

Anaconda Times

Proudly Serving the Soldiers of LSA Anaconda

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For the grins and giggles 'Comics on Duty' world tour arrives at Camp Anaconda

Story by Pfc. Eric Rodriguez
13th COSCOM Public Affairs

LSA Anaconda, Iraq, greeted a cluster of comedians with open arms, Feb. 20. Five comedians, who were more than eager to bring smiles to the faces of soldiers, were part of the Comics on Duty World Tour, holding two separate performances in the base MWR tent.

The performance was well received by a crowd of more than 100 soldiers and civilians who made little effort to control the grins on their faces.

"Wow, I'm so excited to be here!" exclaimed comedian Jennifer Rawlings. "This is great. Everybody's so nice here... I think it's because everybody has a gun."

Tom Irwin, one of the comedians with the Comics on Duty World Tour and also a former Soldier, was thrilled by the giddy reactions of the audience.

"The most amazing thing that anyone has said to me happened in Iraq," said Irwin. "A captain came up to me and told me 'day-in-day out I know that I am in Iraq. Today, for about two hours, you and the other comedians made me forget that I was here. Thank you....' What a great compliment!"

Not only was Tom Irwin receiving compliments but - along with the other comedians - he was also giving them out.

"Thank you very much," he told the crowd. "It takes a lot to do what it is that you [Soldiers] are doing for America. You make me proud to be an American."



Photo by Pfc. Eric Rodriguez

Comedian Warren Hall sets the stage for laughter and amusement during the 'Comics on Duty' tour at Camp Anaconda, Feb. 20.

"It is amazing what Soldiers go through out here, in terms of the surrounding environment, family and emotional distress, and the constant threat on their lives," said Rawlings. "I'm only glad I can do my part by bringing a little bit of laughter into their lives."

Judging from the roaring sound of claps and hoots, the performance was exceptionally successful.

The Comics on Duty World Tour will be coming back in April with a new line-up of comedians who will bring more jokes than one can shake a stick at.

ICDC marching to a different beat, a better future

Story by Spc. James Truitt
13th COSCOM Public Affairs

This is a historic day," said Lieutenant Colonel Luis Freedman, 130th Rear Area Operations Center (RAOC) Commander, as he spoke to 248 Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, or ICDC, recruits standing on the parade field. "Not only have you graduated from phase one of ICDC training, but you men have taken a giant step for the future of your country."

In a ceremony at LSA Anaconda that lasted less than an hour on February 16, ICDC, company B experienced the

military's time honored tradition of basic traing graduation.

"You have worked hard for this moment and you should be proud. I am confident (Bravo) Company can accomplish their mission. You have my respect & confidence." Concluded Freedman.

According to Freedman, phase one - the Army's equivalent of basic training - is a vigorous program focused on skill level one tasks.

"Phase one is seven days training, consisting of vehicle and personnel searches, crowd control, patrol techniques,

marksmanship using the AK-47, and basic First Aid," said Marine Staff Sergeant Alan Truesdale, Combat Assault Battalion, ICDC Instructor. "We are teaching them how to maintain themselves in a combat environment"

"We are not always going to be here," he continued. "This is their country and we are training them to survive. Survivability is their key to success."

In order to raise the recruit numbers, local Sheiks were responsible for finding Iraqis to serve in the new Iraqi Army.

See ICDC, continued on page 2

NEWS

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A cruddy welcoming... to Iraq

Story by Sgt. Ann Venturato
13th COSCOM Public Affairs

It is known to Soldiers here as the initiation to Iraq. An initiation called the crud.

A Soldier arrives in country and may soon experience symptoms of a runny nose, sneezing, sore throat and coughing to name just a few symptoms of the crud.

"There is an increase of Soldiers who experience symptoms of the crud during the cold and rainy conditions because there is more pollen in the air," said Maj. Steven Olsen, the 109th Preventive Medicine Officer.

Because of all the dust and

pollen in the air, Soldiers who have allergies are more likely to get symptoms of the crud over Soldiers who don't have allergies, said Olsen.

"Usually the crud is viral, so antibiotics won't work," said Olsen.

"If the symptoms of the crud persist for more than three days, a Soldier should go to the TMC for sickcall," said Olsen. "The TMC here usually sees about 12 Soldiers a day with symptoms of upper respiratory infections like sore throat, cough, runny nose and postnasal drip."

Olsen suggests Soldiers experiencing early symptoms

of the crud to use over the counter drugs like Sudafed and decongestants to alleviate the symptoms of the illness. He also emphasizes that the key preventive measure for Soldiers is for them to see the TMC before their symptoms get too severe.

