about the brigade's history and emphasized the importance of its mission throughout Southwest Asia.

"Before I heard what I heard earlier, I was proud already. Now that I know we have a lot of history, I'm basically even more proud to be part of it," said Pfc. Mario Ontiveros.

When her unit the 1-196th Area Support Medical Battalion deployed last year, Spc. Lucial Monreal was 7 months pregnant. She watched both her parents and brother deploy and recently return from Southwest Asia. Now with a 14-month-old daughter she decided it was her turn and volunteered to deploy with E/29th BSB.

"I was told that this is a really good company," said Monreal. "I had a couple choices actually. This was the one they told me was probably gonna be best."

Although hard to leave her daughter, Mia-Renee, she believes it was in the best interest for their future.

Since its formation, this was the first time E/29th BSB and the 29th IBCT came together. The moment was brief but significant, for on that day both parties were reminded of why they left their families behind, but that they still have their brothers and sisters to their left and their right, all who wear the 29th IBCT insignia patch.



Spc. Lucial Monreal from Arizona



Pfc. Mario Ontiveros from Arizona



E/BSB Soldiers pose for a picture after Col. Oliveira's speech

Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony in Kuwait

CAMP ARIFJAN



By: 1st Lt. Christine Leimbach
29th BSB Public Affairs
Representative

Soldiers kicked off this year's holiday season with a Christmas Tree Lighting ceremony conducted simultaneously at four military camps throughout Kuwait.

The event took place at 1900 hours on Friday, December 5th at Camps Buehring, Virginia, LSA and Arifjan. LSA MWR Branch Manager, Martin Larson, used Yahoo messenger to broadcast the event to all camps.

Camp Command cells included various fun events that led up to the countdown of the Christmas tree lighting.

Camp Virginia had free pizza and hot chocolate for the Soldiers.

LSA



Photo by: 2nd Lt. Jordan Acidera

Lt. Col. Keith Yoshida, 29th BSB Commander, lighting the LSA Christmas tree. Behind him is live broadcasting of the trees from other bases being lit.



Photo by: 2nd Lt. Jordan Acidera

HHC, 29th BSB Soldiers singing Christmas Carols on the stage. From Left to Right: SPC Ambreh Holi, SPC Chalcedony Silva, SPC Kalai Kahalekai, SGT Novie Widemann, SFC Roland Ladera, SGT Mariesyl Erese, SGT Maria Ramos, CPT Donna Wu, 1SG Rudy Gabrillo, SFC Mario Tabaquin, SPC Colin Lau, SFC Ray Fermin, Chaplain Ray Kitagawa and not seen SPC Rayarchie Rosete, SGT Erwin Udarbe, SGT Jonathan Serrano.

"We had games like Christmas Trivia, Finish the Lyrics and even Musical Chairs," said 2nd Lt. Erica Salvador, a Soldier of Company A, 29th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB).

Camp LSA paired their ceremony with Christmas Caroling led by 1st Sgt. Rudy Gabrillo

CAMP VIRGINIA



of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Brigade Support Battalion (HHC, 29th BSB). "Mele Kalikimaka," meaning Merry Christmas in Hawaiian, was the first song to break the ice and was accompanied with ukuleles and guitars.

His first time on deployment, 2nd Lt. Jordan Acidera said, "That's the first time I've

ever seen a tree lighting event being broadcasted between different locations throughout a country at the same time...I've never seen that before and that's why I thought it was interesting. It helped Soldiers get in that festive mood," he said.

A Christmas message from Hawaii



A local celebration with the Honolulu City Lights

In its 24th year, the 2008 "Honolulu City Lights" celebration will embrace the many wonderful characteristics and uniqueness of the people of Hawaii and our island home. This year's theme, "**Ku'u Home ~ Our Home**," highlights Honolulu, a special place where diverse cultures intertwine, where history blends, and where we embrace and share the Spirit of Aloha with our families, friends and visitors.

Honolulu City Lights is Hawaii's premiere holiday event and is sponsored by Mayor Mufi Hannemann, the employees of the City and County of Honolulu, the Friends of Honolulu City Lights and many community-minded businesses. Each year it draws hundreds of thousands of people to Honolulu Hale (City Hall) and the Civic Center grounds. On opening night alone, 75,000 guests join in to kick-off the holiday season.

