



Serving the Soldiers and Civilians of the 7th Signal Brigade

# the Desert Wire

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“Voice of Freedom”

March 2004



Maj. Gen. James Hylton (left) meets with members of the 67th Signal Battalion at Camp New York.



*RE-UPPING* downrange...

Capt. Dionne Petrowski re-enlists Sgt. Benjamin Huggins at Camp Doha. *SEE... page 7*

## Signal leadership in theater

□ **Regimental commander pays visit to troops**  
Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Pete Fitzgerald

7th Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait – Maj. Gen. James Hylton, commander, U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command, paid a visit to deployed soldiers of the 7th Signal Brigade in Kuwait this month.

“You are doing a magnificent job,” Hylton told troops during a breakfast gathering at Camp Doha.

Headquarters to 7th Signal Brigade theater operations, Camp Doha was one of several stops Hylton made during his visit. He also met with signal units at Camp New York, Camp Udairi and Camp Virginia. The NETCOM commander was briefed on a wide variety of brigade activities and spoke with soldiers about the deployment.

“It was really good that he came out here to visit,” said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Jones, network engineer, 7th Signal Brigade. “It lets soldiers know he’s thinking about what they’re doing.”

Hylton met with members of the 67th Signal Battalion at Camp New York and then had lunch at Camp Udairi with 72nd Signal Battalion soldiers. Before returning to Camp Doha, he also paid a visit to the 151st Signal Battalion at Camp Virginia. Hylton listened to concerns of soldiers and leaders, and let them know how much their effort on the deployment is appreciated.

“It’s an important mission,” he said. “We’re very proud of the work you’re doing here.”

### Inside...



7th Signal Brigade helps bring commercialization to Basrah.

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Soldiers take a break and enjoy the Kuwaiti National Guard Sports Day Festival.

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# Tell your story to the *Desert Wire*

Every soldier has a story to tell, and the *DESERT WIRE* is looking for yours. We are looking for submissions to include in the monthly brigade newsletter.

Stories can be about missions, the work you and your soldiers do, life on deployment, local sights and attractions, or just about anything of interest to soldiers and their loved ones. Pictures are also encouraged. If you have nice, high-resolution digital images, please feel free to send them in as well.

As a signal unit, we are scattered throughout the theater of operations. This is

a great way to let others know what you're doing. For leaders, it's also a good way to give your soldiers some recognition for the hard work they're doing.

Submissions can be delivered to the 7th Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office, located in the S1/S4 trailer on Camp Doha. Or they can be sent e-mail to: [peter.fitzgerald@kuwait.army.mil](mailto:peter.fitzgerald@kuwait.army.mil). Content must be submitted by the first week of every month to be considered for publication in that month.

For any inquiries, please call DSN 318-438-3407. The *DESERT WIRE* is looking forward to your submissions.



Col. Jennifer Napper  
Commander



Command Sgt. Maj. Kenneth Williams  
Command Sergeant Major

## the *Desert Wire*

A publication of the 7th Signal Brigade  
Staff Sgt. Pete Fitzgerald  
Editor

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# Word on the street ...

A look at what soldiers on deployment are saying

## **The question:** What makes a good care package?

By Spc. William Garreans



"I enjoy receiving items from my children, such as drawings, paintings and pictures."

Sgt. Melvin Gonzalez  
HHC, 7th Signal Brigade



"Magazines, books, pictures, cookies, candy and brownies."

Capt. Monique Matthews  
HHC, 7th Signal Brigade



"Drawings, paintings from my kids, pictures, items that help make it feel like home."

Spc. Darren Shreck  
HHC, 7th Signal Brigade



"Disposable cameras, photo albums, key rings, batteries, pictures of my children."

Sgt. Eslyn Williams  
HHC, 7th Signal Brigade



"DVDs, movies, reading material, and ankle socks."

Sgt. William Kosky  
HHC, 72nd Signal Battalion



"I enjoy Scooby Doo items. My favorite item to get is the Scooby Doo mint chocolate cookies, I also enjoy getting pictures of my girlfriend."

