

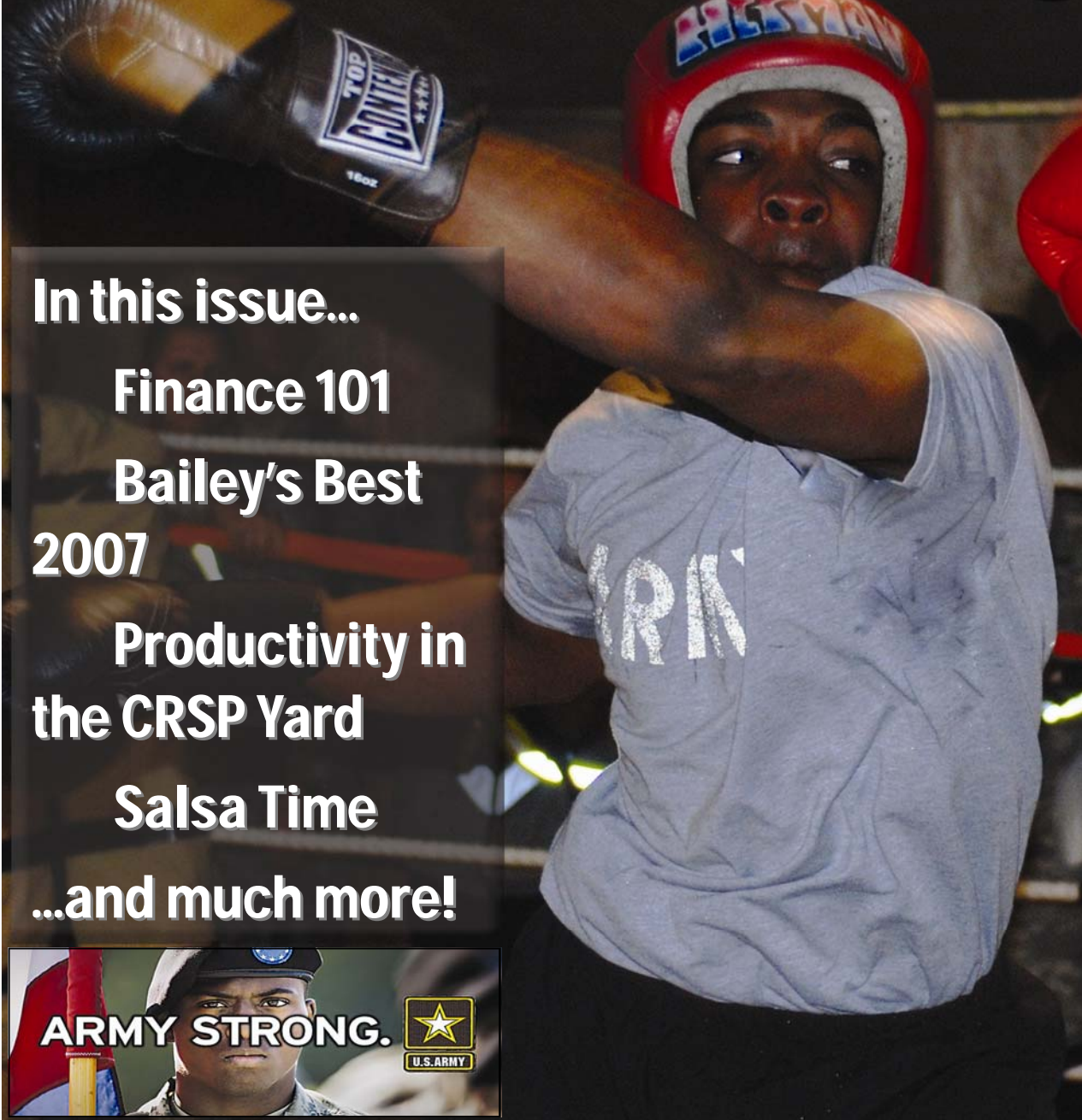
The Sustainment Times

FORWARD

Camp Taji, Iraq

Published by the 1st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office

IMPROVE YOUR SWING IN 2008



In this issue...

Finance 101

Bailey's Best

2007

Productivity in the CRSP Yard

Salsa Time

...and much more!

SOLDIERS NUTRITION

Andrew Morris, J2E, PAO

...of the 1st Sustainment Brigade will be spending...
...from the 1st Sustainment Brigade to help the...
...to check some nutritional products for 2008...
...the 1st Sustainment Brigade to help the...
...to check some nutritional products for 2008...
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Fit to Fight

...of the 1st Sustainment Brigade will be spending...
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Fitness 101 on Pg. 8

1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery

U. Col. Ian Falk, Commander

California Adjutant General

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A special guest on Pg. 9

Sweeney Todd

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Movies to watch in 2008

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Movie review on Pg. 13



Commander's Corner

Col. Kevin G. O'Connell, Commander



(Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Col. Kevin O'Connell, commander of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, listens intently to one of a number of speakers at a leadership conference sponsored by the 1st SB. Command teams from the seven subordinate battalions were in attendance. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

1st Sustainment Brigade hosts Leadership Conference

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st SB PAO

Leaders in the 1st Sustainment Brigade and the command teams from the brigade's seven subordinate battalions gathered in Camp Taji on Dec. 13 to attend a leadership conference hosted by Col. Kevin O'Connell, the commander of the 1st SB, and his staff.

Event highlights included an Administrative Update Briefing, an Operational Planning Group briefing, and several special topics presented by the 1st SB staff.