To cut down on the allergens in the air, Olsen suggests Soldiers may wear dust masks but says that the upper respiratory symptoms of the crud are an immune system response to the dust and pollen in the air.

"The first case of the crud I had was pretty mild," said Maj. R.J. Gore, Chaplain for

the 172 Corps Support Group, who has experienced the initiation of the crud twice since he has arrived here in Iraq thirty days ago.

"This case I have now is a full-blown case the Iraqi crud," he said.

In the past four days, Gore says he has been experiencing the symptoms of sinus and chest congestion, a hacking cough, plugged nose and coughing up stuff.

"I went on sickcall and the TMC gave me some allergy medicine, which I am taking as prescribed," said Gore. "I understand it's a rite of initiation."

ICDC, continued from page 1

"On the first day we had about four to five thousand people show up at our front gate," said Capt. Brian Tomblin, 130th RAOC, ICDC officer in charge of training. "Everyone from local farmers to auto mechanics to even prior military, all of various ages were looking to join."

After the initial selection, all of the recruits are the same rank whether they had prior military service or not. Throughout phase one, instructors select the recruits who demonstrate military knowledge and possess leadership qualities for further review.

"Leaders are chosen out of every group to fill battalion slots such as S-1 (personnel/finance) or other administrative positions," said Triesdale. "We identify personnel that are physically fit, can read and write, and have a military background."

The board consists of ICDC brigade and battalion commanders who test the candidates on military tactics and drill them on various leadership scenarios.

Of the original 258 recruits, 248 graduated.

"I was here in Desert Storm and Desert

Shield, only to come back some twelve years later. I think it's a good idea to give back to the (Iraqi people) and help them maintain a free Iraq," said Triesdale.

Although this mission was challenged by a limited number of translators it was very successful because of the ICDC Cadre and prior service military recruits," said Tomblin.

With the completion of phase one, Company B will move on to phase two.

"Initial entry soldiers are told they will learn the basics while they are in training and will learn everything they need to know once they get to their respective units," said Tomblin. "In phase two, ICDC soldiers put in to practice what they have learned and will further hone the techniques we have taught them."

This is the second ICDC Company to graduate at LSA Anaconda but the first for the 130th RAOC, a National Guard unit from Tullahoma, Tennessee. "Charlie" Company, the next group to go through the ICDC course, is scheduled to begin phase one within the next few weeks.

"We will train two more ICDC companies." Said Tomblin "When that is com-

plete we will have trained an entire ICDC Battalion."



Photo by Spc. James Truitt

248 ICDC recruits graduated, Feb. 16. Those who did not graduate were either prior service military officers who didn't retain their previous rank or those who did not adapt to military life.

NEWS

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Helping out the neighborhood

Air Force/13th COSCOM Civil Affairs distribute supplies with aid of volunteers, celebrity

Story by Pfc. Blanka Stratford
13th COSCOM Public Affairs

During the first two of several upcoming missions designed to improve the education system in the village of Anwar, Iraq, the 13th COSCOM Civil Affairs team conducted a general sight survey to ensure security and situational awareness, Feb. 10, and then united with voluntary Air Force members to distribute school supplies in the vicinity, Feb. 14.

"There is a small school [in Anwar], which has not been a regular part of US aid," said Lt. Col. Nicholas Zoeller, 13th COSCOM CA officer-in-charge. "We're going to start helping them out by assessing the condition of the school and the road leading to it, so that we may add some funds to the school and have it refurbished."

Anwar, less than a mile from LSA Camp Anaconda, is a representative system of post-war Iraq. There is no fresh

water in the town: the people get their drinking water from an unsanitary canal nearby; many children run around barefoot or even naked at times; and school structure is substandard.

"We're trying to help out the community as much as we can," said Sgt. Stephen Soliz, 13th COSCOM CA administrative associate. "It's an unforgettable experience, especially when encountering the children."

"The children are what makes these humanitarian aid trips so important," said Maj. Bryn Russell, Air Force commander of Warrior Bravo mission. "They are the wave of Iraq's future. They need to be taken care of."

An additional reason for going to the Anwar village is that it's in close proximity to Balad.

"It's important for the population to be taken care of and the infrastructure to be enhanced," said Zoeller. "The happier and more prosperous the residents are, the better relations [US forces] will have with



Photos by Pfc. Blanka Stratford

Maj. Bryn Russell, commander of mission Warrior Bravo, hands out donated gifts and school supplies to the residents of Anwar, Iraq, Feb. 14.

them and the better security."

