

The Sustainment Times

Published by the 1st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office

Ready to Deploy

September 2007



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Deployment Ceremony

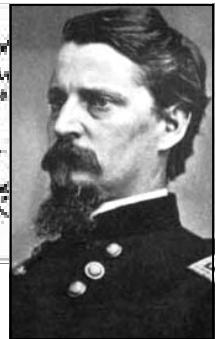
ISOPREP

FRG Day

Singles Retreat

...and much more

ARMY STRONG. 



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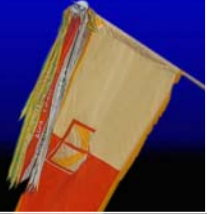
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The Boys Are Back In Town Pg. 15

Commander's Corner

Col. Kevin G. O'Connell, Commander



Dear First Sustainment Brigade Soldiers, Officers and Families,

Well, this is it! The last Brigade Newsletter before we deploy to Iraq. We've been anticipating this event for about a year and the time has finally come. I really appreciated all the hard work and long hours getting us ready to deploy. Our thoughts and prayers are with our families and friends as we deploy this week and next.

I want to welcome back the men and women of the 541st CSSB and 1st Maintenance Company. They did a superb job in Iraq and are enjoying a well-deserved rest. Well done! I'd also like to acknowledge the support and presence of the community, our families, MG (R) Shadley who serves as our Honorary Colonel of the Sustainment Brigade during our recent Deployment Ceremony. It was a beautiful day on the Cavalry Parade field and a great send off for our fine men and women. We're very fortunate to have the support of the local communities, as well as the Platte County mayors. We greatly appreciate their interest and plans for support during our deployment.

Finally, I can't say enough about the great work of our Rear Detachment and the Family Readiness Groups who have been preparing and supporting us during the recent months. We've had great information and assistance put out during the recent pre-deployment briefings. Please do not hesitate to contact the rear detachment in the Brigade Headquarters (Building 7450) or your FRG leaders for any questions or assistance you may need. They are ready to serve.

Godspeed!

COL Kevin O'Connell



Col. O'Connell leads a group of senior leaders on a tour of the First Infantry Division Museum in Wheaton Illinois.

Staff Ride to Cantigny

Story by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude, 1st SB PAO

If you ever had a desire to learn the history of the Big Red One, a staff-ride to Cantigny, in Wheaton, Illinois, is the way to go. The last time I visited Cantigny was to cover a Veterans Day ceremony with the First Infantry Division Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Fourhman. After the ceremony was over I remember thinking that if I ever had the opportunity, I would love come back and spend more time viewing the actual exhibits. I was glad I had the opportunity.

Maj. Christopher Dexter, Deputy Support Operations Officer for the First Sustainment Brigade, was among those who had not visited Cantigny and wasn't sure how to compare it to past trips "My expectations were not nearly as high. prior to this staff ride as previous ones.

I've been on several staff rides to the beaches, battlefields, and cemeteries in France, and as such was not expecting to get much out of this trip. However, I did think that the museum and grounds would be nice to tour as the McCormick Foundation has spent a lot of time and money to honor not only the 1st Division..."

The three-day journey started at 4am, Wednesday, when the group of 36 Officers, Warrant Officers and Senior Non Commissioned Officers from the 1st Sustainment Brigade boarded the Prevost bus bound for Chicago.

"The intent....to build teamwork and provide 1SB staff members with examples of leadership, strategy, communications, logistics support, and use of vehicles and terrain in the battles and campaigns in which the Big Red One has participated in." said Maj.

See Cantigny on Pg. 3

Cantigny Continued from Pg. 2

Arturo Lincoln, the Support Operations Plans Chief and organizer of the trip; "Everyone enjoyed the trip except for the 12 hour bus ride to and from (about 650 miles each way) Chicago."

With movies like *The Real History of the Big Red One*, *300* and the *Big Red One* starring Lee Marvin, what's not to like? I will admit I was pleased when we arrived at our hotel.

The next day we took a short ride from our hotel to Cantigny. Tucked away on five hundred acres of manicured grounds is, former First Infantry Division officer, Colonel Robert McCormick's gift to the State of Illinois and the First Infantry Division, Cantigny, A true place of beauty.

Robert McCormick was the heir to the Chicago Tribune newspaper and had successfully developed the newspaper into one of the largest in the nation. His vast holdings included the paper, a radio station, television station and the estate he renamed Cantigny after the 1918 battle in France. Once home to Robert and his wife, the property grounds included their main house, a 36 room mansion complete with a movie theater, servants quarters

and his great room filled with books, guns, swords and a hidden away bar and later a world class museum, dedicated to the history of the 1st Division, a large welcome center and golf course.

"I was pleasantly surprised, and humbled, at the sheer magnitude of the grounds and the museum...the quality and quantity of the archives (written/verbal/physical artifacts) was impressive", said Maj. Dexter.