"The purpose of these events is to share information with and between the leaders within the brigade as well as strengthen the camaraderie within the 1

SB," said Lt. Col. Chris McCurry, the deputy commander of the 1st SB.

"It's a good opportunity to meet all the field grades in a less formal environment," said Maj. Ira Baldwin, the brigade support operations transportation officer. "I like seeing them in person; it strengthens the relationship."

After dining on prime rib and roasted chicken in the Operation Junction City Room of the Cantigny Dining Facility, O'Connell and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza, the 1st SB command sergeant major, acted as Masters of Ceremony during a brief Hail and Farewell, where they welcomed new members to the organization and said farewell to departing ones.

Conference continued on Pg. 3

Dear First Sustainment Brigade Soldiers and Families,

Happy New Year! A whole lot of great things have happened since our last newsletter. We went from supporting the 1st Cavalry Division to now supporting the 4th Infantry Division. Your Soldiers are doing an unbelievable job, providing world-class support to over 100,000 Coalition Forces and civilians. The accomplishments already are astounding and the Brigade gets better every day. What a great team!

Your Soldiers are being well taken care of by their leaders and we have, in my opinion, the best dining facility in Iraq, if not the US Army. We had awesome meals for Christmas and New Years Eve in our Cantigny Dining Facility. The DFAC is run by contractors, but our food service technicians and specialists oversee the entire operation, resulting in the high quality of the food prepared, great decorations, and nice atmosphere. Definitely a morale booster.

Many thanks to all the Families, friends, and citizens of Junction City, Manhattan, and Platte County for all the support, Christmas cards, and packages. The troops are very appreciative and it is great to know we have home team fans back in Kansas and Missouri cheering us on.

Again, I hope everyone had a great holiday season and I wish all a Happy 2008! Keep improving operations in your area of responsibility and sustain the level of support that has already become your trademark. Thanks for all you do, whether you are a Soldier or civilian, and regardless of your rank or MOS, you are making a great, positive difference on the protection of the Iraqi population and the security of Iraq, the middle east, and the American way of life. Keep up the fantastic work, and I look forward to seeing everyone safely reunited with friends and loved ones in 2008!

COL Kevin G. O'Connell



Command Sgt. Maj. Colvin Bennett with the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)



(above) Capt. Hector Higuera briefs leaders at the leaders conference. (right) Maj. Ira Baldwin and Maj. John Caudill listen to after dinner conversation in the DFAC. (photos by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

Conference continued from Pg. 2

Command Sgt. Maj. Barbara Ann Maxwell, the 15th Finance Battalion command sergeant major, was one of the half-dozen individuals recognized as leaving the 1st SB team.

“She educated me on all the financial matters since I got here, and I feel real confident knowing the Soldiers were being taken care of,” said Cardoza of Maxwell.

“I’m having a great time. It’s good to get together with other people from other units in the brigade to learn about what they do and the challenges they face,” said Maxwell.

The group departed the dining facility and made the short trip to the base theater, where each battalion had an opportunity to showcase their battalion by way of a short HOOAH video.

Following the videos, they munched on popcorn and watched Mark Wahlberg in the motion picture “Shooter.”

The evening concluded with a social call around a bonfire provided by the Special Troops Battalion, 1st SB.



The Sustainment Times

FORWARD

The Sustainment Times Forward is a monthly newsletter produced by the 1st Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Office.

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1st SB Command Sgt. Maj.:
Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza

Editor:
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Writer/Photographer:
Spc. Andrea Merritt

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

bryant.maude@iraq.centcom.mil

On the cover:

Pvt. Emanuel Blandy with the 168th Brigade Support Battalion, throws a left hook at his opponent in the boxing ring on Camp Liberty, Iraq.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

CSM Time

CSM Frank G. Cardoza



(left to right) Spc. Bryan Fadely, mans a M2 .50 caliber machine gun as Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude films a short scene for a farewell video for Command Sgt. Maj. John Fourhman, the 1st ID command sergeant major. (photo by Staff Sgt. Cesar Cobenatoro)



(right to left) Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Cardoza, the 1st SB command sergeant major, reads an inscription on the back of a going-away gift for Command Sgt. Maj. Barbara Ann Maxwell, the 15th Finance Battalion command sergeant major, during a Hail and Farewell on Dec.13. (photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

FRIDAY NIGHT FIGHTS

Story by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude

1st SB, PAO



Pfc. Sergio Cedeno in the ring. (photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

Over the sound of a diesel generator, the cheers of a large crowd can be heard emanating out of a non-descript tent near Pad 4 on Renee Drive in Camp Liberty, Iraq.

“Welcome to Friday Night Fights,” shouts Staff Sgt. Jerry Maldonado, the equal opportunity representative for the 168th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade.

What started out as a small vision for Maldonado has mushroomed into the place to be for some Soldier’s on Liberty.

See Fights on Pg. 6



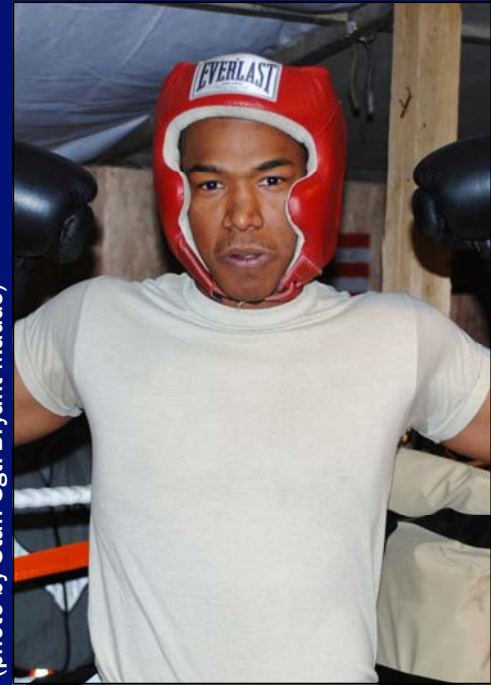
(photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

fulfillment of childhood dream.

