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MEDCOM NOW



Office of the Army Surgeon General and Army Medical Command

Cavalry engages with Iraqi civilians

Medics from the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment provided medical care to Iraqis at a clinic in southeastern Iraq. They trained Iraqi nurses to make better use of the medicines available to them, and passed out shoes and clothing.

“These people don’t have a lot,” said Capt. Julie Cyr, the 27th Brigade Support Battalion’s medical



Pvt. 1st Class Rachelle Halaska inspects a child’s ear during a combined medical engagement near Forward Operating Base Hunter, Iraq.

planner. “It was a heartfelt deed, because they need our help.”

Click here for more information.

Reserve medics provide aid in Panama



Capt. Allison Wright (left) extracts a tooth of a boy in Canitas, Panama, with help from Spec. Shaun Macintire.

Members of the 7218th Medical Support Unit conducted two-week annual training in Panama, completing Medical Readiness Training Exercises in Canitas, Torti and Paso Blanco.

They treated some 400 animals and administered health care to more than 4,000 people.

“I am very excited to be here to meet these people and experience a new culture,” said Pvt. 1st Class Lashawndra Conley, a patient administrator. “This is also giving me a lot of experience to sharpen my job skills.” **Click here for more information.**

Dogs lick stress for Soldiers

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 185th Armor, at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, pet and hug their stress away with a little help from "Sgt. 1st Class Boe."

Boe is a four-year-old English Labrador Retriever, donated to the Army by the Guide Dog Foundation, through the America's Vet Dogs project. She lives on Speicher and works as a therapy dog.

Boe accompanies Capt. Cecelia Najera, occupational therapist, 528th Medical Detachment. Boe, who holds the honorary rank of sergeant first class, makes the rounds visiting the different units that reside on the base.

"Her purpose is to bring Soldiers a reminder of home and offer a sense of comfort and well being," said Najera.

Such animals are used as both physical and psychological therapy. Psychological benefits include the reduction of stress and anxiety, and the overall improvement of morale. On the physical side, therapy in-



Boe waits for her next therapy appointment at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

creases range of motion, strength and balance, and minimizes the need for preoperative medication. [Click here for more information.](#)

Teamwork

Medics from the 15th Brigade Support Battalion check vital signs on a mannequin during training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The Soldiers used mannequins that simulated breathing and bleeding. They learned how to and then applied tourniquets, cleared airways, checked circulation and treated collapsed lungs.

[Click here for more information.](#)



Retired doctor heads to Iraq

Retired Army Col. Lionel M. Nelson returned to military service after a five-year retirement to make a medical contribution in Iraq.

The former Air Force reservist and retired Army reservist shut down his private practice in San Jose, Calif., to participate in “90

Days Boots on the Ground,” an Army Reserve program that gives former military doctors the opportunity to deploy to Iraq for 90 days.

Nelson is brigade surgeon for the 449th Theater Aviation Brigade in Baghdad.

“I truly enjoy the people in Task Force 449 and their spirit to get the mission done,” Nelson said. “I enjoy working with people who have such pride in serving their country and am glad to say that I help to take care of America’s heroes.”

During his time in the Army Reserve, Nelson deployed to Southeast Asia with special operations and civil affairs units and assisted with humanitarian missions.



Col. Lionel Nelson (left) helps Soldiers during a mass casualty exercise in Baghdad, Iraq.

[Click here for more information](#)

Lieutenant overcomes loss of brother

For 2nd Lt. Gilberto Nieves it began in a West Point dormitory — a seemingly normal day for the aspiring infantry Soldier. He was pursuing a family tradition by joining the Army, and Nieves was eager to graduate so he could join his brother on the battlefield.

His ambition would be halted with a single phone call though. On the line, Nieves’ mother broke the devastating news: His brother was killed by a rocket-propelled grenade.

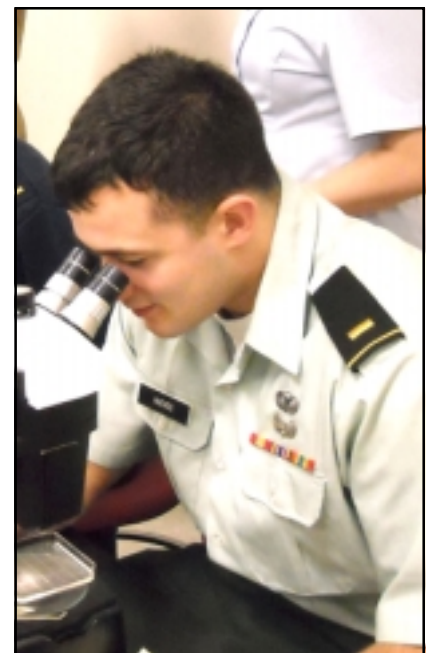
Although devastated, he became fixed on pursuing a career in military medicine through the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

Nearing the completion of his second year of medical school, the Soldier’s conviction remains steadfast and he is beginning to think about fields of medicine. Nieves is considering pediatrics — he calls himself a kid at heart — but more importantly, wants to mitigate any concerns service members have about their Families.