The main reason to visit Cantigny is the museum. One half of the museum is home to a life like reenactment of several major conflicts involving the 1st ID starting with WWI and ending with Desert Storm. The other half is dedicated to exhibits and a state of the art research center. "I enjoyed the tour of the Research Center where they have thousands of volumes of historical documents dating back to the Civil War and beyond. I also enjoyed the Artifacts Collection room in the Research Center where the museum receives and prepares artifacts for display" said Maj. Lincoln. "This museum does a great job of sharing Soldiers' individual sacrifices with people that take the tour," Dexter said.

That night, over a nice meal,

discussion on the history of transportation by Historian Richard Killblane.

"Mr. Killblane spoke approximately 30-40 minutes on convoys, convoy logistics patrols, gun trucks, and the Soldiers who conducted ground operations over the road...of how the Army has had to learn the lessons of convoys back in Vietnam and even now in our current war," said Maj. Ira Baldwin, one of the attendees. "In addition to the discussion he provided, Mr. Killblane intends to write our unit history based on information we provide."

The ride back featured several good movies including *Saving Private Ryan*, which I had failed to watch until that day. By the time we returned to Fort Riley, I held a greater appreciation for those who served, fought, and died in the 1st Infantry Division.

If you ever find yourself in the Chicago area, I recommend you make the short drive to Wheaton and visit Cantigny and its First Division Museum. You will be glad you did.

For more information on the 1st Infantry Division Museum and Cantigny, go to www.cantigny.org



The Sustainment Times

The Sustainment Times is a monthly publication produced by the First Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office.

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We are looking for content so please submit letters, articles, photos, drawings, comics, etc. to

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CSM Time

CSM Frank G. Cardoza



Command Sgt. Maj. Cardoza leads the Honor Guard during the recent 1st Sustainment Brigade Deployment Ceremony. The ceremony was held at the Cavalry Parade Field on Fort Riley where friends and Family of the 1st Sustainment Brigade had an opportunity to bid farewell.

FORT RILEY DEPLOYMENTS

Story by, Bill McKale

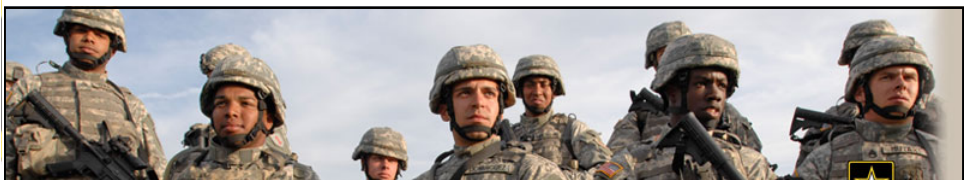
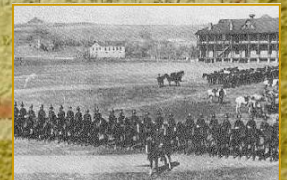
The departure of troops from Fort Riley on missions is nothing new. From the early years of the post, through World War I to the present-day, Fort Riley Soldiers have answered the call and proved the training and values received here prepared them for whatever they were to confront.

The first large-scale Fort Riley deployment occurred in March 1867, in the form of the Hancock Expedition.

Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, a renowned hero of the

Civil War and future presidential candidate, gathered a force of 1400 Soldiers from the 7th Cavalry, 37th Infantry, and a lone artillery battery for the expedition. The commander of the 7th Cavalry was Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer.

The expedition did not prove successful and led to further difficulties. But military planners recognized the importance of Fort Riley as a staging and training area that has continued down to the present day.



Support Army Recruiting





1st SB deployment ceremony

Story and photos by Pfc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB PAO

Soldiers and supporters from Fort Riley and surrounding areas gathered at Cavalry Parade Field Aug. 24 to attend the deployment ceremony for the Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

The brigade, which is comprised of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the 1st Signal Network Detachment and the Special Troops Battalion, is scheduled to deploy this fall.

Guests at the ceremony included Brigadier General Keith Walker, the assistant division commander of operations, Robert Shadley, a retired major general who commanded the DISCOM from 1990 to 1992 during Desert Storm, and four mayors from Platte County, Missouri, who sponsor the Special Troops Battalion, 1st SB.

When the clock struck 9 a.m., cannons blasted to signal the start of the event. During the ceremony, the ADCO presented the unit with a campaign streamer, which was awarded to the





DISCOM for its deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom II from 2004 to 2005.

"Your support is vital to Multi-National Division-Baghdad's mission," Walker said. "The work you will do quietly, professionally, behind the scenes 24 hours a day, seven days a week are the reasons our units are so successful today."