“Growing up in Puerto Rico, I watched the boxers on T.V. and dreamed of one day being like them,” said Cedeno.

Since his training began a month ago, he has been in the ring twice and is committed to keep going the distance.

“I train every day. I’ll come next week, and the week after, I’ll come every day until I learn what I got to learn,” said Cedeno, shortly after his second appearance in the ring at Friday Night Fights.



(photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

Sgt. Jerome Thomas before his fight.

The idea is for each boxer to find someone who wants to fight.

Their hands are taped and inserted into gloves, and then the rules explained. Once the bell sounds, the fight begins. Each round is a minute long.



(photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

A contestant guards his face.

Friday Night Fights promoter, Staff Sgt. Jerry Maldonado (center) and his team Sgt. Robert Flanagan (left) and Sgt. Kyle Butler (right).

Fights continued from Pg. 5

“Each Friday night, there’s a little ‘boxing smoker’ that we hold -- a tournament for the Soldiers -- so we can allow Soldiers a chance to let off a little steam,” said Maldonado, the promoter and referee of Friday Night Fights.

When he found the abandoned, semi-falling down, framed tent, he thought it might be a great place for him to teach Soldiers the art of boxing.

“There was a single-string boxing ring and a whole lot of trash in here,” said Maldonado. When he started fixing the place, people within the command took notice and offered to help.

“Everyone’s been great....the name Friday Night Fights, for

example, came from the battalion commander,” said Maldonado.

With the help of Sgt. Robert Flanagan and Sgt. Kyle Butler, drivers for the 168th BSB command team, Maldonado restored the tent.

They repaired the walls and roof and built a raised boxing ring complete with ropes, corner guards and a bell fashioned from an old fire extinguisher and bolt.

“Sgt. Flanagan and I helped Sgt. Maldonado renovate the place,” said Butler. “It took us about a week,” continued Flanagan.

“We made the place more appealing to the eye,” finished Maldonado.

For Pfc. Sergio Cedeno, a supply specialist with Headquarters Company, 168th BSB, it’s the





Special Troops Battalion

Lt. Col. Robert D. Brem, Commander

A leader talks money with his own

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

In an attempt to “bring something to the table” that his Soldiers could benefit from, 1st Lt. Justin Haug, the Joint Network Node platoon leader for Signal Company, Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, took the advice of his platoon sergeant Sgt. 1st Class Meveran Banks and started counseling his Soldiers on the basics of money.

“I was looking for a way to contribute, bring something to the table. I might not know everything there is to know about finances, but I figured it would help,” said Haug humbly.

His first step was giving an informative class to his Soldiers back in Fort Riley, Kan., prior to their deployment to Iraq. The class taught Soldiers the importance of money, how money comes in and where it goes. He stressed the importance of saving money, reducing expenses and investing for the future.

“I basically like to stress the importance of understanding money management (and) the concept of saving,” said Haug. “I think, not enough Soldiers are confident in what to do with

money...I like to say that money won't buy happiness, but it is important,” said Haug.

After the seminar was over, Haug and Banks came up with



Spc. Batric Johnson soaks in the advice offered by 1st Lt. Justin Haug. (photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)

an idea. They launched a group savings plan that everyone could get involved with and have fun in the process.

They set a group savings goal for the deployment where each Soldier would voluntarily agree to save money and they would track the results. Based on how well everyone did, a series of awards would be offered.

“We figured \$10,000 per Soldier throughout the duration of the deployment. At the same time, that put us at \$40,000,” said Haug.

Haug's next focus was individualized mentoring. “I create an excel spread sheet per Soldier; this way they have their own little budget book. It

shows them all money coming in and then expenses and then investments,” explained Haug.

“This presents their money in a way it can be tracked. I place each spread sheet on the Soldiers' individual computer. I keep nothing,” continued Haug.

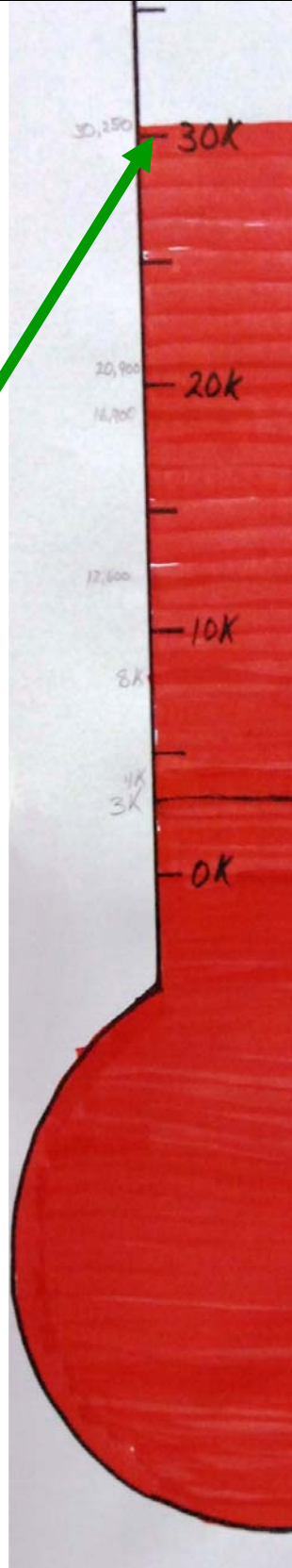
For Spc. Datric Johnson, a JNN operator with Signal Company, STB, 1st SB, this mentoring is working.

