First Memorial Day Ceremony Honors Lives Lost at Tallil AB

Story by: Spc. Ryan Wilson, USA, 203rd Military Intelligence Bn.
Staff Writer

With a stiff salute and the laying of a red, white and blue wreath, fallen heroes and friends—the 51 service members who lost their lives during combat in Iraq—were honored at the first Memorial Day ceremony held on Iraqi soil. Words of remembrance, prayers for fellow airmen, soldiers and marines, and a haunting bagpipe rendition of Amazing Grace marked the special occasion with piercing reminders of why we serve.

"We who serve in the military do not have to be reminded how fragile the gift of freedom is," said Col. Lawrence "Mike" Larson, commander of the 171st Area Support Group (ASG). "It is therefore fitting and appropriate that we pause this Memorial Day...in a now liberated Iraq, to honor all brave Americans who have died in the service of their country."

And that sacrifice is not made by just one American, or by just one branch of the armed forces. And that theme was reiterated several times in speeches delivered by Tallil’s command staff.

"These soldiers, marines, and airmen we remember today, came from different backgrounds and different countries," said Col. Harry Warren, commander of the 86th Medical Task Force. "Yet, they fought as comrades, not oppressed, but willing to fight oppression."

But according to one senior Tallil officer, what really makes this land “holy” is not simply its rich history, but the fact that it is the site where many brave members of the coalition force have laid down their lives for the freedom of people they will never know.

"Let us today never forget their ultimate sacrifice," Col. Michael W. Biering said, "Let us never forget that we are on holy ground, sanctioned by the sacrifice of servicemen for the liberation and freedom of an oppressed people."

But perhaps the most touching metaphor of the day came from Col. John Pon Fret, USMC, 11th Combat Service Support Group, who asked attendees to reflect on a deeper meaning of patriotism as he shared the story of a young Gunnery Sergeant who died after losing both his legs in...
"I told the private in charge of the mortuary arrangements, 'Take care of Gunny, he deserves it,'" said Pon Fret. "And what that private did was drape an American flag he owned over the truck that carried the Gunny's remains to Kuwait. Every time the truck stopped, the private dusted off the flag, and he dusted off the Gunny. When he finally arrived in Kuwait, the Marines who received the body asked if the private if he wanted his flag back. The private said, 'No.' The flag was his final gift to the Gunny."

While the simple acts of the private may not seem magnanimous in nature, they do demonstrate the indelible principle that soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines, even in death, are still recognized and treated as members of their respective service.

"Today, once today starts in thousands of towns, cities and communities across America, families, friends and neighbors will be thinking of us so far from home," said Larsen. "But for all too many it will be a time of sorrow—a time of thoughts, fatherly thoughts a little boy or girl will never know, the memory of final kiss from a husband or wife...or a 'HOOAA' from a buddy who will be present for duty only in our memories."

The special Memorial Day service was attended by approximately 200 personnel and will become an annual event at Tallil Air Base.

Memorial Day was originally known as Decoration Day because it was a time set aside to honor the nation's Civil War dead by decorating their graves. It was first widely observed on May 30, 1868, to commemorate the sacrifices of Civil War soldiers, by proclamation of General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic, an organization of former sailors and soldiers.
IN BRIEF
All times are local.

U.S. Air Force Worship Services

Catholic
Daily Mass
Mon, Wed, Fri 6 p.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent
Vigil Mass
Saturday, 6 p.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent
Sunday Mass
Sunday, 8 a.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent
Sunday, 9:30 a.m., LSA Adder Chapel
Thursday
RCIA/Adult Ed., 6:30 p.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent

Protestant
Traditional
Sunday, 9:30 a.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent
Contemporary
Sunday, 7 p.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent
Gospel Service
11:45 a.m. - 1:30 a.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent

Latter Day Saints
Lay-Led Service
Sunday, 6 p.m., 407th AEG Chapel Tent

Jewish
Lay-Led Service
Friday, 6 p.m., 407th ESFS Compound (BDOC)

Muslim
Prayer
Daily, 12:30 p.m., LSA Adder Chapel
Daily, Sunset, LSA Adder Chapel

Bible Studies
Women's Bible Study
Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m., USAF Post Office Building
Catholic Bible Study
Thursdays, 6:30 p.m., Chapel Tent, open to all who are interested in the Catholic faith

God's Purpose for You
Fridays, 7:30 p.m., USAF Post Office Building

Chapel Movie Night
The Air Force chaplains will sponsor the movie, Maid in Manhattan, Wednesday, June 4, in the AB WOC at 7:00 p.m. This free movie, starring Jennifer Lopez and Ralph Fiennes, is open to all Tallil personnel.