Since August 2006, the unit has relocated from Germany to Fort Riley, Kan., reorganized from the 1st Infantry Division, Division Support Command into the 1st Sustainment Brigade and is now preparing for its deployment to Iraq.



"As we have reorganized into the 1st Sustainment Brigade, we build upon the the DISCOM legacy that traces its roots back to 1917 ... Now is our chance to stand upon the shoulders of the giants that have gone before us, move forward, and turn a page in a new chapter of the 1st Sustainment Brigade's history," said Col. Kevin O'Connell, commander of the 1st SB.



The 1st SB's mission during deployment will be to "plan, monitor, control, synchronize and supervise all sustainment, human resources and financial manage-



ment support to forces in central Iraq," O'Connell said.

After the speeches, the brigade and its subordinate units simultaneously cased their colors and will uncase them in another ceremony once they reach their destination overseas.

At the end of the ceremony, the Soldiers were released to their families. Most of the people stayed around to socialize and enjoy some cake and punch. Afterward some Soldiers went back to work and others went home with their families.



Special Troops Battalion Voice

Lt. Col. Robert D. Brem, Commander



Lt. Col. Brem holds a Rock Drill inside the Special Troops Battalion conference room for the 1st Sustainment Brigade command team. This was an opportunity for various leaders to walk through the steps taken during the first several days on the ground in Kuwait.

the process most of the Soldiers commented on how they felt like they were posing for prison photos.

After their pictures were taken, everyone had to fill out an online questionnaire, which contains personal data known only by the person who fills it out.

“The biggest thing is assisting people in filling out the forms,” Sutton said. “If the form comes back partially complete, they have to start over. One thing we did to prevent that was to print out the forms and have the Soldiers fill them out in advance so they already know their answers.”

All answers were based on simple recollections of strong memories or real events.

The questionnaire asked Soldiers for personal information such as their first non-military job, first boyfriend or girlfriend and the first pet they may have owned. Some Soldiers stated they couldn’t remember that far back.

At the end of the week, all of the Soldiers in the brigade completed their ISOPREPS and prepared themselves for their deployment ceremony, which took place Aug. 24.



ISOPREP for deployment

Story by Pfc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB PAO

In November 2006, the 1st Sustainment Brigade received news that it would be one of many units from Fort Riley to deploy to Iraq in 2007.

Since then, the brigade has been training non-stop to prepare for its mission, and one way the Soldiers prepared themselves was by filling out an Isolated Personnel Report.

Approximately 360 Soldiers from the brigade, which is scheduled to deploy this fall, processed their

ISOPREP during the week of Aug. 20 at the Special Troops Battalion, 1st SB.

The ISOPREP is used by recovery forces to positively identify a service member who may have been captured by enemy forces or went missing in action.

“Every deploying unit has to complete one,” said Capt. Eric Sutton, the officer in charge of the S1 section for the STB, 1st SB.

Each Soldier who went through the process had to have a profile and close-up photo taken of their faces.

It was during this part of

A truck load of diapers

Story by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude
1st SB PAO

A number of guests were in attendance during the 1st Sustainment Brigade's deployment ceremony Aug. 24 at Cavalry Parade Field, and among those guests were three members of the Platte County Mayors Council in Missouri.

Mayors Tom Rezentes of Lake Waukomis, Mo., John Smedley of Platte Woods, Mo., and Dave Brooks of Platte City, Mo., came in support of the Soldiers of the Special Troops Battalion, 1st SB, whom they sponsor.

Their visit allowed them to observe the ceremony and drop off a truck load of diapers for the Soldiers and Families of the STB.

"Our community has come together in an effort to show support to the troops," Rezentes said.

"If the Soldiers know their families are taken care of, they can focus on doing their job in Iraq," Smedley added.

The mayors first hatched the idea of helping Soldiers earlier this year in January, and through a series of emails and phone calls they discovered the STB. They made sev-

eral trips to Fort Riley over the past few months to visit with commanders, Soldiers and Family members.

"Our vision is for the families of our cities to establish relationships with military families that will last a lifetime," Rezentes said.

In addition to the communities' all-volunteer efforts, Brooks has started to discuss the idea of providing assistance to Soldiers and Families with the help of local corporations.

"AT&T has assisted with providing some support and we expect more from them and others in the future," Brooks said.

Capt. Nicole Harrell, the rear detachment commander for the unit, was introduced to the mayors early on and she has learned a great deal about how these two groups can work together.

"In a way we are developing the (standard operating procedures) on how this all works," Harrell said.

The mayors expressed their excitement about their communities' willingness to help out and they hope other mayors from around the country will follow their lead.



Sgt. Matias Carrillo enjoys the food offered at a Caribbean Lunch day hosted by Cpt. Xarhya Wulf of the Special Troops Battalion.