Courtesy: www.honolulu.gov

Opening night took place on December 6th but the Exhibits of trees, wreaths and gingerbread houses will be on display through Jan. 1, with strolling musicians and pre-Christmas visits by Santa.





Our Thanksgiving Dinner in Kuwait

Loved ones back home collect goodies for their Soldiers

Article and photos by 1LT Lisa Royce, 1/299th CAV (RSTA), Hilo HI

Just in time for the holidays, families of deployed soldiers made plans to send their loved ones overseas surprise care packages, courtesy of the Hilo, Hawaii FRG (Family Readiness Group). Rear detachment Soldiers of the 1/299th CAV



Wearing shirts with the name of their loved ones near their heart, four Family Readiness Group members collect snacks to mail to 1-299th CAV Soldiers

eagerly lent a helping hand in the packaging process in this year's Snacks For Soldiers program, stuffing

mailing boxes to the brim with a wide variety of goodies and holiday greeting cards donated by the community outside of Hilo Safeway on November 29th and 30th. According to Anela

Dekoning, Hilo FRG Team Leader, the packages will be mailed and delivered to roughly 96 members deployed from Hilo.



Customers of the Hilo Safeway add their local goodies that are going to be sent to the 1-299th Cavalry Soldiers in Kuwait.

Honoring fallen Hawaii veterans

Article and photos by 1LT Lisa Royce, 1/299th CAV (RSTA), Hilo HI

Lives given defending liberty were remembered and men and women who answered their nation's call were honored in the fall sunshine in front of Hawaii County Veterans Cemetery I on November 11th. Friends, family and veterans gathered to pay their respects to those who came before them at the military cemetery that is meant to be the final resting place for hundreds of Hawaii veterans. The ceremony included the Mayor's Address by Honorable Mayor Harry Kim and the Veterans Day Address presented by LTC Benedict Fuata, Commander of the Hawaii Army National Guard Army Aviation Support Facility.



A salute by fellow veterans, friends and family members for those who have dedicated their lives in loyal service to keeping their country free.



Attention Families:

Soldiers deployed with 1-299th CAV have finally made the move to Camp Buehring, Kuwait. This is their new address:

Soldier's full name (no rank)

Unit

APO, AE 09330

A big mahalo goes out to the keiki and staff of Pearl Harbor Kai elementary who sent goodie bags to the Soldiers of HHC, 29th IBCT.

MAHALO NUI LOA!



Haji pilgrims stone devil



What is the Hajj?

Hajj literally means 'to set out for a place.' In Islam however it refers to the annual pilgrimage that Muslims make to Mecca with the intention of performing certain religious rites in accordance with the method prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad.

History:

The Hajj is based on a pilgrimage that was ancient even in the time of Muhammad in the 7th Century. According to Haidth, elements of the Hajj trace back to the time of Abraham (Ibrahim), around 2000 BC. It is not mentioned in the Quran that it must be carried out during one's life time; rather it is mentioned in Quran that one should carry out this if he/she can afford it. It is believed that the Prophet Ibrahim was ordered by God (Allah) to leave his wife Hagar and his infant son Ismael alone in the desert. While he was gone, the child became thirsty, and Hagar ran back

and forth seven times searching for water for her son. The baby cried and hit the ground with his foot (some versions of the story say that an angel scraped his foot or the tip of his wing along the ground), and water miraculously sprang forth. This source of water is today called the Well of Zamzam. But there is no evidence in Quran or any other holy scriptures regarding this story.

Historically, Muslims would gather at various meeting points in other great cities, and then proceed en masse towards Mecca, in groups that could comprise tens of thousands of pilgrims. Two of the most famous meeting points were in Cairo and Damascus. In Cairo, the Sultan would stand atop a platform of the famous gate Bab Zuwayla to officially watch the beginning of the annual pilgrimage.