Pfc. Christopher Lemon  
HHC, 7th Signal Brigade

# Basrah makes move toward commercialization

**Commercial system installed ahead of 44th redeployment**

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Pete Fitzgerald

7th Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office

BASRAH, Iraq – As Operation Iraqi Freedom continues into its second cycle, a sign that things are changing in theater is the commercialization of military assets. Signal is at the forefront of this change. Recently, a tactical satellite terminal run by the 44<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion in Basrah was replaced by a commercial system.

"It's a great thing," said Doug Chase, Basrah site leader. "This allows for more soldiers to go home. Some of these guys haven't been home in a long time."

Chase heads a team of 10 civilian workers who will replace the 44<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion's tactical data package in Basrah. The civilian team will provide the same communications as the signal soldiers did during their deployment. U.S. troops stationed at Basrah will continue to have secure and non-secure Internet access and telephone lines through the commercial satellite link.

"We have exactly the same mission with essentially the same services," Chase said.

To make the transition from military to commercial, soldiers from the 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade and the 151<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion were sent to Basrah to install a USC-60 satellite terminal. Even without a lot of experience in commercial satellites, the soldiers were able to work through some minor difficulties and get the system up and running.



Sgt. Maj. Larry Arflin lends his expertise to the Basrah mission.



Sgt. 1st Class William Norton makes checks on the satellite terminal.

"We had some challenges, but they mainly had to do with getting spare parts and proper test equipment," said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class William Norton, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade satellite communications manager.

With some brief training on the commercial terminal, and a lot of reading on his own, Norton was able to learn the system.

"In concept, one terminal is pretty much like any other terminal," he explained.

Along with brigade soldiers, personnel from the 151<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion were also on hand to assist with the installation. Sgt. Maj. Larry Arflin, 151<sup>st</sup> Signal Battalion operations sergeant major, came to lend his expertise in electronics.

"I came out to look at the power issues with the satellite and make sure there were no problems," he said.

A South Carolina National Guardsman for 33 years, Arflin is an electronics technician at home. He helped assemble the satellite dish on its rooftop site at the Basrah International Airport.

"I like to get out there with the soldiers," he said.

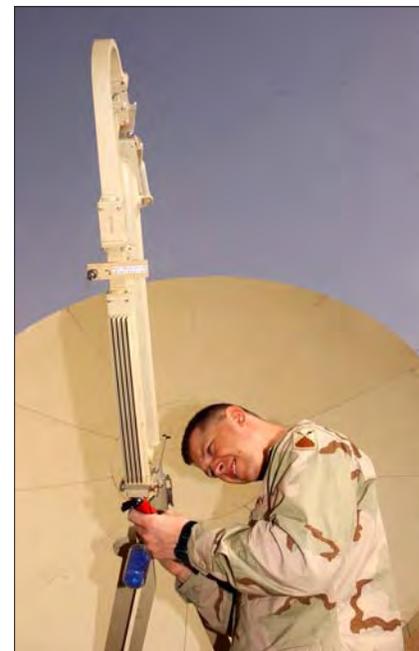
Norton said the team of soldiers and civilians enjoyed a good working relationship and learned a lot during the mission.

"Everybody wanted to learn and people asked the right questions," he added.

As the soldiers handed over control of the terminal to civilian workers, Norton agreed that the move toward commercialization was a good idea.

"I love it," he said. "It releases soldiers to more tactical missions. Basrah is pretty well set up now. This lets us move our assets around so we can be ready for other contingencies."

*Editor's note: Soldiers pictured are working along a flight line where headgear is not authorized.*



Warrant Officer 1 Jon Bates works to help get the satellite shot in.

## Signal Soldiers shine at Black History Month celebration

□ Event educates, entertains gathering at Marble Palace

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Pete Fitzgerald

7th Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait – Soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade took to the limelight in February's Black History Month celebration at Marble Palace. The Feb. 28 event featured a fashion show in which several brigade soldiers participated.

"It was good to be a part of something positive, and a good way to get involved in the community," said Sgt. Lucille Saenz, automated logistical specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade.