Gearing up for Good-bye

Story by Kimberly Howard

The time is coming to say good-bye to the Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade. The amount of stress that this puts on the Soldiers and their Families seems overwhelming. On top of trying to get legal and logistics issues dealt with, Families are facing the day-to-day struggles of life with half the team missing. We've all known it's coming, we've all done what we can to prepare, but how do you really prepare to stand there and say good-bye not knowing when you'll see the most important person in your life again as he or she heads into harm's way? And yet there is some relief when the Soldiers are finally on their way. The clock is finally ticking, we can start the countdown.

As a Family, we're trying to make mementos to keep the person close in mind—pillowcases with pictures, framed portraits to help us feel

See Good-bye on Pg. 19



Mayor John Smedley of Platte Woods, Mo., helps a 1st Sustainment Brigade Soldier unload diapers Aug. 24 at the unit's rear detachment headquarters shortly after the brigade's deployment ceremony. He is one of three mayors who came in support of the Special Troops Battalion, 1st SB, which they sponsor. "If the Soldiers know their families are taken care of, they can focus on doing their job in Iraq," Smedley said.

F DETACHMENT, 15TH FINANCE BATTALION

Foxtrot Update



'Home' in Iraq



**Show
Me
The
Money**



CONGRATULATIONS TO

PFC. CANDO

PFC. CARRASCO

CPL. MEADOWS

CPL. GOODING

ON YOUR RECENT PROMOTIONS!

Tip

You can keep track of Iraq time with the click of a computer mouse. Go to worldtimeserver.com.



Note: Iraq is 9 hours ahead of Central Standard Time

HHC, 1st Sustainment Brigade

Capt. Adena J. Weiser, Company Commander



2nd Lt. McBride promotes several Soldiers including Spc. Leitsch

Hello, Knights! I hope everyone's block leave went well. Those of us who stayed back had a relatively quiet few weeks, after the hectic weeks of training and preparation culminating with our deployment ceremony. So, all of us had time to put our personal affairs in order, be with our families, and just relax and

have fun. Now, however, the last minute is ticking down to the last few seconds. When I got here, back in late May, deployment seemed so far off, but now here we are, just days out. Things are moving fast, but you still have time to take care of any outstanding personal issues. Stay on top of things, both personal and professional. There is no room in HHC for a complacent, "What are they gonna do, send me to Iraq?" attitude.

Speaking of the deployment ceremony, we did ourselves proud and impressed, among others, my own relatives in attendance. They told me afterward that we looked sharp out there. They are very proud of us and what we are doing. I'm sure all of our families feel the same way. Well, that's enough stirring, heart-

warming inspiration. Get on the plane, get downrange, accomplish the mission, and get back home.

That's it for this month, Knights. Stay strong and look out for one another downrange.

2LT Patrick M. McBride

Knight 5



Viva La' US Army! Maj. Lincoln was honored to help Spc. Barrairon reenlists.

Physical Training "Tip of the Month"

Fired Up!! 1st Sgt. James C. Snowden, HHC 1SB

Exercise Goals

Setting exercise goals can be very difficult because you have to be true to yourself first. But let me say just a little something I live by when I exercise; *"Setting goals makes you a meaningful specific rather than a wandering generality."*

Have you noticed that many people go to the gym and year after year they remain the same! I used to be one of them and maybe you are one too. I have this 7 step formula that probably could reach all your **Exercise Goals** and put you far ahead of others on the same journey. Many people I exercise with skip this exercise, but they don't reach their **Fitness Goals** either.

Goal #1: Decide exactly what you

want to accomplish. (build 20 lbs of muscle or lose 20 lbs)

Goal #2: Analyze your position and habits. (present weight, body fat %, and daily eating habits)

Goal #3: Master best weight training exercises. (weight training has a specific purpose)

Goal #4: Create a blueprint of exercise plans. (I will get up at _____, etc)

Goal #5: Monitor progress with weight training journals and progress reports.

Goal #6: Make course corrections when necessary.

Goal #7: Pass persistence test. (Persistence is like muscle, the more you practice the more you develop. Give me a guy who is 80% correct

with diet and training but 100% committed over any guy who is 100% correct with regards to diet and training and 50% committed)

Stay focused on your goals and make a habit to write down your goals every single day without fail. Not many people follow this simple advice, but not many people have their dream bodies either. So, there you have it, the 7 steps to reach your Exercise Goal. Start today and never stop until you reach your goal, and when you do, tell someone about the good news.

Enjoy the journey towards your Exercise Goals. Make new friends in the gym, have fun with workouts, get around fit people and give your best in the gym and the eyes will keep rolling on you outside the gym.

Family Readiness Group Update

Zamary Rosario, HHC Family Readiness Group Leader



Capt. Adam Smith and family stop and review materials offered by one of dozens of base agencies represented at the Family Readiness Briefing.