In 632 AD, when Muhammad led his followers from Medina to Mecca, it was the first Hajj to be performed by Muslims alone, and the only Hajj ever performed by Muhammad. He cleansed the Kaaba, removed all of the idols, and re-ordained the building as the house of God. It was from this point that the Hajj became one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Courtesy: Wikipedia.com

Current:

As of 2007, an estimated two million pilgrims participate in this annual pilgrimage. Crowd-control techniques have become critical, and because of the large

numbers of people, many of the rituals have become more stylized. It is not necessary to kiss the Black Stone, but merely to point at it on each circuit around the Kaaba. Throwing pebbles was done at large pillars, which for safety reasons were in 2004 changed to long walls with catch basins below to catch the stones. The slaughter of an animal can be done either personally, or by appointing someone else to do it, and so forth. But even with the crowd control techniques, there are still many accidental incidents during the hajj, as pilgrims are trampled in the crush, or ramps collapse under the weight of the many visitors, causing hundreds of deaths. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Hajj has a website, with the message, "Be peaceful, orderly and kind. No crushing."

The pilgrimage, a ritual required for all Muslims who are able, takes place not solely on a personal level but also as a ritual which is undertaken in a modern nation-state, Saudi Arabia. It is, therefore, both under the control of that state and also that state's responsibility.

At present, the hajj, in addition to its inestimable religious significance, is also a tremendous engine of economic redistribution, as it annually brings Muslims from the four corners of the globe back to Saudi Arabia. This influx of "pilgrim dollars" (as opposed to "tourist dollars") from other economies has a large impact throughout the Middle East and Northern Africa.

Courtesy: www.newworldencyclopedia.org

Effect on us:

The Hajj, will have very little, if any, affect on the 29th IBCT here in Kuwait. At most our Soldiers may be able to see pilgrims making their journey back to their native countries. While in Mohammed's time the pilgrims took to walking and four legged means of transportation, today's pilgrims use conventional means such as the automobile, and the commercial airline. This year's Hajj is also significant in the fact that Kuwait has opened its borders to Iraqi pilgrims who wish to travel by land to Mecca; previously Iraqi citizens were restricted to air travel only. Due to concerns over security and the potential for insurgents to use this as an opportunity to move from country to country as they see fit, the government of Saudi Arabia, requires that each pilgrim have a Hajj visa.

By: SSG Daniel Carreiro, HHC 29th IBCT S2 Section



Picture courtesy: www.reuters.com

Obama: 'Taking the fight' to Afghanistan

By [Drew Brown](#), Stars and Stripes
Thursday, November 6, 2008

A worsening war in Afghanistan — and a growing Taliban

and al-Qaida insurgency in the tribal areas of nuclear-armed neighboring Pakistan — will loom large on the agenda for President-elect Barack Obama during the next four years.

On the campaign trail, Obama argued that the war in Iraq has drained troops and resources from the battlefield in Afghanistan, causing the situation there to deteriorate. He has described Afghanistan as "the war we need to win," and he has pledged to send at least two more brigades of U.S. troops to reinforce the 70,000 U.S. and NATO forces already serving in the country.

Obama has also pledged to press NATO allies to contribute more forces, and he has said he will step up training for the Afghan army and police, as well as increase non-military aid to Afghanistan by \$1 billion.

"When I am president, we will wage the war that has to be won," Obama vowed, outlining his plans in an Aug. 1, 2007, speech at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C. "(But) the first step must be getting off the wrong battlefield in Iraq, and taking the fight to the terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

Obama has said he will not "tolerate a terrorist sanctuary" in Pakistan, and he has suggested that he will send U.S. forces on cross-border raids to eliminate high-value terrorists if the Pakistani government cannot or will not take action.

But making campaign promises is one thing. Turning them into realities on the ground is another.

Afghanistan is quickly eclipsing Iraq as the deadliest of America's two wars. Since May, U.S. casualty figures in Afghanistan have virtually matched those in Iraq on a monthly basis, and for the past two months, more U.S. troops have died in Afghanistan than in Iraq.

At least 151 U.S. troops have died in Afghanistan so far this year, making 2008 the deadliest for U.S. forces since the war began seven years ago, according to [icasualties.org](#). Another 104 soldiers from other countries also have died, according to the Web site. Insurgent attacks and the numbers of civilians killed in the war are also at an all-time high.