Saenz had the opportunity to showcase African styles during the fashion show part of the event. The evening's program also featured singers, skits, dancing and a guest speech by Col. Ulysses Brown Jr., commander, Army Forces Central Command – Kuwait. Brown spoke on this year's Black History Month celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Brown vs. The Board of Education, the omnibus Supreme Court decision that ended segregation in American schools. He said the decision "lifted us up, gave us opportunity," but emphasized that we must continue to learn from our past.

"It's important to understand the past in order to prepare for the future," he said.

More than 450 people attended the Marble Palace event, and many were soldiers from 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade. Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Michael Gibson, brigade equal opportunity advisor, said he was pleased with the turnout.

"It went really well, and I think people got a lot out of the event," he said. "They got to learn a little history and see some really talented people."

Staff Sgt. Lorrena Roeder, administrative noncommissioned officer, HHC, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade, said the event was good for raising awareness and giving people a chance to celebrate their heritage.

"It was informative as well as entertaining. You could tell they put a lot of work into it," she added.

Along with Saenz, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Tanya Arceneaux and Staff Sgt. Tara Banks from brigade, and Staff Sgt.



Staff Sgt. Tara Banks displays African fashions at Marble Palace.



Staff Sgt. Yolanda Simmons gets into fashion at the celebration.

Yolanda Simmons from 67<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion, also participated in the fashion show.

"They really did a nice job," said Roeder. "I was really proud to see them in there."

Roeder added that seeing her fellow soldiers participate in the event inspired her to take part in March's Women's History Month observation.

"I think it's good to get involved and be a part of something this important," she said.



Col. Ulysses Brown Jr. speaks on Brown vs. Board of Education.



Sgt. 1st Class Tanya Arceneaux takes to the runway in style.

# Sports festival bonds U.S., Kuwaiti soldiers



Cheif Warrant Officer 3 Alicia Carrion serves it up for the 7th Signal Brigade volleyball team at the KNG Cooperative Sports Festival.



1st Lt. John Garceau moves the ball past Kuwaiti defenders.

## □ Kuwait National Guard hosts ARCENT, 7th Signal Brigade

Story and photos by  
Staff Sgt. Pete Fitzgerald

7th Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office

KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait – Perhaps it was the home-field advantage, but the Kuwaiti soldiers seemed to have no problem against U.S. soldiers at the Feb. 22 Cooperative Sports Festival sponsored by the Kuwait National Guard.

"Despite the stiff competition, it was a lot of fun. Everybody looked like they were having a good time," said Capt. Daniel Caunt, brigade automation officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade.

Caunt was among the dozens of 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade and Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) soldiers invited to participate in the first-time event with soldiers from the Kuwait National Guard. Attendees were treated to a full day of activities and sports, including volleyball, soccer, squash, basketball and marksmanship. Held at their recreational complex, the KNG also entertained their visitors with a military marching band, camel and horse rides, and an abundant buffet.

"It was a great opportunity to join and meet with the U.S. Army," said (Kuwaiti) Lt. Col. Jamal Deyab, chief of the KNG Sports Union Organization.

Taking place close to the Feb. 25 Kuwait National Day and the Feb. 26 Kuwait Liberation Day, the event had



Though it was a close game, Edrees Mohamed and the Kuwaiti basketball team prove too much in the end for the American squad.

special significance for the Kuwaiti soldiers.

"These are important holidays," said Deyab. "We will always be grateful for the liberation of Kuwait, so having this event now with the U.S. Army makes it extra special."

The festival began with ARCENT and brigade soldiers facing each other in the preliminary rounds of the competition. Event winners went on to face the winners of the various Kuwaiti match-ups. Basketball drew the largest crowd, with spectators lined up and cheering for both teams in the final. The Kuwaiti team took off to an early lead and never relinquished. The Americans made a run at it in the second half, but ran out of time before they could close the gap completely. Though it was

competitive, the soldiers enjoyed the camaraderie established by the event.

"We play together like friends," said KNG soldier Edrees Mohamed. "I hope we can stay in contact and keep playing. It's very nice."

The KNG teams took most events but the Americans managed to salvage the marksmanship competition. Caunt was part of the marksmanship team and said the competition was "really close." Though he was happy with the victory, the whole day's events made more of an impression on him.

