



THE T-WALL

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM BAGHDAD'S INTERNATIONAL ZONE

VOL. 1 No. 2

AF POLICE FINISH IZ TOUR

By Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

They came to Baghdad on March 7, 2007 to provide law and order in the International Zone. This week, members of the Joint Area Support Group Security Forces are heading home after a standard Air Force six month deployment.

The unit consists of Airmen from six separate home bases in the United States.

Despite the high risk of this law enforcement mission, all of the Airmen are returning without injury.

“It is nothing short of a miracle, period,” said Air Force Maj. Byrl R. Engel, the JASG Chief of Police. “There are at least half of us who could say we had a round land within 10 to 50 meters on multiple occasions.”

The IZ Police are considered the local experts on rocket and mortar attacks. Over the past six months, police patrols have responded to 243 indirect fire incidents.

The patrolmen have treated more than a hundred casualties. “Some of the impact scenes of various attacks were quite gruesome and tough to prepare for,” said Engel.

The most obvious example came on April 12th when a suicide bomber struck in the Baghdad



Photo by Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

Senior Airman Paloma Gonzalez visits with an Iraqi family during a community policing mission in Baghdad. Gonzalez completed her six month tour of duty this week. She is heading home to Spokane, Washington.

Convention Center. That day, eight people died and more than 20 sustained serious injuries.

“I really don’t know how to describe it, it is something I’ll never forget,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Tim J. Raymon, a JASG IZ Patrolman.

Raymon was one of the first responders working to control the scene. “We instantly had to per-

form CPR on many injured people,” he said.

Engel applauds the initial response of his Airmen. He said they “truly displayed the ability to adapt and overcome” during a hectic time.

Turns out, adapting has been a theme of this deployment.

“Normally, Air Force Security
(See *Police*, Page 18)

IN THIS ISSUE...

**GIVING BACK TO IRAQ
JASG OFFERS AID TO
AREA SCHOOLS...**
PAGE 4

**HOTTEST CLUB IN TOWN!
TROOPS FLOCK TO
THE SNAKE PIT...**
PAGE 6

**AISLE OR WINDOW?
A COMBAT TRAVEL
AGENT...**
PAGE 8

**ANCIENT ART
OR FITNESS CRAZE?
MUAY THAI TAKES OFF...**
PAGE 17

COL. WILLIAM R. PHILLIPS, II



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE-IRAQ
JOINT AREA SUPPORT GROUP-CENTRAL (P)
U.S. EMBASSY ANNEX, BAGHDAD, IRAQ
APO, AE 09316



23 August 2007



Dear Families and Friends,

As we approach our three month anniversary in Iraq I want to let you know of the tremendous successes that your Airmen, Sailors, and Soldiers are experiencing. All of us have come to the realizations that we are not in a sprint but a marathon, one that we will all complete together.

All of the Directorates are doing an outstanding job in supporting Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus here at the U.S. Embassy Annex. In fact, two of your Directorates have received praise for going above and beyond the call of duty.

First, the Security Directorate received a letter of commendation from the Chief of Staff, Multi-National Force-Iraq for their efforts to fix and make operational the portable bio-metrics scanning tools. These devices are used to verify identification and to facilitate entrance onto the International Zone. This is significant because General Petraeus was being briefed that it would take months to fix and get this system operational within the International Zone. Your Airmen, Sailors, and Soldiers were able to do it in a matter of days!

Second, the Installations Directorate has returned four properties back to the Government of Iraq. This is significant because only three properties were returned through out all of last year. Turning property over to the Government of Iraq is one of your unit's major objectives and one of the many reasons we are here. Everyday your Airmen, Sailors, and Soldiers are providing assistance to the Government of Iraq to enable them to manage their own country. The Installations Directorate has already surpassed all expectations and they are setting a pace that will be hard to follow.

The Support and Command Directorates continue to provide support to all of MNF-I FWD. They are the silent worker-bees making it happen behind the scenes. I receive positive comments daily on their outstanding performance and their "can do" attitude. Without them the operations would come to a grinding halt within the Embassy.

All of the Airmen, Sailors, and Soldiers are performing beyond expectations. This only demonstrates their professionalism and integrity in performance of their duties. I have said this many times before, you should be very proud of your service member not only because they answered their nation's call but because they continue to surpass standards and expectations. To use a football analogy, our service members continue to gain yardage each and every time they are called on to carry the ball. They could not do this without the support and love they receive everyday from you back home and I want to personally thank you for your support and love. It truly shows in their performance every day!

In closing, please continue to monitor our progress by reviewing the articles and monthly newsletter that will be available through www.virginiaguard.com. We continue to excel in what ever we undertake, conquering the training at the mobilization station, adjusting to our new environment here in Iraq, and exceeding our job expectations. Please join with me and share the pride I feel for the members of our true Joint Team.

Ever Forward!

WILLIAM R. PHILLIPS II
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

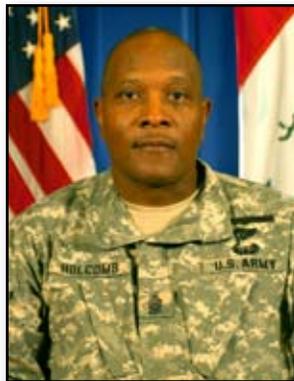
COMMAND SGT. MAJ. CARL A. HOLCOMB



Photo by Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team salute in formation while in Staunton, Virginia. The formation was held as the Soldiers prepared to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

It's hard to believe just how fast time has passed since we all arrived here in theater and, yet, the month of August is almost over. Our soldiers seem to have gotten acclimated to the 117° – 122° temperatures and I have even heard some jokingly say that if the temperature falls below 110 degrees they would consider it to be a cool spell. I, like the commander, continually am amazed at the resilience of our troops and how quickly each of them has adapted to their environment. The stress of being in a war zone and learning to work together with other services and government organizations has, however, presented certain challenges for them, as well. As your Command Sergeant Major I can not express enough the impor-



tance of utilizing your chain of command to resolve issues and vent frustrations you might feel during this deployment. Chances are there is someone within your command chain who has gone through and felt a lot of the same things. We must continue to have an open and honest means of communication and not lose sight of the overall objective for this mission. As Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, enlisted and officer alike, we must set aside our own personal biases and place the mission of the Joint Area Support Group first. Remember, today you are writing the history that following generations will read about tomorrow. It is up to you to determine what your grades will be. Continue to utilize the buddy system, stay focused, and ALERT!!!! “Ever Forward” 

(Below left) The box below indicates the Joint Area Support Group's list of promoted Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen. This list covers the month of August and is organized in alphabetical order.

PROMOTIONS...

Spc. Robert Bishop (USA)
Maj. Kevin Malloy (USA)
Col. Blake Ortner (USA)

(Below right) The box below indicates the Joint Area Support Group's list of Distinguished Service Award winning Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen. This list covers the months of July and August and is organized in alphabetical order.

AWARDS...

Jul. Airman 1st Class Aaron Collins
Staff Sgt. Kelly Tyler
Capt. Joseph Yakubik
Aug. Spc. Jeremy Mills
Sgt. Charles Silk
Chief Warrant Officer 3 Richard Thibeault

PROVIDING THE TOOLS TO TEACH

AMERICAN TROOPS ARE SUPPLYING BAGHDAD SCHOOLS WITH EVERYTHING NEEDED TO MAINTAIN A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

By Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

Iraqi children return to school September 15th. With a little help from the Joint Area Support Group, they should come back to several marked improvements.

JASG representatives met with school officials August 7th to offer a helping hand for the upcoming school year. The practice has become an annual tradition for units serving in the International Zone.

"We started this program in 2004," said Nima Z. Motashar, the former JASG Deputy Director of Community Affairs. "Back then, they were afraid to work with Coalition Forces."

Today, the schools openly embrace the offer of goodwill.

At Wattan Elementary School, located in the 215 Apartment Complex, the principal submitted a request of 20 items. They include emergency generators, photocopier machines, musical instruments and refrigerators.

The nearby Elaaf Secondary School for Girls made sure to narrow its list to ten items. "If we submit too much we probably won't get it, but if we ask for a little our chances are better," said Principal Khariya Musa Jaafar. Her requests include a laptop computer, blood pressure and diabetes machines and wooden cabinets.

"Basically we're looking at a lot of furniture and big ticket items," said Staff Sgt. Duane D. Wolfe, the JASG Public Works Non-Commissioned Officer assigned to manage the project.

Wolfe admits he is close to turn-

ing the wish list into reality. He has started with the smaller items. "I think we can get an initial shipment of pencils and paper and continue to work on the rest of the list," Wolfe said.

Help is already pouring in from back home. The Staunton City School System has volunteered to offer supplies. Wolfe's wife, a school system employee, is leading the charge from the Central Office. "She's kind of the in-between," he said.

Wolfe believes the real goal is to build a relationship between the two school systems, one that will last long after his unit leaves Bag-

dad. "If they can talk to each other without the Army, then I think we'll be successful," said Wolfe.

A permanent partnership would be welcomed news for Wattan Elementary, a school that already shows clear American influence. The halls are lined with paintings of Mickey and Minnie Mouse and the library contains children's books written in English.

But Wattan has some immediate concerns. Six of its 19 classrooms are without air-conditioning. That will make them off-limits to students, with September temperatures reaching 130° Fahrenheit.

(See *Teach*, Page 18)



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

Maj. Kevin Malloy plays soccer with children from Wattan Elementary School in Baghdad. The kids finish up summer break September 15th.

SPEAKING SPANISH IN IRAQ

By Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs

Buenos Dias senior/senorita, Como esta? This is how you are usually greeted every morning as you go thru a check point on your way to work. The last thing you would have imagined when you arrived at Baghdad as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom was that you would be speaking or learning Spanish. It's a normal daily event, every time that you go through a checkpoint, enter the Palace on your way to work, or enter the dining facility you are greeted and inspected by a security guard from Triple Canopy. Triple Canopy is a company based out of Herndon, Virginia and it's one of the security contractors here in the International Zone. The vast majority of the Triple Canopy guards here in the IZ are from Peru.

A few soldiers have taken this opportunity to practice their Spanish or try to learn some. Some of them have previously taken Spanish courses in high school or college and haven't had the opportunity to practice it afterwards and others just want to take the advantage of this rare opportunity. There are various things you can do on your spare time around here, you could exercise, watch a movie, listen to music, take online courses, or stay in your hooch and relax.

Many soldiers are taking advantage of this deployment and are taking online classes. SPC Scott L. Phillips Joint Area Support Group/Support Operations is taking Spanish classes through a Rosetta Stone online course that is offered for free through the Army Knowledge Online website. Phillips mentioned that there are many other free courses available through AKO.

"I just decided to take advantage of my spare time and since the Triple Canopy guards are here I can

practice some of it every day" said Phillips. "Knowing Spanish can be of great help here, back home at work and around where I live."

The other day Master Sgt. Woody Ramsey, Joint Area Support Group Human Resources Management Non Commission Officer in Charge could have use some Spanish when he forgot his identification card in his office and was trying to get back into the Embassy Compound. Master Sgt. Ramsey couldn't speak with the guard and they were trying to communicate by hand signals and gestures, it was not working at all. "Lucky me that Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera, JASG/Public Affair NCOIC was right behind me, I guess I'm going to have to learn some Spanish," Ramsey said.

"You won't be able to learn conversational Spanish with them because of the short time that they can

spend talking to you, but at least you can learn some of the basic words and phrases," said Sgt. 1st class Jose Brujan, JASG/Installations. "It is always nice to find someone that speaks your native language, especially during these deployments. There might be some words that may have different meaning but you can always commu-

nicate and also learn something new in the process."

"I took two years of Spanish in college and every now and then I talk to the Triple Canopy guys, it gives me an opportunity to practice the little Spanish that I remember," said Spc. Amy Swope, JASG Chaplains Assistant.

Besides providing a safe place to work and live in the International Zone, the Triple Canopy guards are providing an opportunity for those wishing to practice or learn a little of Spanish while deployed here in the IZ. 



Photo by Staff Sgt Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs
Spc. Scott L. Phillips uses his spare time to learn Spanish through a Rosetta Stone computer course in his hooch.

PICKING AT THE SNAKE PIT

By Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera,
JASG Public Affairs

The smell of charcoal, the sound of sizzling meat on the grill and the aroma of home cooked baked beans and potato salad takes over your senses as you walk into the Snake Pit. Groups of old and new friends sharing stories, good food, music and sipping ice cold neer-beer (non-alcoholic beer), that's what the Snake pit is all about. After everyone has eaten and socialized for a while, the music begins.

Fingerpicking is a technique of playing the guitar, or some other stringed instrument using the fingertips and/or fingernails, rather than with a plectrum (or "pick").

Every other Saturday a group of musicians and music lovers gather in an old run down building that serves as a K-9 dog handler's lounge. On those Saturdays, it turns into the Snake Pit. They come from all walks of life, different musical backgrounds, professions or trades but all with one thing in common, their love and passion for music. Sgt. Major Vin-



Photo by Staff Sgt Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs

(Right to left) Spc. Gary Thompson, 1st Lt. Philip Hoyle, Sgt. Major Vincent May and civilian contractors enjoy a jam session at the Snake Pit. People gather at the club every other weekend.

cent May, the Joint Area Support Group Support Operations Non Commissioned Officer is one of the regular pickers at the Snake Pit. "It only took me a couple of weeks to find where the pickers and jam sessions were," May said.

A jam session is a musical act where musicians gather and play without extensive preparation or predefined arrangements.

"Through the years I've attended and performed at many jam sessions. They are entertaining, create an environment where you can learn from other pickers, but when it's all said and

done they are just plain fun," said May. They all come to the Snake Pit to relax, have a good time, share stories and make new friends.

"Jam sessions over here are a little different than any I've ever participated in. Here we have the threat of a rocket or a mortar round landing on our little picking party," said May. Despite the threat, pickers and fans keep coming out to the Snake Pit every other Saturday for a few hours of quality picking time, they love it and so do those that stop by to listen.

Spc. Gary Thompson, a JASG Department of

Information Management Specialist, was also present at the Snake Pit last Saturday, Thompson plays the guitar and also sings. Thompson heard about the Snake pit through May. His exact words were, "Thompson, you are bringing your guitar to the barbeque, right?" said Thompson.

The place may look a little rough but the hospitality of the people seem to make up for it.

Spc. Theresa Jolloff, a JASG Support Operations Specialist joined the pickers and sang a few songs for the audience. Staff

(See Snake pg 18)

DEPLOYED DINING



Photo by Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

Would you like some fruit? Server Jaj Mah Tarajudnn slices a cantaloupe in the U.S. Embassy Dining Hall in Baghdad.

By Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

Smorgasbord (smôr'gəs-bôrd')
-noun ;a buffet meal of various hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, salads, casserole dishes, meats, cheeses, etc. -- American Heritage Dictionary

It's not a common term in military speak, but everyone stationed in the International Zone should recognize the definition of smorgasbord. The concept is witnessed each day in the Embassy Chow Hall.

"It's the best of any place I've ever eaten in the military," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Lindler D. McCain, the Joint Area Support Group Chief of Naval Personnel Programs.

McCain confessed the variety and quality of the food has him a little spoiled. "I can never, ever eat an MRE again," he said.

The compliments are music to the ears of Floyd M. Lee, the Senior

Food Service Supervisor in the IZ. The Hampton, Virginia native arrived at the facility in 2003 and has worked to make it the best in Iraq. "My responsibility is huge, I feed the husbands, sons and loved ones of America," Lee said.

He started by improving the eating environment. He dimmed the lights and created a new dress code for all food service employees. Servers now wear maroon vests and bowties or a white jacket with a chef's hat. "I always tell my guys this is a five star restaurant," Lee said.

Lee then arranged what he considers the finest selection of food possible. It includes a weekly rotation including prime rib, t-bone steaks, catfish, Mongolian stir-fry, lobster tails and crab legs. Diners also have a nightly selection of various pastas, salads and soups.

"I like the choices, if you don't like the main line you can go

another line," said Sgt. Chris M. Kellogg, a JASG Communications Specialist. Kellogg was found with a plate full of chili-cheese fries and a grilled-cheese sandwich.

There are healthier options available. A fruit stand comes complete with almost every type of fruit. An attendant is standing by to slice it for you.

The dessert bar has become another favorite stop. Pumpkin, pecan, apple and cherry pies along with an assortment of cheesecakes are always within reach. Bakers also prepare two sheet cakes a day. They are often designed with elaborate decorations. "The guy at night really takes a lot of pride in his cakes," said Lee.

But beware, an abundance of good food can have negative repercussions. "I've gained 7 pounds in 6 weeks," said McCain. Fortunately, he said he is trying to gain a little weight. Bon appetite! 

A COMBAT TRAVEL AGENT



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

By Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

The United States Military crosses Iraq's arid expanses with a myriad of modern aircraft and an ever increasing assortment of new armored vehicles. While numerous HMMWVs and helicopters reign as the workhorses of American movements in Iraq, one JASG Soldier coordinates transportation for the multitude of personnel assigned to the United States Embassy.

"I am the personal travel agent for the ambassador of Iraq, our unit, and any stragglers. There is more than one way to get around in Iraq, but for us, I am the main way," said 1st Lt. Christopher Jones, Transportation Officer in Charge for the JASG and US Embassy Iraq. "If the privates in our unit need to go somewhere, mission oriented of course, I make sure they get where they need to go, by Rhino (an Armored Bus), helicopter or airplane."

Jones recently traveled to Camp Anaconda, North of Baghdad, to meet and coordinate with a new group of Army aviators. The flight showed Iraq's diverse desert environments. Baghdad's urban streets stood as a stark contrast to the green farms and palm groves near the Tigris River, and the barren sand

strewn landscapes farther to the West.

"A lot of it reminded me of Arizona," joked Jones.

He says that the scheduling of flights and reserving of seats on those flights can be difficult. Pilots must consider a range of obstacles, from enemy fire to Iraq's notorious sandstorms.

"My primary job is to put in the requirements and requests for the ambassadors helicopters. So I came (to

Camp Anaconda) today to link up with the new helicopter pilots... a meet and greet kind of thing to have a better working relationship with the people," said Jones. "The helicopters fly everyday, two or three times a day weather permitting, but it's like a bus stop that is constantly changing places, it keeps our enemies from knowing any patterns."

Jones also mentioned some of the perks in scheduling transportation for so many Servicemembers and VIPs.

"I've never met so many people from so many places. I think I have helped people from every major part of the world while working here," said Jones. "I even got to eat homemade lasagna with the Italian ambassador, best lasagna I've had in my life." 

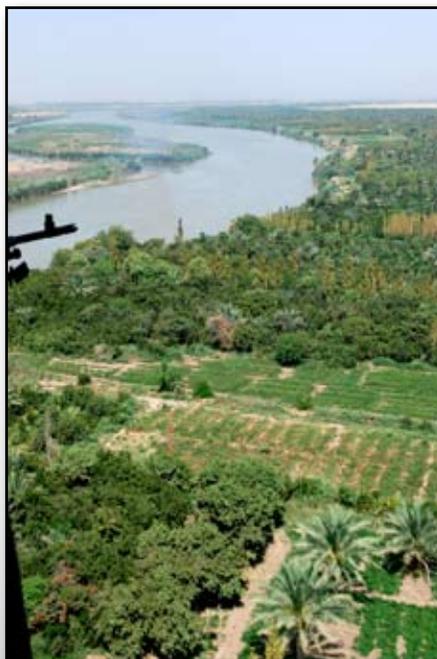


Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs (Top Page) 1st Lt. Christopher Jones on his trip North to Camp Anaconda. (Bottom Page) An aerial view of the fertile banks of the Tigris River.

A SPIRITUAL GUARDIAN



Religious Program Specialist 2nd Class Tim Bostic .

Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

By Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

He is armed to protect some of the rare Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen who cannot arm themselves. He is one of the few Sailors assigned to the Joint Area Support Group and he serves the military by serving God. Tim Bostic is a Chaplains Assistant.

“The Geneva Convention does not allow chaplains to carry weapons so if they are captured they are not technically prisoners of war, they are detained personnel,” said Religious Program Specialist 2nd class Tim Bostic. “Up until 1979 the Navy would assign a random marine to walk around with the chaplain, in 1979 the Navy founded a rate, or job specialty. They said ‘Hey, we’re sending our chaplains out to the marines... we might as well have a Sailor attached to them.”

The Pennsylvanian native, who also proudly stated that Navy “RPs” have served in every major conflict from 1979 on, is on his second tour in Iraq. His first took him all over Northern Iraq with the 35th Marine Expeditionary Unit from August 2004 to April 2005. He traveled through such high risk areas as Al Anbar, Fallujah, and Ramadi. He is also trained as a Marine Corps Battle Skills Specialist. He laughs when he remarks how he became a Religious Programs Specialist.

“I was unassigned at first... You haul lines, anchors, and steer the ship, you do all the grunt work,” said

Bostic. “I kind of just stumbled into (Chaplains Assistance), the rate (career counselor) was an RP, and he was like ... ‘Dude, I’m an RP, and it’s mostly independent duty, you travel a lot... its a smooth cruise.”

“It has got its ups and downs , the best thing is that as a chaplains assistant you are not tied down to any specific shop, you get travel, you get to know the whole command more than anyone else does . When

I was (assigned to) the Marines my radio friends would only really get to know other radio guys and my admin friends would just talk with the admin group,” said Bostic.

The Sailor remarked that his current deployment to the International Zone differs greatly from his previous experiences in Iraq.

“I have about 13 masses to do a week which is quite a good deal. About once a week Spc. Swope and I go out and do some humanitarian aid which is starting to become a fairly high profile mission,” said Bostic.

Although he says he stumbled into the career field, his dedication and devotion to his duties are evident in his defense of his line of work.

“There seems to be some bad stereotypes about chaplains assistants... We are either godless or we’re so holy that we make people sick. I like to be a nice happy medium. I go to church but I don’t smack you in the head with a crucifix or anything!”

**“...I DON’T
SMACK YOU IN
THE HEAD WITH
A CRUCIFIX OR
ANYTHING.”**



AUGUST IN REVIEW



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

(Top page) A smokin' hot rearview shot. SPC Jaymar Lanoza, JASG Command Driver observes his vehicles surface temperature (140°) in the rearview mirror. Baghdad's August temperatures regularly rose in to the 120s.

(Bottom left and right) Spc. Amy Swope helps local Iraqi families in need. The chaplains assistant made regular trips to help impoverished Iraqis who live within the bounds of the International Zone.

AUGUST IN REVIEW



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo by Lt. Col. R. Kenneth Ryan, JASG

(Top Page) Lt. Col Gregg VanOrten re-enlists Spc. Adam Critz near Saddam's famous cross sabers at the IZ parade grounds. Many Soldiers who re-enlist in combat zones receive tax free bonuses.

(Lower left) Spc. David Galloway gets a drink of water with the help of Staff Sgt. Ryan Guidry during Muay Thai training in the U.S. Embassy.

(Lower Right) Lt. Col. William Coffin moves into his Containerized Housing Unit (CHU). Two Soldiers live in 7 by 20 foot trailers and share bathrooms with one adjoining trailer.

AUGUST IN REVIEW



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo JASG file photo

(Top Page) A JASG Soldier helps to clean up an area known as Saddam's old hunting grounds. The IZ Acreage is currently slated for recreational use for events such as scout camps.

(Bottom Right) Students from Wattan Elementary School smile for the camera. The JASG Department of Public Works is working to improve the local learning environment.

(Bottom Left) Master Sgt. Douglas Cummings uses a multi tool to cut up a fallen tree. Numerous JASG Soldiers helped clean up an area known as Saddam's old hunting grounds for Iraqi Boy and Girl Scouts.

SNIPER SHOTS...

A LIGHTEARTED LOOK AT ENTERTAINING MOMENTS IN UNIT HISTORY



HE'S GOT A LOVELY BUNCH OF COCONUTS!

(Left to Right) Spc. Shandon Adkins, Spc. Amber Glosser, and Spc. Katherine DeLorme have a couple laughs while taking a break from training at Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

Photo by Spc. Heather Haggett



A WHOLE 2 INCHES...

Petty Officer 1st Class Gary Barber shows off his catch. Iraq's palace complexes offer a surprising amount of fishing opportunities.

Photo by Master Sgt. Joseph Slaughter Jr.



OOMPA LOOMPA PANTS, YEAHHHHHHH!!!

Spc. Anissa Hutton tries out her newly issued cold weather fleece bib. The Army's Rapid Field Initiative provides Soldiers with a range of new clothings and equipment options for their deployments.

Photo by Spc. Amy Swope

A SHOT AT REVENGE!

DA SQUAD TAKES 2ND SHOT AT TOP TEAM, AGAIN COME UP SHORT

By Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

A big night on the boards by 1st Lt. Trevor A. Bowen was not enough for Da Squad to chop down the giants of Psyc in a league game August 16th at the Embassy Gym Basketball Court.

Bowen, known on the court as LT, finished with 11 rebounds, 8 points and 2 blocks in a 60-55 loss to Psyc, the top-ranked team in the league.

"They've got some really tall guys, three of them are at least 6'6," said Bowen, the 6'4" Da Squad Center.

Early in the game, the size difference was a non-factor as Da Squad jumped out to a quick lead. "We had a lot of energy going in," Bowen said.

Da Squad used three-point shooting and fast breaks to build a 29-26 halftime lead. They did it without a single point from Bowen. "I was kind of frustrated with their big men," said the Joint Area Support Group Contracting Technical Reviewer for Class III Fuels.

Bowen came out strong in the second half, again controlling the boards and scoring on several put-backs. "He was doing his job," said Tyree W. Carr, Da Squad Guard and JASG Embassy Annex Property Manager.

But the physical play eventually wore down Bowen, who stayed in the entire game. "We don't have a bench and they have a real deep bench," Bowen said.

Psyc also had another advantage on the sidelines. "They have a coach who does nothing but coach," said Carr. "They are the only team in the league with a fulltime coach," he said.

"I think a couple of calls here and there and a couple of free throws and we're talking about a different game," said Bowen.

This was the second meeting this season between the two teams. Back on July 22nd, Psyc edged out a 50-48 win.



Photo by Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

1st Lt. Trevor Bowen gives instructions to Spc. Tyree Carr during a basketball game August 17, 2007. Bowen finished with 8 points and 11 rebounds.

IT'S NOT THE SHOES!



Photo by Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs

SPC. TYREE CARR DUNKS IN HIS COMBAT BOOTS AND ACUS AT A COURT IN FOB BLACKHAWK. CARR'S BASKETBALL TEAM, DA SQUAD, WILL ENTER EMBASSY LEAGUE PLAYOFFS LATER THIS WEEK.

Da Squad and Psyc are expected to meet again in the playoffs, which begin September 2nd.

The top four teams in the eight team league will advance to play in a best-of-three series.

Da Squad plans to play a tight zone next time they face Psyc. The goal is to keep the ball away from the big men and make the guards beat them from the outside.

"We can beat them. Hopefully we'll see them in the playoffs and then we'll show them who's the better team," said Carr.

The Embassy Basketball League is managed by the office of Morale, Welfare and Recreation. The regular season started July 15th.



MUAY THAI

By Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

He approaches his target and attacks! His shin repeatedly slams into a human sized bundle of old carpet foam and duct tape. Little plumes of dust and dirt explode from the punching bag as sweat begins to drip from the fighter's face. Then the Muay Thai instructor yells out "Time!" prompting all the fighters to move on to their next set of drills. The one-on-one sparing between the Muay Thai fighters is about to begin...

Muay Thai, also known as Thai Boxing or The Art of the Eight Limbs, is the Thai name for a form of hard martial art developed in several Southeast Asian countries. It is referred to as the "Art" or "Science of Eight Limbs", as the hands, shins, elbows, and knees are all used extensively in this fighting style. Master practitioners of Muay Thai have the ability to execute strikes using eight "points of contact," as opposed to the "two points" (fists) used in Western boxing and the "four points" (fists, feet) used in many other "sport-oriented" forms of martial arts.

"After a day sitting at my desk I have all this built up energy. You have to have an outlet for this energy. My goal every day is to work so hard that when I get home I pass out on my bed," said Staff Sgt. Ryan Guidry, JASG Targeting analyst. "Muay Thai is an excellent outlet!

The martial arts based workout is held three days a week



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

(All above) Staff Sgt. Ryan Guidry punches and kicks during Muay Thai training in the U.S. Embassy Annex. Several JASG Soldiers take part in the martial arts workout which takes place three nights a week.

in the U.S. embassy annex. Several civilian and former military volunteers organize and lead the intense training, which is open to all levels of experience.

"A lot of us can't work out during the day so this is a great way to stay in shape and it helps relieve stress after work," said Guidry.

Muay Thai has a long history in Thailand and is the country's national sport. Traditional Muay Thai practiced today, varies slightly from more ancient forms of the sport and uses kicks and punches in a ring with gloves similar to those used in Western boxing. Thailand's military also conditions its Soldiers for combat with a modified form of Muay Thai. Also of note is the fact that many martial artists consider kickboxing a 'watered down' version of Muay Thai.

"Muay Thai is a lot more striking, and less grappling than the combatives we train with in the Army," said Guidry. "You're standing and striking your opponent more, and using lots of knees and elbows."

The fun and benefits of the workout has drawn numerous JASG Servicemembers into regular attendance. Many have even purchased their own gloves and shin guards.

"You definitely sweat and I've taken a few hard knocks," said Guidry. "Specialist Amy Swope attends fairly regularly, but don't let size fool you, she has a mean right hook."



DRIVING SAFETY

By SSgt KELLY L. TYLER

IZ POLICE, TRAFFIC ACCIDENT INVESTIGATOR

"Police-3, this is Control, we have a report of a Major Vehicle Accident on Qadisiya Expressway adjacent to the Crossed Swords entrance, with multiple injuries. Roger, Police-3 is enroute, send a back up unit for traffic control."

This is almost an everyday occurrence in the IZ. The accident may not always be on Qadisiya Expressway, it may be on 14th of July road or maybe under the 14th of July Bridge or it may even be inside FOB Freedom. Accidents can happen anywhere at any-time. Those involved can be anyone. The IZ Police have handled accidents between Local National Drivers, Coalition Forces, Third Country Nationals, DOD Contractors, Dept of State Personnel...anyone. We have even been involved in our own vehicle accidents. Every driver in the IZ is responsible for their safety, as well as others on the road and the pedestrians too. Traffic safety is not only up to the IZ Police, it starts with you, the Driver. First off, did you know that you are in the IZ? The International Zone...what does that mean? It means that there are people here from various countries, which have learned various different way to operate a vehicle and at one point were subject to very different traffic laws in use in their home country. I'm sure it is a huge change for those from the UK who are forced to drive on the right side of the road versus the left. This is just one example, but acknowledging who is on the road and what the current enforceable traffic

laws are is the first step in maximizing your safety on the road and minimizing your chances in being involved in a vehicle accident.

There are two main ingredients that make up the traffic accidents in the IZ; they are speed and lack of situational awareness.

How many of you readers know what the speed limit is in the IZ? Directly out of The Command Policy Letter Det 4 #3 (International Zone Traffic Safety Program), "The speed limit in the IZ is 60 Kilometers per hour on major thoroughfares and 40 Kilometer per hour in residential neighborhoods." For those of us not on the metric system 60K=37MPH (Miles per hour) and 40K=25 MPH. At these speeds over half of the vehicle accidents occurring in the IZ could have been avoided. Food for thought: Let's say you are operating a vehicle at 60 MPH. At this speed you are traveling at 80ft per second. The natural human reaction time is 1.6 seconds. You see a danger in the road approximately 100 ft in front of you. It takes your



Photo courtesy of IZ Police



Photo courtesy of IZ Police

brain 1.6 seconds to register and for your body to react with evasive driving maneuvers. Sorry, too little too late. You have already struck the danger because at 60 MPH, you just traveled an additional 128ft from the time you noticed the danger to the time it took for your body to react. What if that danger was a child? That child would be dead at your hand. What if that danger was a Stryker vehicle stopped in the middle of the road? (Continued next page)

DRIVING SAFELY

(From previous page) You would be dead or seriously injured, all because you were in a hurry or maybe you just have a "lead foot." Either way, both excuses are unacceptable and they don't replace that life that was just wasted. This is why obeying the posted speed limit is so important.

How many of you have been bee-bopping on down the road, plugging in your FM Transmitter and looking for your favorite song on the old IPOD, when you are about to miss your turn? So, you instantly apply the brakes and cut across two lanes of traffic without checking your mirrors once and make that turn. This is where situational awareness comes. Once again let's think back to the thousands of International Drivers on the road, let's also think about the many holes and ruts on the streets and also the condition of some of the vehicle on the road. Not to mention pedestrians. How many crosswalks have you seen painted on the streets in the IZ? I can't name too many. So many accidents could have also been avoided if maybe we looked over our shoulder a time or two. KBR doesn't do a great job of detailing the windows and mirrors for nothing. Remember back to your Driver's Ed class (back in the States) you should be checking your mirrors every three seconds. Check your blind spot before you negotiate a lane change or enter a traffic circle. Ensure you yield to those who have the right-of-way (ESPECIALLY EMERGENCY RESPONSE VEHICLES!!!) Tonight, my partner (SrA ALMONTE) and I responded to two vehicle accidents, one a

minor fender bender and the other a three vehicle major accident where a local national broke his arm and totaled his vehicle. Both accidents were caused by negligence. In the Major accident, the vehicle at fault

was in the far right lane and decided he wanted to make a U-turn...RIGHT NOW! The driver did not use a turn signal or check his mirrors. He was struck by one vehicle on the front driver's side and a second vehicle on the rear driver's side. His vehicle was unable to move under it's own power and he sustained a broken left arm from the impact. Had he checked his mirrors and his blind spot, he would have seen the two vehicles approaching. I don't think his insurance company is going to cover this...do you?

Safety is paramount! With all the hazards and dangers we face day to day in the IZ, do you really want your Command to have to tell your family that you were a casualty of a vehicle accident that YOU could have avoided?

I sure don't. Constantly think of what you can do to maximize your safety and the safety of those around you. Wear your seatbelts, use turn signals, OBEY THE SPEED LIMIT, yield to traffic that has the right-of-way, STOP AT STOP SIGNS (that is why they are there, they are written in English and Arabic!!!!) Please be safe out there on the roads and do what you can to increase your chances of going home safely. Be a DEFENSIVE driver, we have plenty of other dangers to be wary of over here. 



Photo courtesy of IZ Police



Photo courtesy of IZ Police

JUMPS

AND NOW FOR THE REST OF THE STORIES...

(Continued from *Police* pg1) Forces sit on a wall, we don't go out and do law enforcement," said Raymon, who admits he likes this better.

So does Senior Airman Paloma Gonzales, a JASG IZ Patrolwoman. "There's more of a sense of accomplishment when you stop a car and confiscate 20 AK's," she said.

Police have now seized 535 weapons since arriving in March.

But the unit's biggest challenge has come in dealing with escort violations. All visitors in the IZ are required to have an authorized escort at all times. It's a concept the Iraqis have not completely grasped.

"Such blatant disregard for the policy on a daily basis was an ongoing frustration for all our Airmen," said Engel.

Reports show more than 1,300 people have been

detained due to escort violations.

The hard work has yielded some lasting relationships for the departing Airmen. Gonzalez said she will miss many of the Iraqi Traffic Police and the Interpreters who have played an important part in their police work. "They are obviously doing it to help their country because they don't get paid a lot and it is extremely dangerous," she said.

Gonzalez, a mother of two, admits her memorable moment came a few days ago. "We were taking ice to a mother and her two small children and the little boy kissed me on the cheek. He had never done that before," she said.

The Airmen will stay at their home stations for the next six months. After that, they could face another deployment to Iraq. 

(Continued from *Teach* pg8) The JASG is trying to repair or replace the units before the start of school. Administrators are thankful for the gesture, but insist they will find a way to teach, with or without the assistance.

"You have started and we can now carry on," said Hudi al-Aizawi, the Principal of Wattan Elementary School.

Motashar calls it a case of pride clouding the truth. "They will say they can handle it, but in true life they

can't," said Motashar.

He said the Iraqi Department of Education is simply unable to provide all the tools needed. "There are only enough funds to pay teacher salaries and to keep the lights on," said Motashar.

He insists, that is why the JASG has helped out in the past and will continue to help in the future.

"You can see we did something and when you go there, you can feel it," Motashar said. 

(Continued on pg 6) Sgt. Samuel Phillips and Sgt. Sara Weber took the opportunity to dance to a couple of the songs.

"It's a great place to unwind and spend time with friends, I got to play music and eat great food that was hot off the grill. The potato salad was just like home," said Thompson.

"The Snake pit is sorta a getaway spot without the get away. A place where you can relax and enjoy some good food on the grill and talk and socialize without looking over your shoulder," according to Sgt. Christopher Young, a JASG Air Trans Rotary Wing Non-Commissioned Officer In-Charge, who also found his way to the Snake Pit through May.

"There's good food, great music, and the crowd seems to be getting larger and staying longer as each gathering happens," said Young.

So, the next time the pickers gather at the Snake Pit and the jam session begins, if you have some spare time, you might want to stop by and enjoy the camaraderie. "It's nice to know that there is a group of people here who still know how to live life to the fullest, and have a good time doing it," said Young.

"It's my hope that the music reminds them of home and takes their mind off what we face 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even if we don't sound exactly like the Seldom Scene or Brooks and Dunn," said May. 

STRENGTH IN PRAYER



Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

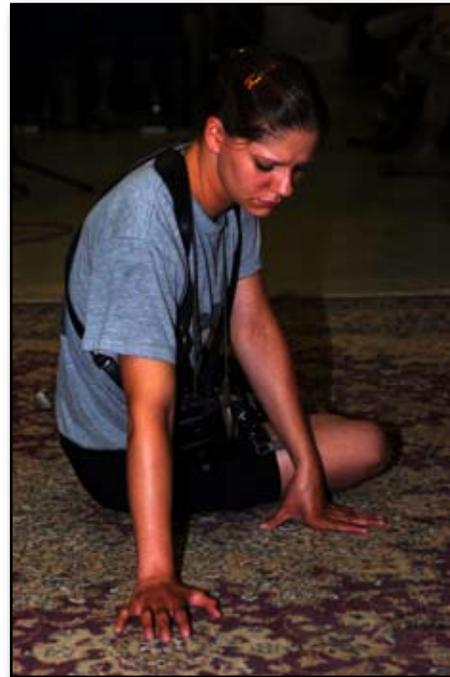


Photo by Sgt. John Slosser, JASG Public Affairs

Sgt. 1st Class Clinton McGuire and Sgt. Quincy Mitchell yell at Theresa Jolloff while acting during a Sunday morning skit during church service.

General George S Patton, Jr writes; "I am a strong believer in prayer"

Scripture Lesson: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"

Philippians 4:4-7, NIV

Thought For The Day: "General George S Patton told Chaplain James H O'Neill that he was a strong believer in prayer. He went on to explain that prayer was no substitute for planning and work, but it was nevertheless an indispensable part of life as a soldier."

-The Soldier's Bible, p. 1123

The Stonewall Brigade was commanded by General Thomas J (Stonewall) Jackson. Many military historians proclaim Stonewall Jackson as one of the greatest Generals in military history. Stonewall Jackson was known as a man of strong prayer and Godly devotion. Many of America's most famous military leaders have been individuals of prayer to God. The list includes

John Pershing, George S Patton, Jr, Hal Moore, Colin Powell, and Charles Krulak.

God is our loving Creator, He is the source of all power, wisdom, and peace. God desires to give us inner spiritual strength and wisdom to overcome our life challenges and to grow from them. "If any of you lacks wisdom, they should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to them" (James 1:5).

In 1944, General Patton told his chaplain of the goodness of God to the Third Army. He pointed out that the Third Army had never retreated, been defeated, and suffered severe epidemics. Patton attributed these successes to the prayers of people back home and said victories in North Africa, Sicily, and Italy were attributed to prayer.

I sincerely thank the people of Virginia, the United States, and praying members of JASG-C for your continued prayers for our mission success and safety.

God Bless,
Chaplain (Major) Edward S. Barnett



END NOTES



ANGELS??

From left to right, Spc. Anissa Hutton, Spc. Allison DePaola, Staff Sgt. Melba Theodis, 1st Lt. Amy Staub, Spc. Amy Swope and Staff Sgt. Amy Wenger flash their 9mm pistols with style.

Photo by Spc. Jeremy Mills, JASG Public Affairs



THE T-WALL

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UPCOMING B-DAYS SEPTEMBER:

- 4 Senior Airman Joel Carpenter
- 6 Master Sgt. John Wilson
- 7 Master Sgt. Woody Ramsey
- 9 Airman 1st Class Sandra Brand
- 10 Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Bostic
Lt. Col. Hilario Mikalofsky
Staff Sgt. Timothy Raymon
- 11 Senior Master Sgt. William Thompson
Sgt. Christopher Young
- 13 Staff Sgt. Michael Hampton
- 16 Spc. Heather Haggett
- 17 Staff Sgt. Thomas Shupe II
- 19 Senior Airman Lindsey Whitfield
- 21 Senior Airman Steven Krugle
- 23 Pfc. Justin Burr
- 25 Tech. Sgt. Mark Brown
- 27 Spc. Shandon Adkins
- 28 Master Sgt. Douglas Cummings

SAVING THE SCOUTS

By Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs

Among pine trees and tall eucalyptus trees and within the confinement of tall concrete walls in what used to be Saddam Hussein's hunting grounds, a group of about thirty volunteers prepare the area for the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides scouting camp.

Volunteers from the Joint Area Support Group and the International Zone spent a few hours picking up trash, raking up leaves and fallen branches. Soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen and civilians showed up to volunteer their time to get the camp ready for the Scouts camping activities in October. The camp is a beautiful piece of flat land of approximately eight acres with rows of pine trees, eucalyptus trees and palm trees and totally enclosed by a 10-foot tall wall.

Iraq was one of the first Arab nations to embrace the scouting movement, starting its program in 1921. They were a member of the World Organization of the Scout

Movement (WOSM) from 1922 to 1940, and again from 1956 to 1999.

After the Baath party took over in 1968 and especially after Saddam Hussein seized power in 1979, youth groups movements and independence was restricted. They couldn't travel outside the country to go to other jamborees, and international Scouts couldn't come here.

In 2004, Chip Beck, a former Navy Commander and Assistant Commissioner for Venture Scouting in the National Capital Area Council (NCAC) of Washington D.C., was serving a 6 month Coalition Provisional Authority tour in Iraq and had the idea to try and restart scouting in the country. In February of 2004, the Green Zone Council of Scouting was established by Beck and another 100 multinational Scouters. Through various scouting networks, the GZC came to the attention of Michael Bradle and his corporation. Bradle offered his full support and suggested that both groups work

together to re-establish a legal, recognized and fully functional Scouting program in Iraq. The Scout program is open to boys and girls of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, its part of their school curriculum and starts in middle school through high school. "Here is a little different than back in the states, their teachers are their scout leaders instead of volunteers," said Capt. Jennifer R. Martin, the Joint Area Support Group Human Resource Officer.

Martin serves as the assistant treasurer for the Green Zone City Council. She is a scout leader back in Virginia and is helping the Iraqi scouts with the fund-raising activities. They sell t-shirts, patches and recently they had a Girl Scout cookie sale. The cookies were donated by their American counterparts and they were able to raise \$2,363. "It is fun and the kids are very interested in the scouting program," said Martin.

1st Lt. Amy Staub, International Zone Transition Team Planner is the new Co-Chair and Events Planner for the GZC. The GZC meets once every week and they plan activities for the scouts and also fund raising events. "So far since they started back in 2004 they have collected around \$80,000," Staub said. Staub was a girl scout for seven years and decided to get involved with the GZC after being asked by Martin.

Three years after Chip Beck's initiative, the Scouting program in Iraq keeps going strong and the volunteers keep coming out to help and do whatever they can for this noble cause. 



Photo by Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs

Volunteers help clean up the Scout Camp Grounds in the International Zone.

COMBAT ZONE FAMILY REUNION

By Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs

Deployments can be very hard for many Servicemembers, leaving behind their families, friends, jobs, or just the sudden change in their lives. Imagine being married to another Servicemember and having to deploy at the same time to different locations in the same region of the world.

That is the case of Air Force Tech Sgt. Marie N. Gall, a Joint Area Support Group Human Resource Manager and her husband Tech Sgt. Michael J. Gall.

Michael Gall, who has 14 years service in the Air Force, is on his second deployment and is currently deployed in Qatar with the 317th OSS out of Dyess AFB, Texas. Michael Gall comes from a family with a long history of military service. "Most of my uncles in both sides of the family, also my sister and brother-in-law have served or are serving in the military" said Michael Gall. Marie, a native of Haiti and a resident of Haines City, Florida, came to the United States with her parents when she was 12 years old. She joined the Air Force 11 years later. "I joined to help pay for college and have a sense of accomplishment," said Gall. Three years after joining the Air Force, Marie got her U.S. citizenship which was one of her goals when joining the Air Force.

"In my country of origin, Haiti, it's almost impossible for females to fill in traditional male roles such as military. Most women are expected to be mothers, housewives, teachers, nurses, etc.," said Marie Gall.

While stationed at Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida she met Michael Gall from Aurora, Nebraska as the result of a blind date, and later they got married. They have been married for a little more than eight years and have two boys.

"My plans were to get out after we got married but

my husband received orders to Germany so I decided to extend and go with him instead of staying behind and being an extra load for him," said Marie Gall. Eight years later, they find themselves deployed in Iraq. "I think this is my calling because every time I try to get out, I find a reason to stay in," Marie Gall said. They have two boys, Brendan, 5 and Ethan, 2. "My parents are taking care of our sons, they think we

are out fighting the bad guys who say bad words and take toys away from good boys and girls," said Michael J. Gall.

It is not just her husband that is deployed here in the region, her sister Sgt. Lawrence Green, with the 151st AG Postal Company and her husband Spc. Ronald Green from Cleveland, Ohio and part of the, HHC, 3-8 1st CAV, are also deployed in Iraq. They are both active duty Army stationed out of Fort Hood, Texas and on their first deployment to Iraq.

"I feel like we are doing

something brave in serving our country. The toughest part is not being able to see each other even though we're in the same country probably no more than two hours away," said Lawrence Green. August is a special month for the sisters, since they both share birthdays and it is also Sgt. Green and her husband's 2nd wedding anniversary.

They are deployed all over Iraq and due to the conditions around here they are not able to see each other as they would like, so they keep in touch through e-mail and telephone as much as they can. "I don't like that we're all deployed at the same time, especially with my husband, but we are making history together," said Marie Gall. Having to leave the boys with relatives, moving them across the country and placing them in the unfamiliar surroundings of daycare has been tough to deal with, according to Marie Gall.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Raul Rivera, JASG Public Affairs
TSgt. Marie Gall take some time off to help out the Iraqi Girl Guides during their cookie sale.