“LT put it out in a way that an average Joe could understand,” stated Johnson. “Out of the three loans, I've paid off one (and) pretty much doubled the payments on the second....before I was just paying the minimum. Having a plan laid out in front of you helps out,” determined Johnson.

Haug also warns Soldiers of the little things they spend money on. “When we start to look, the most surprising items are the little things like eating out, drinking, or purchasing fun toys,” warned Haug.

“I used to buy cigarettes and Mountain Dew religiously; that's about five dollars a day. I watch the little things now. It makes a big difference,” explained Johnson.

Once the Soldiers see where their money is going, after they tackle the bills and cut back on the discretionary spending, Haug moves on to discussion of saving and investing.



FITNESS 101: 1SB OFFICER TEACHES SOLDIERS NUTRITION

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB, PAO

The Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade will be spending the New Year in Iraq, but many still made resolutions that range from saving money to losing weight.

One officer from the 1st SB has volunteered his time to help the ones who have vowed to shed some unwanted pounds for 2008 as well as those who just want to stay in shape.

Capt. Lamar Sales, the officer in charge of mortuary affairs for the 1st SB, has been a certified personal trainer for six years and has generously offered his expertise to Soldiers who want and need it – regardless of rank.

“I like Soldiers. I consider myself Lamar Sales, who is a Soldier who happens to be a captain,” said Sales humbly. “If Pfc. whatever says, ‘I have a problem,’ I feel it’s my job to find ways to fix that problem.”

Sales, a South Carolina native, began taking a more serious approach to working out while in high school. He began working out with his neighbor, who happened to be Mr. South Carolina, a body builder.

See Nutrition on Pg. 19



Capt. Lamar Sales, teaches a class on nutrition. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)



1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery

Lt. Col. Ian Falk, Commander

California Adjutant General

visits 1-143rd Soldiers



1st Lt. R.D. Coleman , 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery

From guard towers to entry control points, by armored vehicle or Blackhawk helicopter, Maj. Gen. William H. Wade, the Adjutant General for the California National Guard, wasted little time in seeing exactly what California Army National Guard Soldiers were doing to support Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery, 1st Sustainment Brigade, were quick to show him what a day's work was like – from behind the wheel of an Armored Security Vehicle.

Assembled in March 2007, the Task Force is comprised of six artillery batteries from 1-143rd FA plus one infantry company from the 1st Battalion, 185th Infantry Regiment; all from some part of California. The Soldiers are busy conducting force protection, convoy security, and military police missions out of forward operating bases throughout central and northern Iraq.

“Visiting the Soldiers of Task Force 1-143rd FA in Iraq is one of the best things to happen to me in the last six months”, said Wade. “If that isn't enough, I had the opportunity to promote some of them, and re-enlist many of them.”

In a tour that covered three different forward operating bases throughout Iraq, Wade, accompanied by Command Sgt. Major William Clark Jr., Command Sergeant Major for the California National Guard, saw 1-143rd FA Soldiers hard at work in their various missions.

In addition to the traditional impact award of the general's coins for excellence, he had the honor of awarding a Combat Action Badge, a Combat Medical Badge, and presiding over three re-enlistment ceremonies. Wade took the opportunity to visit additional California Guard Soldiers in the area, to include the 118th Ordnance Company and the 160th Long Range Surveillance Detachment.

Wade praised the professionalism and focus of California Soldiers currently serving in Iraq and those Soldiers serving in Southern California in support of the wildfire relief effort.

“Their dedication is something to behold,” said Wade. “Spending time with these Soldiers has set me up with something to be truly thankful for during Thanksgiving,” concluded Wade.



Maj. Gen. William H. Wade, the adjutant general for the California National Guard, visits California Soldiers in Iraq. (photos by Master Sgt. Russell Bledsoe)



1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Lt. Col. Lee Ellis, Commander

Trans officer leads the pack!

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB, PAO

About 125 Soldiers, Airmen and civilians on Camp Taji put their bodies to the test during the 5K EZ Run, which took them on a three-mile journey around the camp, Dec. 9.

The Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center hosts runs like these to help servicemembers take attention off of home, increase physical endurance and stamina, develop relationships with other Soldiers on the camp and foster esprit de corps, said William Brown, the MWR technician who hosted the event.

Everyone toed the line and once Brown yelled "GO," the spirit of competition set in.

After 16 minutes, 17 seconds, had passed, 2nd Lt. Maurice Harford, the executive officer of the 377th Transportation Company, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, crossed the finish line.

With unbelievable speed, he had finished the run almost two minutes before the next person who crossed the line.

At the beginning of the 5K, some people took off like rockets and others weren't as fast; but no matter what pace they ran, everyone finished the run.

A group of 1st SB Soldiers put the esprit in esprit de corps as they finished the run. Their cadences could be heard at least a half-mile before the finish line, and their motivation rubbed off on spectators as they passed by.

People in the crowd clapped their hands to the rhythm of the cadence the 1st SB Soldiers were singing out.

"They are definitely motivated," said Brown as they passed by.