At least 626 U.S. soldiers have died in Afghanistan

Obama picks Shinseki for VA

By Hope Yen, Associated Press
Saturday, December 7, 2008

WASHINGTON »
President-elect Barack Obama has

chosen retired Gen. Eric K. Shinseki to be the next Veterans Affairs secretary, turning to a former Army chief of staff once vilified by the Bush administration for questioning its Iraq war strategy.

Obama will announce the selection of the Kauai-born Shinseki, the first Army four-star general of Japanese-American ancestry, at a news conference today in Chicago. He will be the first Asian-American to hold the post of Veterans Affairs secretary, adding to the growing diversity of Obama's Cabinet.

"I think that Gen. Shinseki is exactly the right person who is going to be able to make sure that we honor our troops when they come home," Obama said in an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press" to be broadcast today.

NBC released a transcript of the interview after the Associated Press reported that Shinseki was Obama's pick.

Shinseki's tenure as Army chief of staff from 1999 to 2003 was marked by constant tensions with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, which boiled over in 2003 when Shinseki testified to Congress that it might take several hundred thousand U.S. troops to control Iraq after the invasion.

Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, belittled the estimate as "wildly off the mark" and the army general was ousted within months. But Shinseki's words proved prophetic after President Bush in early 2007 announced a "surge" of additional troops to Iraq after miscalculating the numbers needed to stem sectarian violence.

Obama said he chose Shinseki for the VA post because he "was right" in predicting that the United States would need more troops in Iraq than Rumsfeld believed at the time.

"When I reflect on the sacrifices that have been made by our veterans and I think about how so many veterans around the country are struggling even more than those who have not served - higher unemployment rates, higher homeless rates, higher substance abuse rates, medical care that is inadequate - it breaks my heart," Obama told NBC.

Shinseki, 66, is slated to take the helm of

the government's second-largest agency, which was roundly criticized during the Bush administration for underestimating the amount of funding needed to treat thousands of injured veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Thousands of veterans endure six-month waits for disability benefits, despite promises by current VA Secretary James Peake and his predecessor, Jim Nicholson, to reduce delays. The department also is scrambling to upgrade government technology systems before new legislation providing for millions of dollars in new GI benefits takes effect next August.

Veterans groups cheered the decision.

"Gen. Shinseki has a record of courage and honesty, and is a bold choice to lead the VA into the future," said Paul Rieckhoff, executive director of the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "He is a man that has always put patriotism ahead of politics and is held in high regard by veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan."

Obama's choice of Shinseki is the latest indication that the president-elect is making good on his pledge to have a diverse Cabinet.

In Obama's eight Cabinet announcements so far, white men are the minority with two nominations - Timothy Geithner at Treasury and Robert Gates at Defense. Three are women - Janet Napolitano at Homeland Security, Susan Rice as U.N. ambassador and Hillary Rodham Clinton at State. Eric Holder at the Justice Department is African-American, while Bill Richardson at Commerce is Latino.

Shinseki is a recipient of two Purple Hearts for life-threatening injuries in Vietnam.

Upon leaving his post in June 2003, Shinseki in his farewell speech sternly warned against arrogance in leadership.

"You must love those you lead before you can be an effective leader," he said.



Ward, Florence get the big waves

By: Daniel Ikaika



PHOTO COURTESY ASP WORLD TOUR

Californian Chris Ward scores the highest two-wave total during the first day of the Pipeline Masters

A mix of local and international surfers thrived in perfect conditions as the Billabong Pipeline Masters began competition yesterday on the North Shore.

The barreling 4- to 8-foot (10- to 16-foot wave-face heights) tubes were plentiful, allowing competitors in Rounds 1 and 2 to post high scoring rides throughout the day.

ASP World Tour surfer Chris Ward, 29, scored the highest two-wave total of the event, a 19.90 out of a possible 20 points. In the process, the San Clemente, Calif., native also caught the highest scoring ride of the day -- a 9.77 out of 10 -- on a breathtaking Pipeline barrel.

"It isn't the biggest day. It isn't really that scary out there. It's just pristine and there's pretty good ones out there," Ward said. "You just gotta luck out and get in the right position to get 'em. I was (on) both of those waves and those were two of the biggest sets in our heat. I was lucky to get under 'em and I was really happy."

"In a heat it doesn't get any better than that," Ward said. "I'm just happy to be out there and happy to be in Hawaii."