Outside of school, he brings to life the memory of his brother and other fallen heroes by speaking to veterans groups.

“I’m not forgetting what Soldiers give up,” he said, knowing all too well the meaning of sacrifice.

[Click here for more information.](#)



2nd Lt. Gilberto Nieves studies parasites during a laboratory class.

JCS chief promotes mental health

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff emphasized the importance of de-stigmatizing mental-health care for returning war veterans as he cut the ribbon on a newly renovated facility designed to improve that care at Fort Drum, N.Y.

“We’ve got to work hard to meet the need, and actually get ahead of, the challenges we have,” said Navy Adm. Mike Mullen. “I think we’re all in denial if we don’t recognize the huge, huge stress [multiple deployments have] put our force and our Families under.”

Fort Drum’s new Wilcox Center was renovated to provide much-needed care in a modern, state-of-the-art facility. **Click here for more information.**



Cutting the ribbon to open the new behavioral-health facility at Fort Drum, N.Y. are (left to right) Brig. Gen. Kevin Magnum, commander of 10th Mountain Division Rear; Adm. Mike

Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Pvt. Jacob Biss; Col. Jerry Penner, commander of Fort Drum MEDDAC; and Dr. Todd Benham, MEDDAC chief of behavioral health.

Polk opens new OR

Fort Polk, La., MEDDAC has nearly finished operating room renovations. The project began in 2007, and when it is complete the hospital will have four state-of-the-art ORs.

“The old ORs were dreary,” said Maj. Mary Condeluci, head nurse of the operating room. “I didn’t realize we were working in those conditions. When we saw the new lights, the lighter colors and the upgraded equipment, it changed morale.”

“The current update introduces much more extensive use of imaging technology to facilitate laproscopic surgeries,” said Col. George Giacoppe, hospital commander.

Click here for more information.



Fort Polk MEDDAC staff work in an improved operating room.



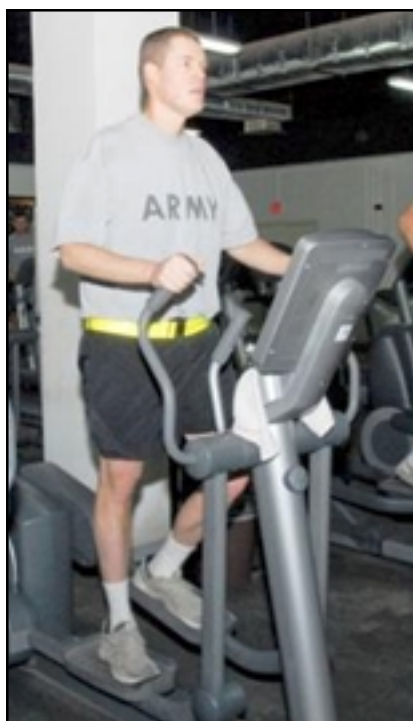
In command

Col. Judith Ruiz (left) and Col. Yolanda Ruiz-Isales (right) are the first twins to command Army medical facilities.

For more information, click here.



Hazel Clark Stewart conducts a nutrition class at the Fort McPherson, Ga., Wellness Center. **For more information click here.**



MAJ Doug Badzik, preventive medicine officer for the 10th Mountain Division surgeon's cell, has lost 40 pounds during nine months in Iraq. **For more information click here.**

New training centers open

High-tech Medical Simulation Training Centers (MSTC) recently opened at Fort McCoy, Wisc., and Fort Dix, N.J.

Soldiers are able to train on mannequins that simulate bleeding, breathing and realistic wounds. Rooms can be darkened to represent night, and sounds similar to battle are played to provide a combat-like setting.

"The [mannequin] lets the Soldiers see how their inaction can cause harm or good and can react if the Soldier is performing the proper procedures," said Paul Lapadula, combat lifesaver training coordinator at Fort Dix.

"Here at MSTC you have created a real-world environment to give a real-world experience that will pay huge dividends to our Soldiers. This [training] gives tremendous confidence to our Soldiers that we will give them the best top-notch care possible. It is a tremen-



Sgt. Tron Harris of the 978th Quartermaster Company gives an IV to a mannequin at the Fort Dix, N.J., Medical Simulation Training Center. **For more information click here.**

dous force multiplier," said Maj. Gen. Dean Sienko, commander of 3rd Medical Deployment Support Command.



Brig. Gen. Richard Stone (left) and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Richard Park cut the ribbon opening the Medical Simulation Training Center at Fort McCoy, Wisc. **For more information click here.**