At the end of the event, Brown handed out six trophies. The first three males and the first three females to finish the race were awarded. Harford was no stranger to winning.

It was the fourth trophy he had won, but no matter how many he receives, "It's still an exciting feeling," said Harford, who runs about 40 miles per week. He is also apart of a running group that runs 7 to 14 miles every Sunday.



2nd Lt. Maurice Harford, the executive officer of the 377th Transportation Company, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, wins first place and awes a few spectators after gliding across the finish line in 16 minutes, 17 seconds, during the 5K EZ Run Dec. 9. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Around Camp Taji



Start the year off right. Tuesdays and Thursdays at building 509 is a Pilates class. The class is open to everyone on Camp Taji. Get the six-pack abs you've always dreamed of. Classes start at 11:00 and last one hour.



Coming events on Camp Taji in January 2008

Get your country dance on every Friday night at building 680. The Country Line Dance starts at 19:00. Have a good time with friends.

Pilates

Emphasis on the Abdominals, Buttock & Thighs. Get a lean, toned muscle and a strong body.

Location: **BLDG. 509**

Beginning January 1, 2007 Every Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday @ 1100-1200 HRS.

POC: Andrea Galloway, BLDG 509, 2000 Camp Taji, Taji, Iraq

Santa was spotted all around Camp Taji in the month of December. Can you guess who Santa is? See page 19 for the answer.

HAPPY

NEW YEAR

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Big O eyes the basket!

BIG O

Big O takes the shot!

The follow through!

BIG O

String Music!

Hot Wheels



DE: \$14K to \$17K
 ES: \$19K to \$28K
 Evolution: \$28K to \$35K

MITSUBISHI LANCER

One of your New Years "Resolutions", if you're a sports car enthusiast, should be the 2008 Mitsubishi Lancer "Evolution".

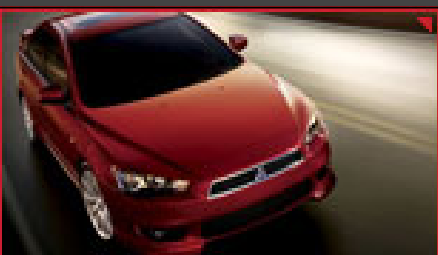
This money saver and power maker, is as fast as a Mustang V8, and drives like a luxury \$40,000 ride. I know what some of you are thinking; this year you plan on saving more money and making your life better over all. Now you can have your cake and eat it too. This fast, sporty, four-door, and family in mind compact sports car is a dream come true. With 289 lb - ft of torque and 286 horsepower, it's no wonder you can do 0 - 60 in just 5.0 seconds!

"Now you can have your cake and eat it too!"

Master Sgt. Benjamin Wingfield

Previous generations of the Lancer have been plagued with build-quality issues and poor interior materials, but the 2008 Lancer is a completely new design. A big thing to remember with this nice ride is, now you can roll down to the post exchange, commissary or your local Wal-Mart, looking cool, saving gas, and hauling a trunk full of goodies.

The Lancer is one of the most attractive vehicles in its class, and makes available some technologies normally found only on upscale cars, such as keyless ignition technology and a top-shelf navigation system. Available in three trims: Base DE \$14,599 - \$16,899, the ES \$18,999 - \$28,679, and the top of the line Evolution starts at just only \$28,679 - \$35,189. With such low prices, you'll still have enough money left over at the end of the year.





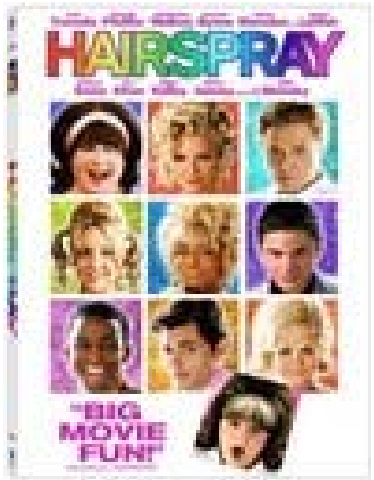
Sweeney Todd

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street
 Starring Johnny Depp Directed by Tim Burton



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Movies to watch in 2008

By Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude, 1st SB, PAO

Does anyone watch musicals any more? Apparently the foreign press does and it appears to love them. This year, the Golden Globe Awards will feature two musicals, “Hairspray” and “Sweeney Todd,” competing in a number of categories. My personal favorite, and the one I would most like to watch, is “Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.”



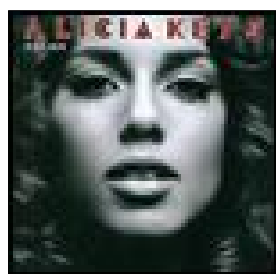
Set in 1800’s London, Sweeney returns after being banished for a crime he did not commit to find his wife and daughter missing. He sets up shop in a seedy side of town and cuts the throats of unsuspecting customers. After the bloodletting starts, he sends them downstairs to Mrs. Lovett, who turns them into meat pies. Directed by Tim Burton, this dark comedy should due well at the box office and may even pick up an Oscar or two.