September events

- Sept. 21 — 4 p.m., POW/MIA Ceremony, Custer Hill Parade Field
- Sept. 22 — 9 a.m., Apple Days/Open House, Main Post
- Sept. 29 — 7 a.m., Fort Riley post-wide yard sales
- Oct. 10 — 11:45 a.m., Hispanic Heritage Month Observance, Riley's Conference Center



Two new WO2's are sworn in. WO2 Johnson and WO2 Rollins.

FRG Day

Story by Pfc. Andrea E. Merritt, 1st SB PAO

Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade and their family and friends joined together for a day of fun at the unit's Family Readiness Group Day July 31 at McCormick Park.

Soldiers were released from work a few hours early that day to prepare themselves for the food and the festivities.

At the event, Soldiers were lured into playing a game with the promise of a day off if they win. Eager to get a day away from work, Soldiers volunteered themselves and their significant others for the challenge.

The game was played much like the "Newlywed Game" except contestants were whacked in the face with a pie if they lost.

See FRG on Pg. 12

Happy Birthday

- SFC Gunter Vogt
- COL Kevin O'Connell
- SFC Stewart Baldwin
- MSG Loretta Maldonado
- SFC Marci Kleinfeld
- SSG John Shingles
- MSG Anthony Gibson
- SFC Michael Gray
- SGT Robert Cougan
- SPC Raphael McCarter
- SSG Terrence Wright
- SFC Bobby Morehead
- SFC Cesar Cobenatoro
- SSG Wood Corey
- SSG Raipg Egbert
- CPT Kimberly Holmeswatson
- SPC Kevin King
- SGT Nicholas James
- SGT Joshua Dery
- SPC Ketzy Ginyard
- SPC Cristoffer Honan
- CPT Devin Taylor
- SGT Ryanpatrick Severt
- SGT Luke Robson
- SPC Harry Cline
- WO1 Nathaniel Lajoie
- SGT Jacob Hanson
- SGT Brandon Johnson
- PFC Troy Moppin
- SPC David Beardon

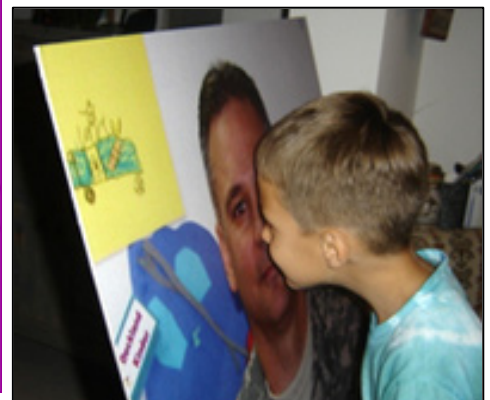
See Birthdays on Pg. 19

Flatdaddies

By Maj. Lowell E. Howard, Jr.

Flat Daddies and Flat Mommies are life-sized printed posters of parents who are actively serving overseas in the military. These posters are made available free* to the children of deployed service members through the generous support of sponsors.

<http://flatdaddies.com/>



F R G DAY

FRG Continued from Pg. 11

Some of the women told their partners not to lose because they didn't want to get their hair dirty.

After the scores were tallied, two couples were on the losing end of the game. As punishment, participants hurled a pie, which was just a plate full of whipped cream, in their significant other's faces.

The contestants who lost the game weren't the only ones to get up close and personal with a pie.

During the event, a small group of people teamed up and raised approximately \$150 to throw a pie at 1st Sgt. James Snowden, the



first sergeant of HHC 1st SB.

"It was for a good cause. We raised a little money for the FRG," said Spc. Mystisha Cousette, a cook with HHC 1st SB, who held the pie.

"He didn't let me throw the pie at him. He just grabbed it and put his face in it," Cousette said.

The first sergeant just grinned and laughed it off as he wiped whipped cream out of his eyes.

"It's okay. It was for a good cause. It was all in fun," Snowden said. "You'll get it back when we run."

At the end of FRG Day, the Soldiers and their families helped raise about \$500 for the FRG.

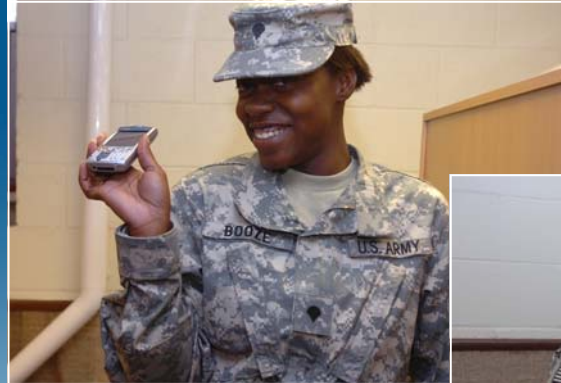


Soldier on the Street

We asked Soldiers the following question: "What personal item must you have with you in Iraq?"