Ward is still in the hunt for World Tour requalification next year, but is extremely impressed with the young surfers stepping

1,6000 jobs open at Hawaii's Target stores

By Andrew Gomes

Next week retailer Target Corp. will begin hiring up to 1,200 people to staff its two O'ahu stores to open in March, followed by another 400 employees to be hired in May for a store on the Big Island.

Target has scheduled a mass-hiring event for Dec. 18 to 21 at the Hawai'i Convention Center from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and will make same-day job offers to as many people as it can.

"We've got the application process down to an art, and ideally we would like to fill all 1,200 positions in those four days," said Rob Parke, Target's district team chief.

The hiring binge by the nation's second-largest discount retailer could provide some welcome relief to the hundreds of Hawai'i workers laid off since the economy began slipping earlier this year.

Among workforce cuts this year: 1,900 people at Aloha Airlines; 274 at Maui Land & Pineapple; 169 at Hawaii Medical Center; 130 at DFS Group; 120 at Molokai Ranch; 118 at Servo Pacific; 91 at The Honolulu Advertiser; 85 at Weyerhaeuser Co.; 70 at Hawaiian Dredging; and 38 at Palama Meat Co.

Other labor reductions have come at other companies through smaller layoffs, furloughs and reduced hours.

"A lot of people are looking for work," said

Beth Busch, executive director of Job Quest, the state's largest job fair. "In this economy, (Target's hiring) is perfect timing."

Layoffs helped push the state unemployment rate to a seven-year high of 4.5 percent in October, the most recent month for which statistics are available.

October's unemployment rate equates to 30,250 unemployed in a labor force of 665,350. That compares with 2.8 percent unemployment, or 18,200 unemployed out of 647,300, in October 2007.

Courtesy: The Honolulu Advertiser

Wednesday, December 10, 2008

State workers won't get off early Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) _ Hawaii state employees won't get off from work early like they usually do Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve.

Gov. Linda Lingle says taxpayers can't afford to give such an expensive gift to state employees as the economy declines and the state budget is running short.

Instead, the state's 53,000 employees in 17 departments will work full shifts the day before the holidays.

The state says it will save about \$15 million in productivity because employees will be at work instead of starting the holidays early.

This is the first time in Lingle's six years

in office that the state won't allow employees the administrative leave.

State workers can still take Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve off if they use vacation time.

Courtesy: Kapu.net

Wednesday, December 10th, 2008

Support Group's Scholarships help spouses finish education

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10, 2008 – Military spouses with an eye on professional certification or a post-secondary education may not have to foot the entire bill, thanks to a National Military Family Association scholarship program.

The group is accepting applications for its annual Joanne Holbrook Patton Military Spouse Scholarship. The scholarship is awarded to spouses or surviving spouses of Servicemembers on active duty or in the National Guard or reserves and of military retirees. The scholarships, ranging from \$500 to \$1,000, can be used for tuition, fees, and school room

and board while the spouse obtains professional certification or attends post-secondary or graduate school.

The number of scholarships awarded each year varies, depending on funding. But thanks to a partnership with the Fisher House and Folds of Honor foundations, the association is able to provide a larger number of scholarships. Scholarship selection is based on answers to survey questions used to help the association advocate for education changes on the applicant's behalf.

Applications are accepted online only, through the National Military Family Association

Web site, <http://www.nmfa.org>, and must be submitted by midnight Feb. 1.

Association officials said they started the scholarship program to recognize that unique challenges, including frequent moves and deployments, can interfere with military spouses' ability to complete their education. The association also has created a Web portal at <http://www.nmfa.org/SpouseEd> that's stocked with military spouse education resources and information to help spouses reach their career and educational goals.

Courtesy: www.defenselink.mil

New Military Handbook available for Guard and Reserve

ARLINGTON, VA December 10, 2008 Military Handbooks has announced the release of a new 2008 handbook for military personnel, the 2008 Guard and Reserve Military Handbook.

This handbook, written specifically for members of the Reserve Component, includes a variety of information about military pay, benefits, and education. To receive your own copy of this handbook, simply go to our Web site - www.militaryhandbooks.com and submit your request. Don't forget to tell all of your military colleagues about this free handbook!

About the 2008 Guard and Reserve Military Handbook: This unique handbook, written specifically for the National Guard and Reserves, gives you everything you need to know about serving in the Reserve Component, including: drill pay and enlistment bonuses; allowances like BAS and BAH; re-employment rights; education and training benefits specific to the Guard and Reserve; health care; and retirement.

Understanding the benefits you receive from serving in the Reserve Component can be tricky,

especially if you don't know where to go for more information. This handbook combines it all into one easy to use guide.

To download your own FREE copies of the 2008 Military Handbooks, please visit: <http://www.militaryhandbooks.com>.

Please note that if you received an error message while attempting to download the handbooks, it is due to the large volume of requests we are receiving. Simply try your request again in a few hours.

How to find Soldier's Holiday messages online



In light of our Soldiers' many Holiday Greetings back to their loved ones at home, here are some pointers on how to find the Holiday Greetings that were shot. Also, there is an option to send an e-card with the Holiday Greeting embedded in the e-card to be personalized and emailed to the Soldiers' loved ones.

Below are instructions on how to access the Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) Holiday Greetings on-line:

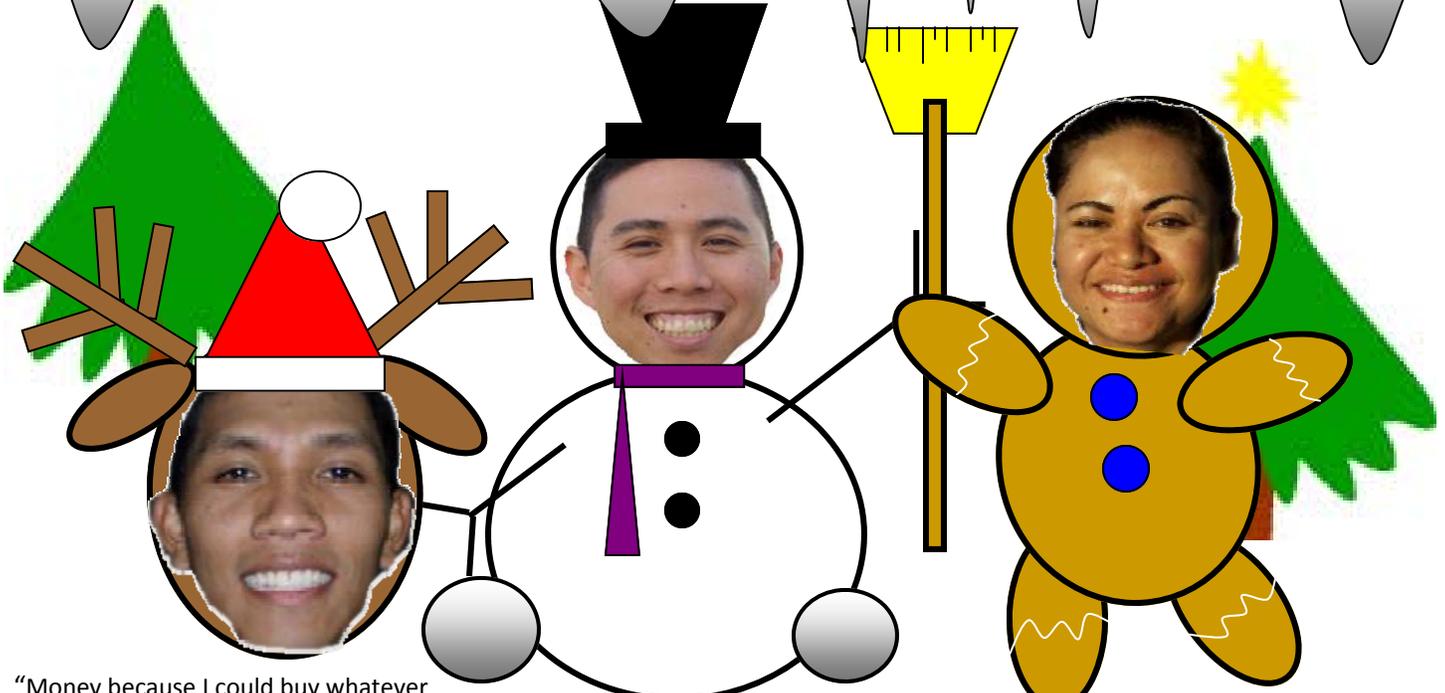
(Extracted from FAQs on the DVIDS website - www.dvidshub.net)

Go to - www.dvidshub.net, click on the Holiday Greetings icon in the upper right, you will find a drop down menu at the top in the center that asks you to "select a holiday" - select the appropriate Holiday, click on the appropriate state, and find the name

(they are listed alphabetically), and then you have the choice to download the video file, send a e-card with the video embedded, or download/listen to the audio file.

The files are also being sent back to the Hawaii television stations to be run as they deem appropriate. The great thing about DVIDS is that if the Holiday Greeting is not run or missed by the Soldiers' loved ones, then they can view them on-line anytime and/or save them to their personal electronics equipment for viewing at their convenience.

What was your favorite Xmas gift? ?



“Money because I could buy whatever I wanted.” Sgt. Jerome Balbin, HHC/ 29th IBCT

“Spending time with my family because of the times we get to cherish.” Sgt. Blayne Wong, HHB/487th

“A pink BMX bike from my parents. I hated the color but loved the bike.” Spec. Desire Kamaisantos, A/487th FA

Look out for Holiday Shout Outs From Your Soldiers



Stay tuned to local news stations for upcoming holiday greetings from your soldiers.

The 29th IBCT would like to send a warm mahalo to the Public Affairs Staff at the 4th SB, 311th ESC and 1st TSC for their assistance!!!!



We'd like to hear from you!

ATTN: PAO
HHC, 29th IBCT
APO AE 09366

Camp Arifjan Kuwait
Triad Area , Zone 6, Tent 14

Phone: DSN 430-7864
E-mail: pam.ellison@us.army.mil
E-mail: crystal.l.carpenito@us.army.mil

**WE'RE ON THE WEB AT
WWW.ARMYFRG.ORG**

Lava Flow Staff

**Public Affairs officer
Maj. Pam Ellison**

**Public affairs NCOIC
Sgt Crystal Carpenito**

**Contributors
UPARs**



Meet the 29th IBCT Unit Public Affairs Representatives!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Front row, left to right: **Maj. Ellison, Sgt. Carpenito, Sgt. Cox, 1st Lt. Leimbach, 2nd Lt. Reyes, Sgt. 1st Class Rabanal**

Back row, left to right: **Sgt. 1st Class Alviar, Staff Sgt. Naluai, Capt. Zeisset, Spec. Harper, Spec. Meredith Spec. Stansbury, 1st Lt. Espino, Sgt. Amano, Capt. Anno**

Missing from photo: **1st Lt. Yukutake, 1st Lt. Turner, 1st Lt. Ammerman, Staff Sgt. Fuata, Staff Sgt. Indalecio, Spec. Reed Kotake**



Public Affairs's Comment

As we are all getting settled into our new homes here in Kuwait, and as we are all getting familiar with our surroundings and all the new rules and regulations, I ask that each of you keep a couple of things in mind regarding Public Affairs (PA) related issues. As some of you may or may not know already, there are restrictions for photography and videography in the Kuwait Theater of Operations; according to Command Policy Memorandums from ARCENT, ASG-KU and 1st TSC, only Soldiers who need to take photos and/or videos in the course of doing their official duties are authorized to do so. Please be sure to get with your Unit Public Affairs Representative (UPAR) in order to ensure that you understand the importance of these photo and video restrictions. We ask that you follow these restrictions and use your UPAR as the person taking the photos and videos that your unit needs. Even the UPAR has certain guidelines that must be followed, as we don't want to create any Operational Security violations that could put our fellow Soldiers at risk. Please note that everything going back home and those PA products that we wish to publish on our assorted websites (i.e. newsletters, website photos, videos, etc.) are required to be reviewed by the 1st TSC release authority; please push these items to the Brigade PAO to get approval for release – the turnaround is very quick! Thank you for your cooperation in staying within these guidelines.

To each of you, the Brigade PAO section wishes holiday blessings for you and your families. Stay safe, continue your outstanding performance, and please let us know what you would like to see in YOUR newsletter!

Mele Kalikimaka me ka Hau'oli Makahiki Hou!