The Air Force and the 13th COSCOM CA team will be distributing basic supplies to the school and its enrolled children. The supplies – to include notebooks, rulers, pencils, pens and paper – are part of a voluntary donation program initiated in the United States.

"There is a shortage of school supplies throughout Iraq, even in Baghdad," said Zoeller. "The country needs all the help it can get."

According to Zoeller, major sponsorship will also be provided by actor Gary Sinise, who stars as Lieutenant Dan in the Oscar-winning film *Forrest Gump*. Sinise, who has recently traveled to Kuwait, Qatar and Iraq as part of a USO tour, was scheduled to make an appearance on the *Tonight Show*, urging people nationwide to aid in the contribution of education materials to Iraq, particularly in the local Balad area.



Lt. Col. Nicholas Zoeller, commander of 13th COSCOM Civil Affairs, stops to play with a small child during a mission to distribute gifts and school supplies to the residents of Anwar, Iraq, Feb. 14.

EDITORIAL

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An American tale: *One soldier's story of the great unknown*

Story by Staff Sgt. Tommy Johnson
Charlie CO., 489th Eng. Bn.

Somewhere in Iraq. My journey by convoy from south Kuwait to deep into central Iraq has indeed been a culture shock as to what is considered important and enhancing for the quality of life. This is quite evident by seeing southern Iraq, where people live in mud walled huts with reed and grass thatched roofs, no running water or electricity.

As one moves further north, the quality of living improves but, compared to the standard of living in the U.S., it leaves a lot to be desired. Not until my third trip into Iraq could I find a way to convey to anyone back home just what I have seen with all the emotional feelings that the vision of all of this has presented.

When a convoy stops in Iraq, all personnel get out in full "battle rattle" (Kevlar helmet, flak vest, weapon and ammo carrier) and locked and loaded weapons. Nevertheless, we still buy and trade with local Iraqi vendors, especially buying ice for our coolers to keep our water cold. They are the only source of ice for the U.S. soldier en route.

One particular day, I was standing security for my squad when I noticed a young lad. Barefoot, dressed simply and about the age of 10 or 11, he walked up and down the line of parked military vehicles along the shoulder of the pavement. What kept my attention was the look of bewilderment he had. It was like he didn't grasp what was going on. After a few minutes, I spoke to him and gave him some candy, which I always carry for handing out to the young children we encounter. He took what I gave him, looked at me and walked off. A short time later, with some MRE treats that the other soldiers had given him, he walked past me with that same look of unsureness. I had never seen anything like this.

At that moment I thought of something. I went into my packer box (like a footlocker) and took out a new ball cap I had. When he came by again, I handed it to him and indicated it was his and then turned to continue my duties of security for the convoy. I looked back thinking I would see the boy walking the line again. He was just standing there with the treats in his hands. With that same look on his face that expressed nothing but confusion, he suddenly turned, walked a short distance, then returned once more, everything still in his hands.

By now I was absolutely confused myself, pondering what was going through this kid's mind. It was as if he just couldn't or wouldn't respond to any of what was happening. I finally went over to him, took the cap out of his hand, adjusted the size, placed it on his head and looked him straight into his eyes. I smiled, pointed to the items, and indicated they were all his. I patted his shoulder.

And the light went on!

He got a big smile on his face, looked me in the eyes and nodded approvingly. He finally understood that not only the cap goes on your head but that all of it was a free gift - freely given. To have a stranger who seemingly invaded your country try to give him something without expecting anything in return was just not in his cultural upbringing.

I wish everyone in America, especially those who feel downtrodden by their illusions of being held back, could really see what being held back is. A young shepherd's son in southern Iraq, living day to day for nothing more than food in his stomach, clothes on his back and a roof, taught me something about raw simplicity. Simplicity, in that what we as a Christian nation have been taught as common charity, is something that opened the heart, the mind and the spirit of a young Iraqi boy.

History of Presidents Day

Presidents Day honors the birthdays of two of America's greatest Presidents: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The country observes the birthdays of its first and sixteenth presidents as a national holiday because their influence on America is unmatched in U.S. history.

George Washington, "first in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen," is without a doubt the most famous American in history. During the Revolutionary War and as first president of our country, Washington laid the foundation of the United States and cast the mold for its future leaders. He brought an armed force of farmers, merchants, sailors, and tradesmen together to fight and win against the greatest military power on earth. Achieving victory, Washington accepted presidency and pulled the thirteen former colonies together as a nation. Under his leadership, the U.S. Constitution emerged.

Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, supported "government of the people, by the people, for the people" and fought to preserve the union during the Civil War. He not only presided over the most terrible period in our country's history and maintained an unwavering vision of a unified America, but he also distinguished himself as a humanitarian and statesman who fought for equality for all Americans. Once Union victory was certain, Lincoln further distinguished himself by setting a tone of peace and reconciliation that paved the way for the reunification of the North and South.

In life, both Washington and Lincoln brought unity to our country during times of great strife. In death, we honor their memories.

LIFESTYLES

Question of the week

If you could tell your family something you hadn't said before deployment, what would it be?



CPT Kevin Fitz

"I would tell my family that it is a lot safer and nicer at Camp Anaconda than they read about."



CW3 Pierre Balentine

"I would tell my father 'thank you' for the insight that he gave me as a young man."



PFC Melissa Mitchell

"I would tell my family that I am actually scared about coming out to Iraq."



PFC Singinn Lawson

"I would tell my family not to worry and not to believe everything they hear in the the news."



SGM Osvarado Vasquez

"I would tell my family how much I appreciate the foundation they have given me."

Attention LSA Anaconda

Want to lose \$100.00?

Recently, local Nationals have been approaching Soldiers and asking for change for a \$100 dollar bill. These bills are **COUNTERFEIT!!!**

If you value your money, do not exchange your US currency for anyone. If you are a victim or would like to report a counterfeit case, please contact Military Police Investigations at 302-550-0557 or report to the Provost Marshal Office, bldg 4253.



SGT Kathy Brown

"I wish I could have told my grandmother goodbye...I don't know if she is going to make it."

LIFESTYLES

Billboard Top 20 Albums

1. Norah Jones, **Feels Like Home**
2. Kanye West, **The College Dropout**
3. Kenny Chesney, **When The Sun Goes Down**
4. OutKast, **Speakerboxxx/The Love Below**
5. Josh Groban, **Closer**
6. Harry Connick, Jr., **Only You**
7. Evanescence, **Fallen**
8. Twista, **Kamikaze**
9. Incubus, **A Crow Left Of The Murder...**
10. Various Artists, **2004 Grammy Nominees**
11. Sheryl Crow, **The Very Best Of Sheryl Crow**
12. Beyonce, **Dangerously In Love**
13. Toby Keith, **Shock'n Y'all**
14. Michael McDonald, **Motown**
15. Melissa Etheridge, **Lucky**
16. Ruben Studdard, **Soulful**
17. Alicia Keys, **The Diary Of Alicia Keys**
18. Norah Jones, **Come Away With Me**
19. Jessica Simpson, **In This Skin**
20. Chingy, **Jackpot**



MOVIE REVIEW

By Pfc. Blanka Stratford
(films found at AAFES)

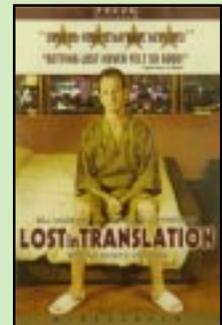
My Boss's Daughter



If you want a movie that makes no sense, wastes your money, but nevertheless has hot chicks running around like headless chickens, this is it. Ashton Kutcher stars as Tom, a young executive with the hots for his boss's daughter (Tara Reid). The plot dwindles as Tom agrees to housesit for his boss, loses the big man's coke-addicted pet owl, and gives Carmen Electra a breast cancer exam. I give it one star, if that, for the owl's performance.

Lost in Translation

Great flick. Bill Murray and Scarlett Johansson star as Bob and Charlotte, two soul-searching characters who meet by chance in a bar in Tokyo and form a unique friendship. Estranged from their respective spouses, they lean on each other and in the process learn a little more about the pleasures and pains of life, love and the pursuit of happiness. Director Sophia Coppola get two thumbs up.



Underworld



Dark and sleek but nowhere near *Interview with the Vampire* material, this movie is about a century-old battle between sexy aristocratic vampires and sewer-dwelling werewolves called Lycans. Kate Beckinsale plays Selene, a beautiful vampire on a werewolf-annihilating quest to save a man whom the Lycans are tracking, only to discover he is a werewolf himself.

SPORTS

NBA Conference Standings

Eastern Conference		Western Conference	
Atlantic	Streak	Midwest	Streak
Nets	Won 11	Timberwolves	Won 4
Knicks	Won 1	Spurs	Won 6
76ers	Won 1	Mavericks	Won 1
Heat	Won 2	Grizzlies	Won 2
Celtics	Lost 4	Rockets	Won 2
Wizards	Lost 3	Nuggets	Won 3
Magic	Won 1	Jazz	Lost 3
Central	Streak	Pacific	Streak
Pacers	Lost 1	Kings	Lost 1
Pistons	Won 1	Lakers	Won 2
Hornets	Won 3	SuperSonics	Lost 1
Bucks	Lost 1	Trail Blazers	Won 1
Raptors	Lost 3	Warriors	Lost 1
Cavaliers	Lost 2	Clippers	Won 1
Hawks	Lost 1	Suns	Lost 6
Bulls	Won 2		

NHL Conference Standings

Eastern Conference		Western Conference	
Atlantic	Last 10	Central	Last 10
Flyers	6-4-0-0	Red Wings	6-2-2-0
Devils	4-5-1-0	Blues	4-6-0-0
Islanders	4-2-3-1	Predators	4-5-1-0
Rangers	3-7-0-0	Blue Jackets	3-5-1-1
Penguins	0-9-0-1	Blackhawks	4-6-0-0
Northeast	Last 10	Northwest	Last 10
Maple Leafs	6-3-1-0	Avalanche	4-2-2-2
Senators	5-2-1-2	Canucks	4-5-0-1
Bruins	8-0-0-2	Flames	5-4-1-0
Canadiens	5-5-0-0	Wild	4-2-2-2
Sabres	8-1-1-0	Oilers	4-6-0-0
Southeast	Last 10	Pacific	Last 10
Lightning	7-1-1-1	Sharks	5-4-0-1
Thrashers	3-7-0-0	Stars	6-2-2-0
Panthers	3-5-2-0	Kings	3-2-3-2
Hurricanes	2-5-2-1	Mighty Ducks	6-2-0-2
Capitals	5-3-2-0	Coyotes	1-7-1-1

Speed came at wrong time for National Guard NASCAR driver

Story by Tim Hippias
Army News Service

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – Army National Guard driver Greg Biffle had too much speed for his own good in the Daytona 500 — on two accounts.

Biffle won the pole position for the 46th running of the Great American Race but had to start at the rear of the field because he changed engines on Saturday. He quickly drove the No. 16 Ford into the lead pack, ran as high as second, and was running third behind runner-up Tony Stewart and winner Dale Earnhardt Jr.

With 29 laps left, however, Biffle was penalized for speeding on pit road, which ended his shot at victory. He finished 12th in his second Daytona 500.

"I was just a little fast coming onto the first couple pit boxes," Biffle said. "I got slowed down before the first speed line and was at pit-road speed and got back in line where I needed to be, but NASCAR still thought I was a little fast there, so they did what they had to do I guess and penalized me for speeding on pit road."

Biffle admitted he made an error in judgment.

"The tires were smoking real bad and I kind of panicked and pushed on the brakes a little more than I should've and I started skidding," he said. "Once you start skidding the tires, you're doomed."

"Slowing from 190 to 55 is pretty tough. You've got to time that just right."

Biffle wasn't surprised with how quickly he worked his car from the rear of the field to the lead pack.

"Nope, we have probably one of the fastest cars here, next to the 8," he said. "In fact, I think we had the fastest car here, next to the 8. I'd say we had the second-quick car. The 20 (Tony Stewart) was really good, but we were right there."

Penalty aside, Biffle thought he might have found his way to victory lane.

"Oh yeah, I had something for him," he said. "I was riding along there. I had an opportunity to try and win but Tony (Stewart) blocked me really bad coming down the front-stretch. It's been quite a while since I've seen somebody block like that. I was passing the 20 for the lead, I



Photo by Spc. Lorie Jewell

National Guard crew members scramble to get driver Greg Biffle back on the track in his second-to-last pit stop in the Daytona 500. Biffle, who was penalized for coming in too fast on his last pit stop, finished the race in 12th place.

thought I had him passed, and he ran me into the outside wall."

Despite having to start from the rear, getting penalized and getting blocked nearly into the wall, Biffle remained upbeat.

"The National Guard car ran really good," he said. "I'm really proud of the team."

PHOTOS



Photo by Pfc. Blanka Stratford
An Iraqi boy clings to his mother as she awaits food and supply distribution in Anwar, Iraq, Feb. 14.



Cartoon by Sgt. First-Class Mark Baker



Photo by Spc. James Truitt
An airman ground-guides a C-130 cargo/personnel carrier across the LSA Anaconda, Iraq, flight line just moments after the plane had made its landing, Feb. 3. These aircrafts touch down on Anaconda on a daily basis.



Photo by Pfc. Blanka Stratford
Brig. Gen. James R. Moran gives an enthusiastic 'thumbs up' to Soldiers at Camp Anaconda, Iraq, Feb 18.