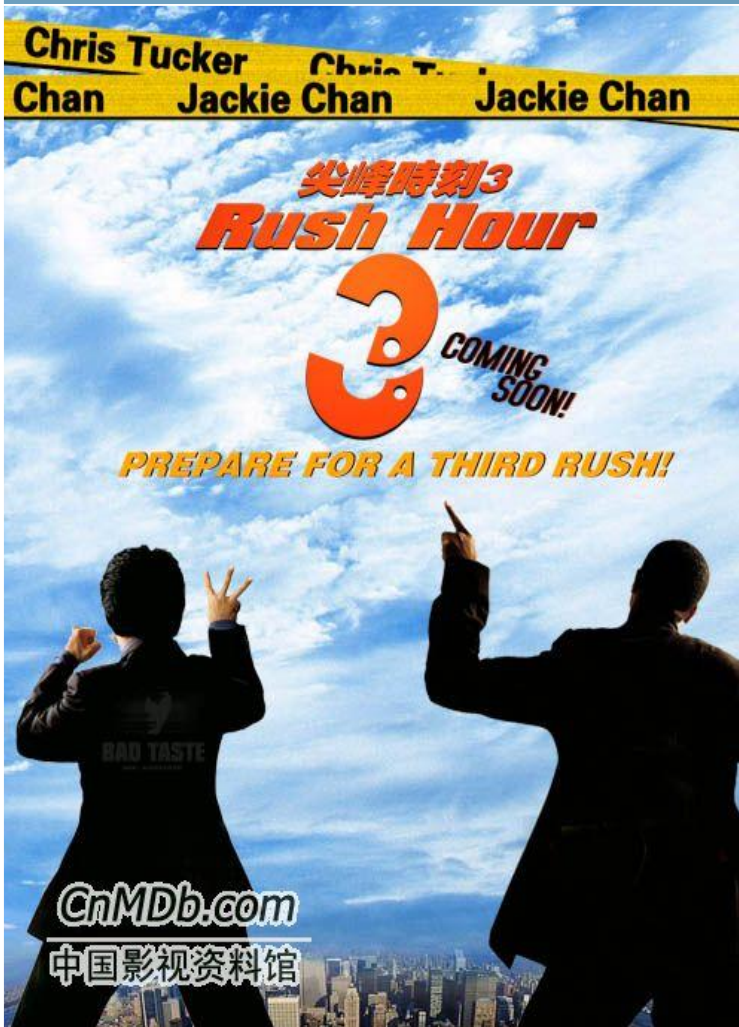
Gatorade! I drink about 2 gallons a day. SSG Bobby Moorehead



My cell phone. It's my life.
Spc. Keya Booze



Pictures and communications with the family.
Maj. Anthony Walker



If you want a good laugh and don't mind a predictable plot lone then Rush Hour 3 is for you. The chemistry between Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker makes up for the fact that you know what's going to happen before it does. However, save yourself a few dollars and wait for the DVD. I give this movie four out of seven magazines.

Garden of Eden

Poem by PV2 Bailey

You sent us on our way. With the scars of that black day.

While the blood rains in our eyes. Now we wish we'd taking off our disguise.

But when will we find what where searching for; a piece of mind. But I want so much more.

It's over. It's over now. I am on my way. I will find my way.

Sometimes we need change. To see the scents we never made. I said that I won't cry but I regret that I never said goodbye.

But when will we find what where searching for; a piece of mind. But I want so much more.

It's over. It's over now. I am on my way. I will find my way.



Personal Computer Performance Issues

By Maj. Coster, S-6

Many friends of the S6 come to our office requesting assistance with poorly performing home computers. We have a "Standard Operating Procedure" we do when we check these computers that anybody can perform to improve performance; try these before you decide to buy a new computer, or ask/pay for help fixing your computer.

First, check your RAM (Random Access Memory). Many inexpensive older computers come with 128, 256 or 512MB of RAM. This is the MINIMUM for Windows to operate, NOT the OPTIMUM. A gigabyte of RAM is usually not expensive anymore, and it is one of the best things you can do to improve performance in most cases. Rarely do you need more than one or two Gigabytes of RAM, and if you do need more than that, you are a MAJOR GEEK and don't need my advice! If your computer is SLOW and is CONSTANTLY accessing the Hard Drive, this is likely one of your problems. Find your "My Computer" icon either in the start bar or on the desktop and "right click" it, then choose "Properties", the resulting window will tell you how much RAM is installed on your computer. Make SURE you know what kind of RAM you need if you decide to buy it; there are MANY specifications for RAM – they are not interchangeable.

Next, make sure you have one and ONLY one antivirus program, firewall program and spyware program loaded and running. If you have more than one, they take up memory, processing time and they also start attacking each other and may cause your computer to malfunction. Make sure these are set to



run and "auto protect." When the computer boots up, update DAILY, and run a virus scan once weekly. See August newsletter for recommendations. Using and running these programs will eliminate most of the "spyware" and malicious code users accidentally download while browsing the network that cause major performance degradations.

Defragment your hard drive once a month or as needed. You can find the "defragment" program by going through the "start", "programs", "accessories" and "system tools" menus. "Defragging" the hard drive actually moves and puts all of your data files on the hard drive in order. Conceptually this is like straightening up your desk. As you work your desk becomes disorganized and you periodically have to rearrange and straighten it up. All the information is still there, hasn't changed, but now it will be in a rational, easy to access order. Electronically what this does is increases efficiency when transferring information from your hard drive into RAM memory – makes it faster.

Next thing to do is to look at all of the programs you have loaded on your computer. The programs you want to eliminate are the ones that you don't need and run all the time. Many of these programs have icons that appear on the lower right of the taskbar. Go through the "start", "control panel", "add/remove software" menus to remove software. Remove "Google" and "Yahoo" toolbars unless you use and

like them; they are known to contribute to performance problems.

Programs that are loaded and don't run until you "click" on them usually cause NO performance issues while they are not running (unless your hard drive is full). But if you don't need them anymore, uninstall them since they do take up space on your hard drive.



stood to their feet and either saluted or placed their hand over their hearts.

“For me, when the flags got heavy or I started feeling the heat, all that was taken away when I saw the people standing and saluting. Any pain I felt was worth it,” said Tapia.

Children were excited, especially as other participants in the five-block parade threw candy

to the crowd. They scrambled to gather the goodies as soon as they hit the ground.

After the parade ended, the Soldiers enjoyed a meal at a local restaurant. They took time to exchange stories with the veterans who marched in the parade with them. The veterans were among the first of many people to express gratitude and appreciation to the Soldiers for what they do for their country.

“I felt honor and a sense of pride and a little sad too because the wars they fought in, especially Vietnam. They were mistreated once they returned to the US. They wanted to make us feel good unlike what they felt when they came back from their wars,” said Tapia.

After the parade ended the residents of Wilson prepared themselves for the car show and ended the festival with a night of music in the park, which the Soldiers were unable to attend.

Czech Fest

Story by Pfc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB PAO

Six Soldiers from the 1st Sustainment Brigade joined the festivities and helped residents celebrate during the annual After the Harvest Czech Festival, July 28 in Wilson, Kan.

The Soldiers represented their unit as the color guard during the parade portion of the festival.

Each year the community gathers at the festival to celebrate its heritage. In 1874, a large number of Czechoslovakian immigrants migrated to the small city in Ellsworth County looking for work on the railroad.

The rich, Czech culture is the reason Wilson proclaimed itself to be the “Czech capital of Kansas” in 1974, and it has worn the title proudly ever since.

Despite the smoldering heat and humidity, spirits were high as the festival began. The audience was treated to a traditional dance by the young, Czech Dancers on Main Street before the parade began.

In the order of the march, the Soldiers followed behind veterans who fought in the Vietnam War, Korean War, Desert Storm, and the Gulf War.

“It is good to have a military presence at an event like this because we represent the country that made their ancestors’ dreams happen,” said Staff Sgt. Sonia Tapia, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the detail.

“They recognize us because by sacrificing ourselves we can continue to maintain that dream for them and their future generations,” said Tapia.

As the Soldiers marched by with the flags, everyone



541st CSSB returns from Iraq

Story by Pfc. Andrea Merritt

Family and friends gathered to welcome the Soldiers of the 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion home during a redeployment ceremony Aug. 18 at Long Gym.

The battalion, which is comprised of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company and 1st Maintenance Company, returned to Fort Riley after a 12-month deployment in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Some of the 541st CSSB's deployment successes include conducting more than 2,000 combat logistics patrols, completing more than 2,600 transportation requests and driving more than 1.2 million miles delivering supplies in support of Multi-National Division Baghdad.

"It's great to see the families and the turn-out here. Excitement's in the air. Soldiers get to see their loved ones, and aside from a couple of minor injuries everybody made it back safe and sound," said Lt. Col. Lee Merritt, the 541st CSSB

commander.

As the ceremony began and the Soldiers entered the gym, loud screams and thunderous applause erupted from the audience. Some family members' eyes were filled with tears even before they saw their Soldier march into the room.

"We were scared to death," said Connie Stilson, mother of a returning Soldier, as she recalled how she felt when she found out her son was deploying.

"We lost our daughter in 2004 to a flu virus so sending our other child was a real act of faith, but we learned that if God is ready for you it doesn't matter if you're in Iraq or Topeka, Kansas. We're just glad he's home," Stilson said.