Hot Tracks

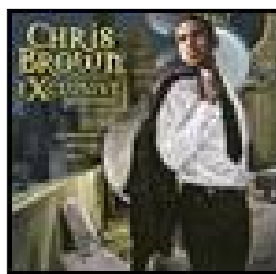
By Pvt. Rashi Bailey

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1
Alicia Keys
No One
13 weeks



2
Chris Brown
Kiss Kiss
12 weeks

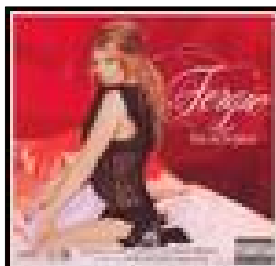
3
Timbaland
Apologize
18 weeks



4
Flo Rida
Low
5 weeks

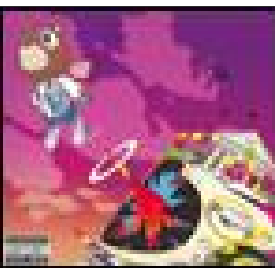


5
Colbie Caillat
Bubbly
23 weeks



6
Fergie
Clumsy
8 weeks

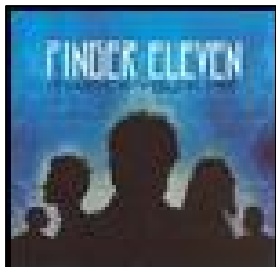
7
Kanya West
Good Life
12 weeks



8
Soulja Boy
Crank That
21 weeks



9
Rihanna
Hate that I love
14 weeks



10
Finger 11
Paralyzer
Been around!

I looked back at 2007, at all the music I enjoyed, and formulated my personal best 10. This is my list; due with it what you will. It will be fun to watch the music scene develop in 2008!



15th Personnel Services Battalion

Lt. Col. Angela Odom, Commander



A group of Soldiers from the 15th PSB groove to the Electric Slide during the battalion's Organizational Day. (photo's by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Salsa Time

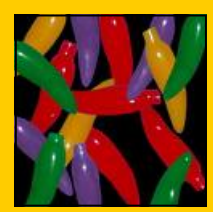


(above) Lt. Col. Angela Odom, commander of the 15th Personnel Services Battalion, dances to "Suavemente" by Latin singer Elvis Crespo with Spc. Hugo Ramirez, a mechanic with HHD, 15th PSB, during the battalion's monthly organizational day. Audience members were encouraged to participate in the event by getting on the floor and dancing along to the music. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)



(right) Sgt. Emily Castillo, the noncommissioned officer in charge of personnel services for the 15th PSB, dances to "Suavemente" with Col. Kevin O'Connell, commander of the 1st Sustainment Brigade. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

(left) Spc. Tishon Showers, a supply specialist in Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 15th PSB, gets down to R&B singer Usher's popular song "Yeah" during the unit's monthly organizational day. During the event, Soldiers showcased their song and dance skills to an audience of their peers. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)





68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion

Lt. Col. Darrell Duckworth, Commander

STARTING THE NEW YEAR OFF RIGHT

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st SB, PAO

While some people were making lists of all the lavish gifts they wanted for Christmas, the Soldiers of the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion were just happy to have a place of their own to eat.

After months of traveling back and forth on buses to the nearest dining facility after their's closed down, the Soldiers of the 68th CSSB can practically walk right outside their doors to grab a meal.

"When we first got here, we had tents. They didn't have any trailers, so we just went with what we had," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Frazier, the senior food operations noncommissioned officer for the 598th Maintenance Company, 68th

CSSB.

After some of the leaders decided a new facility was in need, they came up with a plan to have one built.

About four months after the building process began, the Stagecoach Café was complete and opened on Thanksgiving Day.

In the small, single-serving line facility, Soldiers enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving dinner with turkey, ham, and other foods. "It was excellent," said Frazier. "Everyone was pleased."

Although the Stagecoach Café doesn't have the same

wide variety as other DFACs in the area, some Soldiers from the battalion still feel a



(Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)

Spc. Algernon Phillips tends the grill.

sense of pride.

"We might not have all the selection as the other big DFAC, but our cooks bring us the best they have," said Sgt. Reynaldo Luna, the battalion commander's driver for the 68th CSSB.

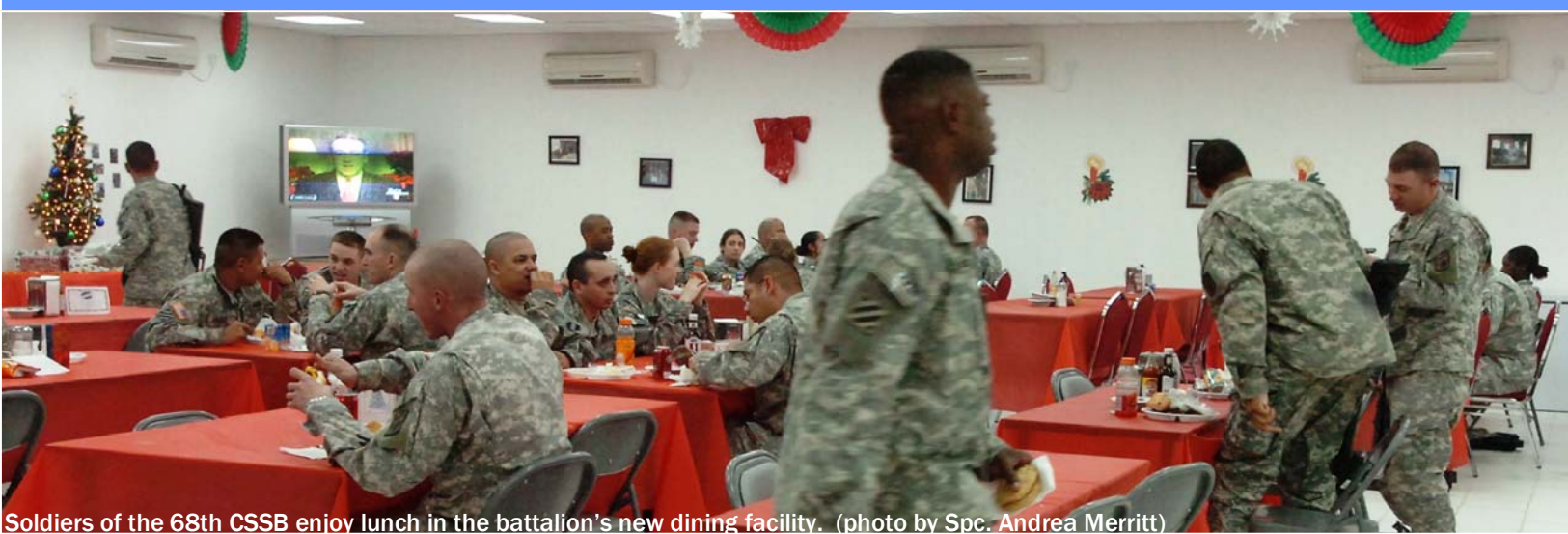
Unlike many other dining facilities, where civilian contractors make the meals, Soldiers in the battalion are responsible for preparing the food.