"They really put on a great welcome," Caunt said. "The band and the food were great, and people were really hospitable. It was a very entertaining day, and a good getaway. I hope we can do it again sometime."

## Army commitment

▣ Troops take time to make future plans while deployed

Story and photo by

Staff Sgt. Pete Fitzgerald

7th Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait – Sgt. Benjamin Huggins knew he wanted to stay in the Army, and Feb. 14 seemed like the perfect day to have a re-enlistment ceremony.

"I wanted to do it on Valentine's Day because I love the Army," he said.

Huggins, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade Property Book Office noncommissioned officer in charge, re-enlisted for six years, and said he plans to make a career in the Army.

"There isn't a better job out there," he said. "The Army gives you every opportunity to excel. It's a very respected career field, and I've been able to meet people and see the world."

Deployed to Kuwait for Operation Iraqi Freedom, Huggins couldn't be with his wife on Valentine's Day, but said she sent her congratulations from Germany.

"She supports me because this is something that makes me happy," he explained.

Huggins is also the company retention NCO for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and said he wanted to set the example by being the first deployed soldier to re-enlist in the company.

"I think it's awesome," said Capt. Monique Matthews, commander, HHC, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade. "He's a really good soldier, so it's good we're retaining the best we have. Even when soldiers are deployed, it's encouraging to see that they still want to re-enlist. It's good for the unit and good for the Army."

Sgt. Guy Cooper, tactical network engineer, HHC, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade, followed Huggins a few weeks later with the company's second re-enlistment. Cooper, who had re-enlisted years ago while deployed to Camp Doha, stood in the same exact spot for his ceremony.

Master Sgt. William Keating, brigade senior career counselor, said it's good to see soldiers taking advantage of re-enlistment



Capt. Daniel Caunt (left) re-enlists Sgt. Guy Cooper (right) in the same spot on Doha where Cooper had stood for a previous re-enlistment. Sgt. Benjamin Huggins (center) was the first from the company to re-enlist.

opportunities while deployed. Along with preparing for the future, soldiers re-enlisting while deployed in support of OIF can earn up to \$10,000 in bonuses.

"Soldiers shouldn't be putting their careers on hold while down here. Leaders should talk to soldiers about their desires to stay in the service and get them to visit their career counselors.

Even though we're deployed, we still have to maintain a force and mentor soldiers. The benefit is in planning ahead," he explained.

As the company retention NCO, Huggins said his goal is to get as many soldiers as possible to re-enlist.

"I want to let them know of every opportunity and benefit available to them," he said.

## Contractor named employee of the month

Story and photo by

Staff Sgt. Pete Fitzgerald

7th Signal Brigade Public Affairs Office

CAMP DOHA, Kuwait – Deployed alongside soldiers of the 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade are some of the most highly-skilled and dedicated professionals in the civilian sector. Kelly Elium is one of them. A contracted employee from Northrop Grumman, she works here as the information assurance manager for the brigade. In January, Elium was named Northrop Grumman's employee of the month.

"It's an honor," she said of her recognition.

An employee of the global defense company for more than a year, Elium said she was excited about the chance to deploy with the brigade to Kuwait. When the opportunity arose, she volunteered for the mission.

"It's been great," she said. "I love it here. We have a great group of people who are very talented."

For 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. John Garceau, information assurance security



Kelly Elium feels right at home alongside her soldier coworkers.

officer, working alongside a civilian has been a good experience.

"It's a great idea," he said. "We can learn from each other. She brings a lot of experience and technical expertise. She's able to teach us how the civilian side does business and she has a lot of good ideas."

Elium, an Air Force veteran of seven years, said working with the military again has been "almost like coming home."

"It's what I know best," she added. "I feel very fortunate to be a part of the unit."

## Chaplain's Corner ...

By Chaplain (Maj.) Pearlean Scott

7th Signal Brigade

### How to carry the people you need to carry Galatians 6:2

**I have a Word for You from the desert.** It is about "How to Carry the People You Need to Carry." We can carry others only with help from above. It may be that at this time in your life you've been assigned by God to carry someone who cannot make it on their own. Maybe you've got more than one person to carry - even a bunch of people. You are living our word for today from the Word of God in Galatians 6:2. Your Lord's command is: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."