The ceremony was short and simple. It began with the troop formation and followed with prayer, the playing of the national anthem and ended with a speech from Col. Kevin O'Connell, commander of the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

As soon as the command

"fall out" was given, a sea of people rushed from the stands and flooded the floor.

"I'm excited. It feels great to be home. I'm just excited to be back," said Spc. Zachary Stilson, an all-wheel mechanic with the 1st Maintenance Company, 541st CSSB.

After all of the families reunited, the gym cleared out and silence filled the once loud and crowded area.

The families didn't waste any time taking their Soldiers home to spend quality time with them.

"Soon we can start our 30-day block leave and relax and enjoy being a family again," said Anjel Merritt, the battalion commander's wife and the senior Family Readiness Group leader for the battalion.

She also offered some advice to those who may soon have to deal with their loved ones deploying.

"Just take it one day at a time. Take it in small increments because if you look at the deployment as a whole, it will be very overwhelming for you."

Singles Retreat

Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade get a taste of the great outdoors.....





Chaplain's Thoughts

Chaplain Terrence E. Hayes, Brigade Chaplain

Dear First Sustainment Team,

The days are fast closing in on our deployment date to Iraq. For many, it is the second or third deployment. For others, like me, it is the first. Regardless, there are feelings of apprehension and anxiety. I would like to encourage you to make every effort to communicate love and appreciation to your family wherever they're located. It's natural to feel a little detached from your family as you anticipate the upcoming deployment. It is important, however, to make a special effort to show love to your children and spouse, parents and other family members. Do your best to be positive and encouraging to those

you love and be able to leave on a positive note as much as possible.

Secondly, consider setting some goal for yourself and your family while you are gone. I plan to recover my ability to read the Bible in Greek, the original language of the New Testament. Think about some educational or physical goals you'd like to attain. Write them down. Encourage your spouse if you're married to think of some practical goals he or she can work on while you're apart. Maybe it would be reading the same book together or taking some college classes. It will help the time pass faster.

I'd also encourage you to consider some spiritual goals. Maybe you've never read all the way through the

Bible or another religious book you've always wanted to read. There will be a variety of opportunities in Iraq to practice your faith, whatever it may be, and the Unit Ministry Teams stand ready to help you in that faith. If there is anyway we can help in these days before we leave, don't hesitate to contact me or Chaplain VanHook. God bless you and your family.

Trusting in the Great Sustainer,

Chaplain (MAJ) Terry Hayes

.....during a recent single Soldiers retreat lead by Captain VanHook.



Good-bye *continue from Pg. 8*

closer, little notes for those especially tough days – and yet it’s hard to find the time to do even that.

We’re all trying to pull it together and be tough. We need to be strong for the Soldiers, the kids, ourselves, but inside it feels like the weight of the world is upon us. Normally when faced with a huge task, I’ll make a to-do list and try to mark things off as I go. I don’t even want to contemplate marking off 455 breakfasts, lunches, dinners, baths, and bedtimes. 455 days is almost impossible to wrap my mind around. Our “baby” won’t be a toddler when my husband returns; he’ll be a little boy—although I don’t know if he’ll be potty trained—I’ve never potty trained a boy before! And God help me, my little girls are going to be preteens. We’re going to have to learn to be a Family all over again.

I have tried getting more involved with our church, making friends with other spouses who are in the same boat, working with the FRGs, finding activities for the kids—and I know this will help in the long run, but trying to run a “normal” life by myself while worrying about my husband seems unlikely at this point. Just little things like oil changes seem overwhelming! And yet I know there is an inner strength in all of us that lets us get it done and appreciate our “normal” home lives that much more.

This isn’t our first deployment. I don’t know if that makes it harder or easier. Realistically I know that I’ll be able to fall into the role and make it work. Some days will be harder than others, but between faith and friends I’ll hold it together. On the other hand, nobody really wants to come take care of your kids while you’re in bed with a puking virus. The real killer is no sleeping-in for 455 days!

The one question that I have never been able to answer is: why

does everything in the house break the minute the Soldiers get their boots off the ground here and on the ground over there? If someone knows how a washing machine or minivan can understand deployment, please let me know.

We can do this. The past months have been spent pulling together as a team, and now it’s time to put all our plans into action. As our Soldiers prepare to deploy, my thoughts and prayers are with all of the Families.



Happy Birthday

Birthdays *Continued from Pg. 11*

SPC Ilda Nunez
 SGT Samantha Little
 SPC Lashata Thompson
 SPC Mike Alcalá
 PFC Jerry Barrera

Wash!

Always wash hands with warm water and soap:

- before handling food;
- after handling food;
- after using the bathroom;
- after changing a diaper;
- after tending to a sick person;
- after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing; and
- after handling pets.

HANDS