On Christmas Eve, Soldiers from the 598th Maint. Co. could be seen grilling food for lunch on a deck right outside the back door of the Stagecoach Café.

"There's a lot of pride there because it's our own. (It's) run by our

Soldiers, not KBR," said Luna.

The Soldiers of the 68th CSSB have benefited from the convenience of the Stagecoach Café since Thanksgiving and will continue to enjoy it well into the New Year.



Soldiers of the 68th CSSB enjoy lunch in the battalion's new dining facility. (photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt)



168th Base Support Battalion

Lt. Col. Todd Heussner, Commander



Capt. Jeremiah O'Connor, commander of the 57th Transportation Company and 1st Sgt. Lorenzo Zamora, 1st Sgt. for the 57th Trans Co. unfurled the company colors at the transfer of authority ceremony 7 Dec. (Photo by Pfc. Jasmine Haynes)

Soldiers keep busy at the 168th BSB



(left) 1st Sgt. Jerry Richardson, Bravo Company, 168th Brigade Support Battalion, inspects equipment in motor pool 10. Making sure that the equipment is being used properly is vital to the "Bandit" maintenance success. (Photo by Sgt Dameon Bradford)



(right) Sgt. Kulle Templeton of Bravo Company, 168th Brigade Support Battalion, "Bandits" perform preventive maintenance checks and services on his HMMWV. Safety is a way of life for this Soldier as he wears his safety boots, goggles, and coveralls. (Photo by Sgt Dameon Bradford)



1st Lt. Phillip Castillo administers the oath of enlistment for Sgt. Jason Grooms at the 57th Transportation Company motor pool 13 Dec. Grooms' re-enlistment marks the companies 7th since their arrival 7 Dec. (Photo by Sgt. Rechelle Scott)



Chaplain's Thoughts

Chaplain Terrence E. Hayes, Brigade Chaplain

EIGHT FOR A GREAT 08

By Maj. Terrence Hayes

1st SB Chaplain

Recently, I preached a sermon entitled "Eight for a Great '08" or something like that. It was based on Jesus' words in John 15:7 *'If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will and it shall be done for you.'* I gave an eight-fold plan for reading your Bible through in 2008, a plan that will carry us all the way back home. Let me give you a condensed version.

1. Prepare - Use as many ways as possible to remind yourself that reading / memorizing / meditating on Scripture is *the* very best thing you can do for yourself. I put verses on the walls in my room, have a lot of books on spiritual themes that I want to read and surround my world here in Taji with truth that I can see daily.

2. Plan - There's the old saying, 'If you fail to plan, you plan to fail' or 'If you aim at nothing, you will always hit it.' The slug-gard, the lazy person in Proverbs is always planning to start, but never gets started. A spiritual battle rhythm, putting God on our daily calendar is what it's

all about. Get a plan for reading the Bible. Google 'Bible reading' and you will see dozens of them.

3. Decide - Take up a plan, decide

ahead of time what plan you will use, and then start. You won't be successful every day. When you fall off, get on the horse again and keep riding.

4. Memorize Bible Verses - "I can't do that, it's too hard," we say. You're right. Memorizing also gives the greatest satisfaction, the greatest power and the greatest comfort. Think of the people you know who are the most spiritually minded, who walk and are in tune with God and enjoy Him. Aren't they usually people that ooze Scripture? Do you want to go deeper with God and have power in prayer? Let His words abide in you.

5. Retreat - That means get away for an hour or two. Just read your Bible. It may take 20 chapters but God will say something to you. The only place here is probably your little room, but it works.

6. Journal - We see more when we write down our thoughts than when we just read. "Thoughts disentangle themselves over the lips and through the finger tips", someone wrote. It's true.

7. Read - Great Christian authors who know God deeply and saturate their writings with the Bible. I have favorite authors like that. Find yourself one great and Godly giant in the Christian faith and make him your lifelong companion.

8. Keep - Keep the living person of Jesus before you as you read the Bible. He is with you, as close as your breath. Someone also wrote, "The Bible is the only book where the author is always present when it is being read." I like that.

Keep abiding and may God's best be yours in the year ahead.



(photo by Maj. Terrence Hayes)

"I don't have a background in finance. I wasn't schooled on it at West Point. However, the last six years I've been trying to save and invest the best that I can," said Haug "I tell the Soldiers money is never going away, it doesn't matter how much you know now, just keep learning; a little this year, a little next, keep learning," continued Haug.