U.S. Army Worship Services

Catholic
Daily Mass
Mon, Wed, Fri 6 p.m., 407th AEG WOC Conference Room
Saturday Mass
Saturday, 9 p.m., 407th AEG AF ESFS Bldg (BDOC)
Sunday Mass
Sunday, 8 a.m., 392nd AEG WOC Conference Room
Sunday, 9:30 a.m., 63rd Signal Battalion
Sunday, 11 a.m., 86th CSH

Protestant
Daily
Daily, 12 p.m., 163rd 63rd Signal Battalion**
Daily, 8 p.m., 92nd EN DFAC
Daily, 9 p.m., 1/293rd IN*

Wednesday
Wednesday, 12 p.m., 109th EN DFAC*
Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., 63rd Sig*
Wednesday, 7 p.m., 36th EN Briefing Tent*
Wednesday, 8 p.m., 109th EN DFAC

Fridays
Friday, 8 p.m., 109th EN DFAC

Sundays
Sunday, 8 a.m., and 8 p.m., 36th EN
Sunday, 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., 86th CSH
Sunday, 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., 36th EN Brief Tent
Sunday, 10 a.m., 1/293IN and 171st ASG
Sunday, 12 p.m., 63rd Sig.
Sunday, 12 p.m., 109th EN DFAC

*= Bible Study ** = Devotions

Latter Day Saints
Sunday
Sunday, 2 p.m., 86th CSH
Sunday, 6 p.m., 407th AEG WOC

Jewish
Lay-Led Service
Friday, 6 p.m., 407th ESFS Compound (BDOC)

Muslim
Prayer
Daily, 12:30 p.m., 63rd Signal Battalion
Daily, Sunset, 63rd Signal Battalion

Morale Calls
Do not use workplace phones for morale call purposes. Only 10 percent of the total number of phones on base may be used for morale call purposes per CENTAF.

AAFS BX/PX
AAFS hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

NOTICE
To help everyone get the most out of their facilities and stay good neighbors, the Tallil Times reminds all readers that each MKT, dining hall, shower tent, latrine tent and morale tent is specially sited, stocked and serviced for certain numbers of people in a certain areas. These amenities work well if only those people use them, but additional people rapidly use up whatever food, water and “stuff” were planned for the intended users. If you aren’t among the intended users, you take away from those who are and in the long run hurt that unit’s ability to properly serve their people. Help others and yourself to have enough when you need it.

To submit information or corrections to IN BRIEFS, send your comments to the IN BRIEFS editor, Sergeant 1st Class Steve Miller at tallil.times.aor@centa.f.af.mil.
Space is the Ultimate High Ground

Story by A.J. Bosker
Air Force Print News

Space is the ultimate high ground and gives American forces a tremendous advantage on the battlefield, according to the Air Force’s director of space operations and integration at the Pentagon.

“We must dominate space,” said Maj. Gen. Judd Blaisdell, “because it would be very difficult to conduct a war without our space assets and the capabilities they provide.”

For example, he said, satellites allow American forces to communicate globally, providing “reach-back” capability and performing real time command and control and battle management.

“They also give us the bandwidth needed to operate our unmanned aerial vehicles,” the general said.

Space platforms also warn American forces of enemy missile launches, he said. The older systems, initially designed to detect strategic intercontinental ballistic missiles, were adapted in Operation Desert Storm to detect Iraqi Scud missile launches.

“We’re now pushing to replace these with the new space-based infrared systems which would be able to more accurately detect the smaller tactical or theater ballistic missiles,” he said.

“(These systems) will also be able to relay this information to other assets enabling us to strike these launch platforms or (intercept the missiles in flight).”

The Air Force is also using space to enhance its intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, Blaisdell explained. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, various ISR assets provided information to the combined air operations centers, allowing them to make rapid battlefield decisions, putting coalition forces inside the enemy’s decision cycle.

Also during OIF, coalition aircraft dropped thousands of precision-guided munitions including 5,500 Global Positioning System-guided Joint Direct Attack Munitions.

“GPS guidance enables JDAM to have an accuracy of four meters,” he said. “When that is combined with the GPS navigational accuracy of the weapons platform, we can considerably minimize collateral damage.”

GPS also provides accurate timing, besides navigation and position information.

“Accurate timing information was used as the basis for all air and space tasking orders,” he said.

Space assets also enable the electronic distribution of the orders to the field, Blaisdell said.

“These communications satellites also played a big role enabling joint communications and the transfer of targeting information to air, land and sea forces,” he said.

In the future, the general believes that the military’s reliance on space, and the capabilities it provides, will only increase. Blue Force Tracker, a system in development, is designed to identify and track friendly air and ground forces, reducing fratricide incidents.

“This unparalleled knowledge of the battlefield will allow us to avoid collateral damage, wreak havoc on the enemy and (achieve) our objectives more quickly,” Blaisdell said.

According to Blaisdell, space will not only help American forces win wars, but it may also help deter them.

“We will have a space-based radar system that will let us observe what’s going on in critical parts of the world at any time,” he said. “We will be able to track the moves of potential hostile countries and provide that information quickly and easily to the international community.”

Regardless of what the future holds, Blaisdell said he believes the responsibility for taking advantage of space will still rest on the shoulders of talented men and women.

“Education and the continuing development of a space cadre is important because we’ve barely scratched the surface on the capabilities that space can provide,” he said. “In order to dominate space, we need people who understand the importance of space and the capabilities that it can provide.”

New Installation Titles Reflect Joint Use

Story by: 2nd Lt. Lance Patterson
Air Force Reserve Command Public Affairs

This summer, nine Air Force Reserve Command installations will be re-designated joint bases or stations to reflect the multiservice use of the facilities.

Lt. Gen. James E. Sherrard III, AFRC commander, initiated the change. At his suggestion, the civil engineer at AFRC headquarters here completed a survey of the installations where the command is the host and determined nine locations qualify for joint status.

The locations and their future designations are: Dobbins Joint Air Reserve Base, Ga.; Grissom JARB, Ind.; Homestead JARB, Fla.; March JARB, Calif.; Minneapolis-St. Paul Joint Air Reserve Station, Minn.; Niagara Falls JARS, N.Y.; Pittsburgh JARS, Pa.; Westover JARB, Mass.; and Youngstown JARS, Ohio.

“The primary change is simply to insert ‘joint’ in the installation title,” said Thomas Hovey, chief of civil engineer operations for AFRC. “No other relationships will change.

Homestead is a special case, since action is ongoing to convert it from an air station to an air reserve base with the signing of a supplemental record of decision. This action officially transfers the airfield to the Reserve, according to Hovey.

Hovey said he expects the progress to be completed by July 31. (Courtesy of AFRC News Service)
Split Disbursement Now Mandatory For All Military Travelers Using Gov’t Travel Card

A ll military travelers must now select the split disbursement option on their travel voucher claims to directly pay their government travel card expenses, according to finance officials.

Split disbursement requires travelers to tally up their Government Travel Card (GTC) expenses and authorize enough funds to be sent automatically to Bank of America to pay off their charges, said Michael G. Weber, Air Force travel card program manager at the Pentagon. Any remaining travel settlement will still be sent to the traveler’s personal account.

“Although this change was mandated by the 2003 National Defense Authorization Act to reduce the number of delinquent travel card accounts, split disbursement really is a win-win for everyone,” Weber said. “It simplifies the payment process for travelers, gets the bank their money more quickly and reduces the number of delinquent accounts.”

Nearly half of all Air Force travelers already use split disbursement on a regular basis when filing their vouchers because it simplifies the process for them, Weber said.

“Airmen no longer have to wait for their travel money to be credited to their personal accounts before they can mail a check to the bank,” he said. “It saves them the cost of a stamp or a trip to a bank branch and gets the money to the bank within two or three days.”

By having all travelers pay off their travel card bills automatically, the Air Force should see a decrease in the number of delinquent accounts, he said. This is especially true if a traveler returns from a TDY as a billing cycle is about to turn over, because they can pay off the card before their account becomes 30 days past due.

If a traveler charges more to their GTC than they were authorized, they still must select split disbursement and also reimburse the bank any additional charges, he added.

“Selecting split disbursement on a travel voucher, whether done manually or on an automated travel system, is easy and requires only a few clicks of the mouse or one block to be done,” Weber said.

Supervisors and approving officials are required to verify travelers have selected split disbursement before signing off on any voucher, he said.

“If split disbursement is not selected on a voucher, it will be returned to the traveler to be done,” he said. “This may delay the processing of the claim and potentially put the traveler’s GTC account into a past-due status.”

Although split disbursement is not yet mandatory for civilian employees, Weber encouraged them to take advantage of its time-saving benefit.

For more information, Air Force travelers can contact their finance office or unit travel card program manager.

Stateside Space-A Air Travel May Open to Military Families

American Forces Press Service

A one-year test starting April 1 will permit space-available air travel within the continental United States by family members who accompany their military sponsors.

Defense transportation officials said dependents of active-duty members and military retirees will be eligible. Their travel priority during the test will be the same as their sponsor’s. The test ends March 31, 2004.

Current regulations allow dependents to travel space-A with sponsors to, from and between overseas points, but prohibit their travel point-to-point within the continental United States. Active duty and retired military members already have space-A privileges stateside and overseas.

To register for space-A travel, active-duty sponsors must be on leave or a pass and remain in that status while awaiting travel and through the entire travel period. Retirees may sign up 60 days in advance but not before the test begins April 1.

Generally, space-A is the seats left on military aircraft after official duty travelers and cargo are accommodated. Space-A travelers are assigned various seating categories; for instance, active duty members on emergency travel receive a higher priority than leisure travelers. The Air Force’s system is the best-known, but all the services offer space-A using their own rules and policies.

For more information on the space-A privilege, its rules, registration process, travel procedures, tips, and dozens of frequently asked questions, visit the Air Force Air Mobility Command space-A Web site at amcpublic.scott.af.mil/Spacea/spacea.htm.
Life in the desert just got better for personnel stationed at Tallil Air Base. In spite of the poor reputation bare base assignments have Tallilians now enjoy many of the same creature comforts found on major military installations in the U.S.—despite their somewhat remote location in southern Iraq.

In just two short weeks, Tallil, located near An Nasiriyah, surged ahead of the norm with the delivery of new furniture, an expanded menu, regularly scheduled movies, video game facilities, laundry facilities and a brand new 10-bed expeditionary hospital.

But what’s comforting about this desert home improvement project is the fact most of it was accomplished by recovering surplus items from bases closing within the Central Air Force Area of Responsibility (CENTAF AOR).

Maj. Sean Cahill, commander of the 407th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, has helped make a lot of the new improvements possible by organizing what many say is the first all Air Force convoy moving through southern Iraq.

"The Army is kept pretty busy supplying its own forces, so it just seemed prudent to see what we could do for our selves as far as getting deliveries here," said Cahill.

So, with that the Tallil "Red Tail" convoy system was born. Modeled after the Third Army’s famous Red Ball Express convoys of WWII, the convoy is managed and driven by the airmen it supplies. Like the original Red Ball Express, the Tallil Red Tail Express is a direct result of American ingenuity creating new instruments and processes on the spot to overcome problems encountered while deployed.

Cahill also adds that the name "Red Tail" has an interesting coincidental tie with the famous Tuskegee Airmen of the 332d Fighter Group as many of the Tallil’s early personnel come from the 332nd Air Expeditionary Fighter Wing located in Kuwait. Known as “Red Tails” by the distinctive red tailed aircraft, the historic P-51D Mustangs never lost a bomber they escorted.

The Red Tails come into Tallil about three times each week, and with about 15 to 20 tractor-trailer loads of equipment and supplies.

"As other bases are steadily whittling down inventories and people, they don’t need as many beds, armoires and washing machines,” said Maj. Matt McCleskey, 407th Expeditionary Services Squadron commander. “So, we track them down, load them up and convoy them down here.

McCleskey and his team have also contributed quality of life improvements on base. “We’ve done everything from building a comfortable 160-tent living area to migrating our meal service from MREs in the field to three hot meals a day in a designated dining facility. We are definitely committed to improving lives,” said McCleskey, adding "and more is happening every day.”

For example, a 30-washer and 60-dryer laundry tent complex has been the most recent and perhaps most dramatic improvement for Tallil personnel. One user was so appreciative said McCleskey, "They scrawled a message in dust on the lid to thank us, saying Services rocked their world. While it was pretty funny, gestures like that really mean the world to us.”

The Morale Tent is another indicator of just how good things can get. During the recent Memorial Day festivities, personnel from both the British and U.S. armed forces were able to enjoy movies, play cards, do puzzles and play NFL football on two video game stations in this fully equipped tent. “You bet we're busy and have been right from the start,” said Staff Sgt. Tarn Sanger.

But not all improvements are quite so obvious. Tallil’s new potable water plant and waste water disposal system now takes water from a nearby Euphrates River canal and pipes it three miles to the base for treatment through six reverse-osmosis purifiers. And it was quite a tall order for the South Dakota Air National
Guard members who make up much of 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron (ECES).

"It took about 3 days in the sun laying 20-foot lengths of 4-inch pipe, but now we produce almost 40,000 gallons of water each day to help in food prep and clean-up in the dining facility, as well as less restrictive use for the laundry and showers." said Tech. Sgt. Les Duncan.

While potable water is still delivered by truck to the bladders at all locations right now, by mid-June water should be piped to all locations. However, it's not enough to provide water to use. There is a need to handle the shower and wash water runoff as well as the 40 gallons of water generated from each washer. It all has to go somewhere.

And “somewhere” was no problem for Maj. Kim McLaury, an ECES engineer, who as a civilian consultant, designs water systems for commercial and residential use.

“As member of the Air National Guard, I have a little extra expertise that I can bring along with me on each and every mission.” McLaury said. “And in this case, it sure doesn’t hurt that my expertise happens to be in water system design.” McLaury designed a lift station pumping system that now removes all the soapy runoff to an evaporation lagoon, enabling the ability to manage larger amounts of waste water without overburdening the system.

But then there’s the one improvement that’s helped facilitate almost all other improvements—power. To help meet the demand of a growing population, Maj. Richard Reid of the 407th ECES says they’ve linked six enormous air transportable generators together to provide enough electricity to power a city of 5,000 residents.

"It’s really nice,” Reid said. “Each power unit just rolls right into and off a C-130, making it really easy for us to set up a power plant wherever we go.” He added that while most people don’t care about the technical details, it’s the air conditioning and laundry machines that most people look for. And what’s even better is the fact there’s now less generator roar around living and work spaces.

Other improvements include a new chapel facility.

“The new chapel tent gives us a clean, cool and centralized location for our airmen and soldiers to find a variety of spiritual services and religious studies,” said Maj. (Chaplain) Bob Collins, Tallil’s senior chaplain.

Also, PERSCO has relocated to their own tent in the same area as the chapel, helping centralize them with ESVS lodging and command tents.

A new 10-bed Expeditionary Medical Squadron (EMEDS) hospital is now open and providing medical and limited dental care.

On the horizon, other improvements to look for include full Armed Forces Radio and Television Service (AFRTS) and a fitness center, both coming in June. The Morale Tent is expecting to expand its video gaming center and add a library.

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**Words for Warriors**

“War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.”

—John Stewart Mill
DA LOB-STAH MOB-STAH: Staff Sgt. Mario Delahoz turns up the heat on a few lobster tails at the Tallil dining Facility on Memorial Day. Diners at the Tallin Tavern were treated to steak and lobster for the holiday meal.

GRILL SERGEANTS: (l-r) Master Sgt. Scott Downs, Staff Sgt. Scott Okoniewski, Master Sgt. Bo Thornton, and Master Sgt. Matt Staub man the grills.

THE LONG RUN: Members of all Service branches took part in a special Memorial Day 5K Fun Run. Another run is scheduled for June 14th to honor Flag Day and the U.S. Army’s 228th birthday. That run will be an 8-miler.

Send Us What You Shoot

We want to see Tallil Air Base and the surrounding areas from the inside out and we need your help. If you’ve got a digital camera, then we want to talk to you! Send us your best digital photo for the week and we’ll choose the top shots to be published in the next Tallil Times.

When submitting photos, make sure they are of reasonable quality, and are in a .jpg or .gif format. Next, make sure you provide us with an accurate description of the event and COMPLETE names of all persons pictured. Photos without complete information cannot be considered. Photos must be in good taste and not compromise safety or security in any manner.

If you have questions, please contact the Public Affairs Office at DSN 459-0014 or send your questions directly to deborah.smith@tlab.aorcentaf.af.mil
SOUTHERN IRAQI STEAK OUT: Master Sgt. James McKnight, Staff Sgt. Erika Fisher and Master Sgt. Bo Thornton keep a close watch on the grill at Tallil's first ever Memorial Day celebration. The 407th Expeditionary Services Squadron (ESVS) added a delightful change of taste to the Tallil Tavern’s menu—steak and lobster—to help personnel celebrate the occasion.

SOLEMN PIPER: Spc. John Gifford, USA of the 79th Military Police Battalion plays Amazing Grace on the bagpipes during the first Memorial Day service held at Tallil Air Base.

THIS IS THE WAY WE WASH OUR CLOTHES: For many months, Tallil airmen have washed their clothes in buckets, but thanks to the folks in the 407th Expeditionary Services Squadron, this method has quickly been replaced by a new laundry tent complete with washers and dryers.
Civil Affairs Unit Helps Iraqis Build New Iraq

Story by: Sergeant 1st Class Steve Miller, USA
203rd Military Intelligence Battalion

The coalition forces may have won the war for Iraqi Freedom, but how do they win a lasting peace for the Iraqi people? That's where the Army's Civil Affairs units fit in. Their mission is to fulfill humanitarian obligations and act as a liaison between the victorious coalition forces and the host Iraqi government.

One of the Civil Affairs' units assigned to Tallil Air Base is the 486th Civil Affairs Battalion from Broken Arrow, Oklahoma (near Tulsa). Though they have done some rotations in Bosnia and Afghanistan, the 486th’s primary area of peacetime responsibility is the U.S. Southern Command in Central and South America. Under the direction of Lt. Col. Donald Wadley, the 486th has 29 of its authorized 120 soldiers on duty and ready for service in Iraq. Besides five members at Gharma, near Baghdad, they have a four-man planning cell led by Major Cornelius Johnson and two civilian affairs teams to help displaced civilians in the Tallil area. Since there were not many displaced civilians in the Iraqi Freedom conflict, the displaced civilian sections have become direct support teams that meet with the nearby communities to identify and report their needs.

“Our goal is not to change a way of life, but to help these people get back to where they were,” said Sergeant 1st Class Dan Gilliss of the 486th.”

Since March, the 486th Civil Affairs Battalion has worked with non-governmental agencies and local governments to supply food, purify water, improve irrigation canals, provide medical care, and help get construction projects built in the nearby communities. When this civil affairs unit arrived two months ago, they were arranging convoys, including four thirty-foot trailers, to distribute up to 60 pallets of emergency food donated by USAID. Now, since large emergency food shipments are over, the emphasis has been on improving the local water situation, and distributing replacement food, medical supplies, and purified water.

As far as water concerns there are some distinct issues. The An Nasiriyah area has a water treatment plant. However, there are two problems: lack of a sufficient supply of chlorine to adequately purify the water and the need to repair the electrical power grid so that there is power for the pumping stations to properly deliver water. The other issue is to improve the latticework of irrigation canals that are filled from the Euphrates River. The civil affairs teams are matching up which Euphrates lock or gate is connected to which canal in order to guarantee an abundant water supply for cultivating profitable crops. This is being done to keep the farmers contented so that they do not migrate to the city for nonexistent jobs and become homeless city dwellers.

According to Major Johnson, “one of the most pleasant things to do is Medcap - the village sick call.” As long as medical supplies last, military doctors setup periodic visits to the Iraqis in order to cure them of their ailments. Announced in advance, the Iraqis are lined up along the side of the road before the military doctors get there. If the illness is more serious, the Iraqi patients are sent to the hospital. This is the first treatment in a long time for many of these patients who were out of favor with the previous regime.

Finally, the 486th studies, evaluates, and recommends possible construction projects to the State Department's Office of Reconstruction and Human Assistance (ORHA) for possible funding and follow-up in getting the projects done. Examples of spending money to improve the Iraqis lives include drilling a well, repairing a bridge, or building a school.

The 486th Civil Affairs unit has also coordinated a lot with non-governmental organizations. Two prominent charitable organizations they have worked with in the An Nasiriyah area are International Medical Corps and the Dublin-based Irish Goal organization. The unit has made the transportation arrangements to get water, food, cleaning, and medical supplies donated by the U.S. government, USAID, U.S. corporations and other national governments that are flown in from the Army Human Operations Center in Kuwait City. Once these supplies are shipped to An Nasiriyah, the Irish Goal takes over distributing them to Iraqi civilians. The International Medical Corps distributes donated medical supplies that are shipped by the Air Force to the two main hospitals in An Nasiriyah - primarily for women and children.

This writer can attest to the effectiveness of the Civil Affairs team working in action. Personally, he observed a four-hour, seven-vehicle convoy drop off food and water to the small communities of Al Ajel and Wethech Shaci. First, the team discussed and negotiated with the community's male elders. Then, Sgt. Ky Jones' team happily mingled and helped the males of the communities unload 209 cases of food, 148 boxes of purified water, and a soccer ball for the two communities that had a total population of 423 inhabitants.

The Army first assumed civil government coordination and restoration functions in the post World War II occupations of Germany and Japan. A pivotal reorganization point was the combination with Army Psysops under one command, the Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command in Fort Bragg, NC during the Persian Gulf War. Lately, dealing with the aftermath of recent military actions and civilian catastrophes (such as hurricanes in Central America), Civil Affairs has become one of the most frequently deployed units in the U.S. Army Reserves.
DoD to Reorganize Active-Duty, Reserve Work Loads

Courtesy Air Force Reserve Command News Service

Sept. 11, 2001, did more than change how Americans view the world; the terrorist attacks altered how the U.S. military protects the country.

As of March 5, more than 176,500 members of the reserve components had been mobilized to support the war on terrorism at home and abroad, according to the Department of Defense. This buildup of forces is placing a strain not only on reservists, families, and employers, but also on the country’s ability to maintain so many people on active duty for extended periods.

To help ease the burden on the U.S. government and the taxpayers who pay for it, DOD is laying the foundation to “rebalance” the work load shared between the reserve and active-duty components.

Rebalancing is at the fore because DOD cut the active force 34 percent and the reserve components 25 percent after the Persian Gulf War, according to Thomas Hall, assistant defense secretary for reserve affairs.

“We structured the forces to face what we thought the world would look like,” Hall said. “Then, suddenly, 9/11, and the enemy was at the doorstep, and the world was never going to be (the same).”

One mission likely to receive a lot of attention is security forces in the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve Command. Most reservists who were activated after 9/11 were allowed to get off active duty after serving one year. However, thousands of Guard and Reserve SF members were extended into a second year, and some of them are just getting off active duty as 9,000 members of the Army National Guard begin providing security at Air Force installations.

Hall is aware of the strain repeated call-ups place on reservists. He knows many critical specialties are concentrated in the reserve components, which cause the same units to be called up repeatedly.

“We cannot have a situation where we call you, as a guard member or reservist, every year for three or four years,” Hall said. “You won’t stay in the guard and reserve, and employers might worry about employing you.”

No date has been set for the rebalancing to go into effect. The plans must be reviewed, proposed and approved, as with any defense proposal.

Officials in the Directorate of Plans and Programs at Headquarters AFRC, Robins Air Force Base, Ga., say they have not received any instructions from the Air Force or DOD to review current programs.

“Force rebalancing, like all other DOD proposals, will be dependent on budget submissions, legislative changes and policy adoption,” said Lt. Col. Bob Stone, assistant for public services, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense. “Think of it as a process and that the concept is now moving toward budget and legislative initiatives.”

Although DOD cannot make sweeping changes without congressional approval, the services can shift responsibilities from unit to unit through force structure realignments.

For example, the Air Force announced in December 2000 plans to realign the Air Force Reserve’s 939th Rescue Wing at Portland International Airport, Ore., from a combat search and rescue to an air refueling mission. This year the unit is transitioning to eight KC-135 Stratotankers and transferring its eight HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopters and five HC-130 refueling aircraft to an active-duty unit at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

Sports Shorts

By: Sergeant 1st Class Steve Miller, USA 203rd Military Intelligence Battalion

Sports Writer

Car Racing
Gil de Ferran held on to win the Indianapolis 500. He prevented his teammate, runner-up Helio Castroneves, from winning his third Indy 500 race in a row.

Basketball
The New Jersey Nets who swept the Detroit Pistons, 4-0, will face either the San Antonio Spurs or the Dallas Mavs in the NBA championship.

The Dallas Mavs suddenly overcame a 19-point third period deficit to defeat the San Antonio Spurs 103-91. Spurs still lead the series 3-2.

Tennis
Andre Agassi, the French Open’s oldest entrant at 33 came from behind to beat Mario Ancic from Croatia, 5-7, 1-6, 6-4, 6-2, 7-5 to reach the tournament’s third round. Serena Williams has already won her third round match in the women’s bracket.

Major League Baseball Leaders

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SPIRIT IN THE SKY: CONCORDE, N.C.