When you pick up the burdens of someone God leads you to help, you are living out the life of your Savior and you're making Him proud. That doesn't mean the load doesn't get very heavy sometimes, even overwhelming and nearly unbearable. There's only one way you can do that. You have to depend on help from above. And since carrying someone else is a divine mission, you can release the weight to a Heavenly Father who is so much stronger. In fact, in Psalm 55:22, He gives you this invitation: "Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall." That means casting the cares of those you're carrying on Him, too.

Long-haul carriers learn the strange secret of compassionate distance - offering yourself lovingly and wholeheartedly to a hurting person when you're with them, but leaving them completely in God's hands then, and especially when you're not with them. You're not supposed to carry them all the time. And they will never learn to walk on their own if you get a "messiah complex" and act as if you're their savior. That's co-dependency, not burden-bearing.



Chaplain (Maj.) Pearlean Scott delivers her message at the Sunday Choir Service on Camp Doha.

Just as God enlarges the capacity of a single kidney to do the work of two when one is removed, so God will enlarge your capacity to carry a load you never thought you could handle - if you go to Him consistently for His sustaining grace. Daily, you need to download His promise in Isaiah 46:3-4: "I have upheld you since you were conceived and have carried you since your birth. Even to your old age and gray hairs I am He, I am He who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you." Now, that is a promise of heaven's support that is without loopholes, without interruption, without limit. After all is said and done, you can carry someone else because someone stronger is carrying you.

Or as a great old Gospel song says: "When we have exhausted our store of endurance, when our strength has failed ere the day is half done; when we've reached the end our hoarded resources, our Father's full giving has only begun. His love has no limit, His grace has no measure, His power has no boundary known unto men; for out of His infinite riches in Jesus, He giveth and giveth and giveth again."

## Calling home

### □ New IVR system makes it easier to place morale calls

By Kevin Coy

5th Signal Command News Release

MANNHEIM, Germany – Those deployed with the 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade now have an easier time making morale calls to friends and family back home. In support of Soldiers and civilians in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, 5th Signal Command and U.S. Army Europe developed new automated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) processing services. The new services, from Heidelberg and Vaihingen, allow callers to connect without the help of Defense Switched Network (DSN) operators. Instead, the automated voice of "Mary Ann" guides callers through the dialing procedures.



Sgt. Eslyn Williams connects.

"It's a great feeling to have this system here. It definitely boosts morale," said Sgt Eslyn Williams, Property Book Office noncommissioned officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 7<sup>th</sup> Signal Brigade.

The improved service results in virtually no waiting time when callers dial a destination number direct from their telephone keypad. Although help from operators will continue as before,

deployed Soldiers and civilians are encouraged to use the new automated IVR services. The new systems will not replace existing operator services; they are instead an improvement and an additional means for those making calls home.

"It's been great for my family," added Williams. "They can see what's happening over here on TV. To be able to just pick up the phone and let them hear my voice is very reassuring for them."

Callers must dial from a touchtone telephone with the ability to call European DSN. All calls are limited to 15 minutes starting from the time the destination is connected. At the 13-minute point, the caller will receive an announcement that the call will end in two minutes. The caller can then hang up or the system will automatically disconnect the call two minutes after the voice-prompt warning.

# *Desert Wire picture pages ...*

The deployment in photos



Staying alert, Pfc. Christopher Lemon keeps on the lookout during a convoy to the Iraqi city of Basrah.



Sgt. 1st Class Ricardo Samudio moves out on a site visit in Iraq.



Getting acquainted, Pfc. Brad Turcotte meets his first camel at the Kuwait National Guard Cooperative Sports Day Festival in February.



A military convoy kicks up dust and sand as it moves through the Kuwaiti desert on the way to Camp Udairi.



Sgt. Lucille Saenz strides down the runway African-style at the Balck History Month celebration.



After her promotion ceremony, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Mary Laurenti gets a warm congratulations from 72nd Signal Commander Lt. Col. Jeannie Tibbetts.



Employees of Hardee's surprise 2nd Lt. Jason Johnson with a rendition of "Happy Birthday."