According to a 2006 survey from AC Nielsen, Americans are among the world's most cash-strapped people. "Americans are legendary for incurring debt," said Tom Markert, Nielsen's chief marketing officer, in an article written by Les Christie, CNNMoney.com staff writer.

Nearly a quarter (22 percent) of Americans has no money left once they've paid for their essential living expenses and spent their discretionary dollars. That puts the United States at the top of a list of 42 countries for saving futility. The United States is neck and neck with Portugal, writes Christie.

It's understandable that in an environment like this, the message of paying off debt, saving and investing for the future has struck a cord with the Soldiers in Haug's platoon.

"I want more for my daughter," said Johnson. "Now that we're going to get out of debt and save, we'll have more money for our daughter," states Johnson enthusiastically.

How well is the group doing? "We're doing great! Currently we're just shy of \$30, 000," stated Haug.

The platoon plans on holding a barbeque as a reward for reaching their first mile marker, and if they continue on track, a lot of bills will be eliminated and bank accounts filled.

"I gained 30 pounds that summer from working out with him. That's when I became really big in football. When I gained the weight, I was a lot stronger and a lot faster," explained Sales.

He continued his newfound passion throughout college by interning for his strength coach and training cheerleaders and other athletes.

Sales eventually joined the U.S. Air Force, and while at Dyers Air Force Base, Texas, he became the fitness director for his unit and was recommended by his commander to go to Cooper's Institute in Dallas, which is one of the leading schools in educating personal trainers.

"My goal was to go there, come back and teach my fitness staff how to actually train personnel," said Sales. "Once I got my certification and I actually came back, I started training pilots."

One of Sales friends was a pilot who flew 24-36 missions at a time. Once he began working out with him, he noticed he didn't feel as tired while on missions, said Sales.

"Then my name got out. I would train a lot of people who needed it ... Then after I showed the importance of training and how it was different from the Physical Training Leader course, which showed you how to do group PT, I got authorization to send my staff to the course and make sure they were doing the same thing for the Airmen on Dyers Air Force Base," said Sales.

Due to force reduction in the Air Force, Sales job was cut. He still wanted to serve in the military so he joined the Army, said Sales.

Although he is no longer a fitness director in the Air Force, he is using all the knowledge he gained

throughout his life to help Soldiers.

Sometimes, if he is at the gym and sees someone performing an exercise incorrectly, Sales will stop what he is doing so he can teach them the right techniques, which include proper placement, alignment, lifting, breathing and balance.

"I was in the gym doing some weight lifting and he noticed that I was using the wrong technique so he came up to me and showed me the right way to do it," said Staff Sgt. Loretta Maldonado, the senior food operations sergeant for the 1st SB.

"We just got to talking and I was telling him what goals I had and he offered to help me out and he did. I started working out with him, and in the first two months, I lost 14 pounds," said Maldonado.

Sales started Maldonado on a regime that consisted of cardio exercise, alternating upper - and lower - body exercises as well as an abdominal workout.

Although she is consistent with the exercises, she admits there are times when she just doesn't feel like doing them. How does she push past it?

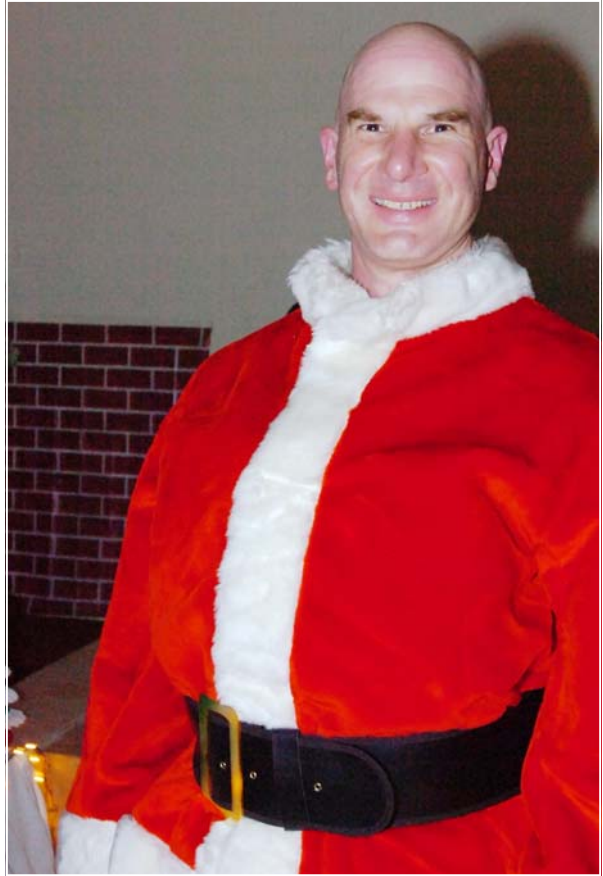
"He's really motivating. There are days when I went there and didn't even want to do anything,

but he just had a way of motivating me to where I wanted to," said Maldonado.

Sales' experience as a personal trainer has taught him how to keep people inspired during their workouts.

"If they're running on a treadmill, a good personal trainer is running right next to them. If they're doing 5.5 (mph), the trainer is doing 5.5 because what you're doing is building the confidence of the person next to you," Sales said.

"To me, it's fun. There's nothing better than seeing how someone losing ten pounds can really change their life. That's the difference. I've seen it change people's lives positively," Sales added.



The surprise Santa was none other than our very own Lt. Col. Chris McCurry. (photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude)