



DESERT MONTHLY

JULY 2014

U.S. ARMY MAJOR GRADUATES
FROM KUWAITI COLLEGE

pg 6

Desert Monthly

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On the Cover U.S. Army Maj. Robert Bonham, sits amongst foreign classmates at his graduation ceremony prior to receiving a master's degree in military science from the Kuwaiti Mubarak Al Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College June 17, 2014. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tracy R. Myers)

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Around the AOR

Jordan



Paratroopers from various countries load onto a Royal Jordanian Air Force C-130 Hercules in preparation for a friendship jump June 2, 2014, during Exercise Eager Lion at an air base in Jordan. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Brigitte N. Brantley)

Afghanistan



Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers with the 215th Corps, display their index fingers after casting their vote, while providing security aboard Camp Shorabak, Helmand province, Afghanistan, June 14, 2014. Black ink on the index finger indicates that an Afghan has voted during Afghanistan's 1393 run-off election. (Official U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. James D. Pauly)

Jordan



Multinational special operations forces climb aboard a transport cruise ship during a level four visit, board, search and seizure as part of Exercise Eager Lion at the Royal Jordanian Naval Base, June 5. Exercise Eager Lion 2014 is an annual, multinational exercise designed to strengthen military-to-military relationships and enhance security and stability in the region by responding to modern-day security scenarios. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Melissa Parrish)

Saudi Arabia



Crown Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud meets with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, at the Royal Court in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, June 2, 2014. The Crown Prince is the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense. (Department of Defense photo by D. Myles Cullen)

Tajikistan



Sgt. 1st Class James Garton, U.S. Army Central Command Explosive Ordnance Disposal noncommissioned officer, observes a Tajikistan army engineer wire explosives for an electric demolition during the first International Mine Action Standard EOD level-one course in Tajikistan June 5, 2014. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tracy R. Myers)

U.S. Army veterinarians work with K'S PATH to address cat crisis

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Sgt. William White

Cats! Yes, cats; common feral mammals in and around Kuwait City, whose population is growing quickly, according to John Peaveler, managing director of the Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and their Habitat.

Notably, a stroll along the Kuwait City coast might lead one to ask themselves, "Where did all these cats come from?"

One notion is that the invasion of Iraq in 1990 left many public services temporarily hindered. After a small buildup of trash, rats marched in to feast on the extra rubbish and rotten food. The solution, albeit a hasty one, was to bring in cats from Egypt.

Though it may have worked to rid the rodents, nomad cats now walk the midnight alleys, meowing, procreating, living among the Kuwaiti populous in the rich and flavorful city.

When a city needs a solution to its solution, Army veterinarians are here to spay and neuter these cats into submission.

The men and women of the Army Veterinarian Corps have partnered with a Kuwaiti animal advocacy organization to address an issue that plagues both Kuwait and many parts of the U.S.

"Our mission is to protect the health of humans and their pets," said Capt. Lynn Miller, a veterinarian at Camp Arifjan. "Most diseases these

feral animals carry [rabies, ringworm, intestinal parasites] are zoonotic."

Zoonotic means a disease can be transferred from animals to humans, which is important to most, barring those die-hard rabies fans.

In short, the vets are working closely with Kuwait-based non-military organizations to spay and neuter more than 50 feral cats in order to control the epidemic.

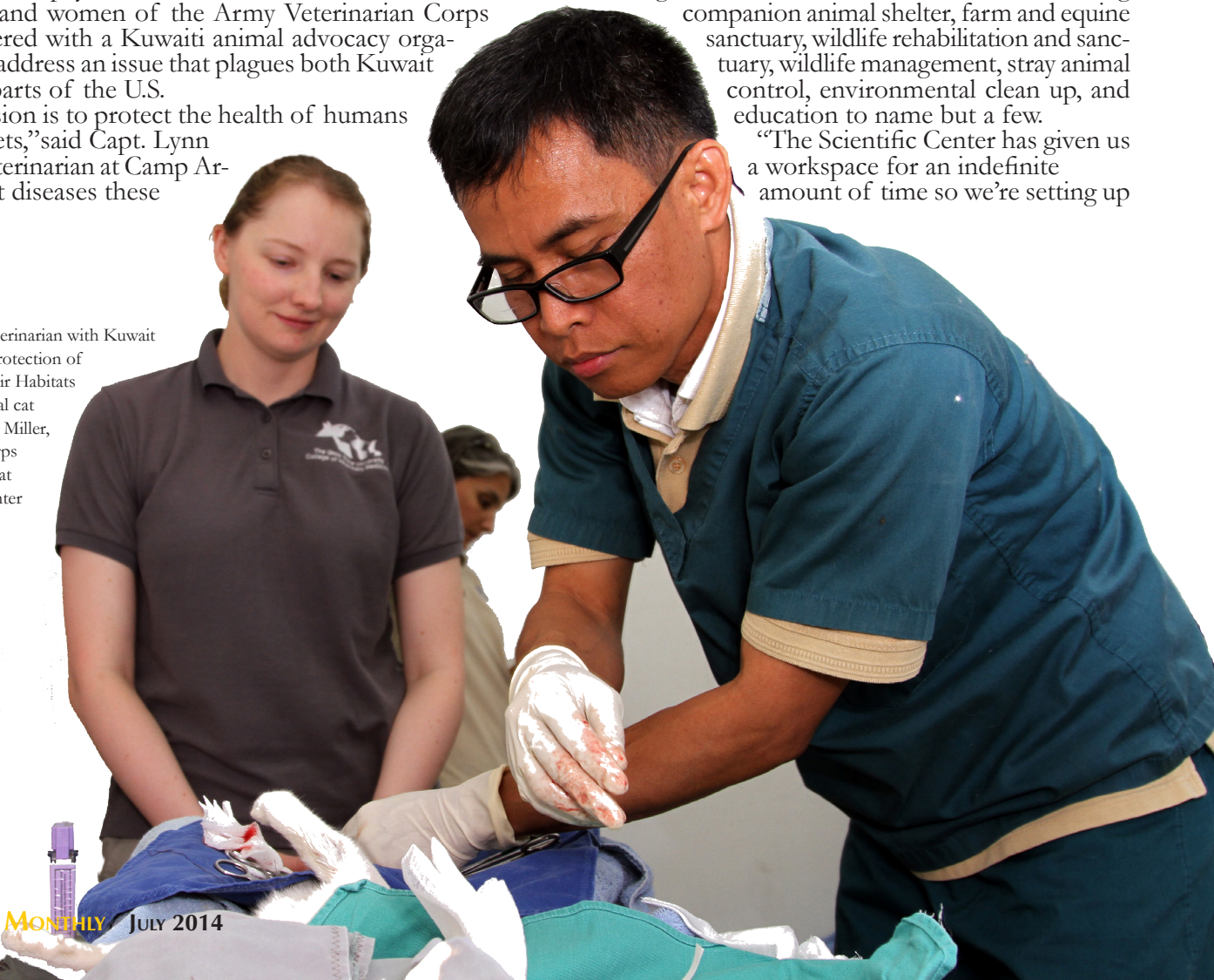
"The mission is called the Feline Trap, Neuter, Vaccinate and Return program," said Miller. "We just finished the program at the U.S. Embassy. That area was inundated with diseased stray animals that threaten the U.S. State Department employees' pets. We cleaned all the nasty diseased animals out and sterilized/vaccinated the healthy ones who try to defend the territory now."

Now, Miller and her partner, Capt. Natalie Spiliopoulos, are working with Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and their Habitat (K'S PATH), to support stray animal management around Kuwait City.

K'S PATH is a volunteer organization that provides a wide range of services for animals in Kuwait including companion animal shelter, farm and equine sanctuary, wildlife rehabilitation and sanctuary, wildlife management, stray animal control, environmental clean up, and education to name but a few.

"The Scientific Center has given us a workspace for an indefinite amount of time so we're setting up

Noel Cadiz, a veterinarian with Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitats operates on a feral cat while Capt. Lynn Miller, a veterinarian corps officer, looks on at the Scientific Center in Kuwait City, June 1, 2014.





Capt. Natalie Spiliopoulos, a veterinary corps officer, works with Noel Cadiz, a veterinarian with Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and Their Habitats to neuter a feral cat at the Scientific Center in Kuwait City, June 1, 2014.



Capt. Lynn Miller and Capt. Natalie Spiliopoulos, veterinary corps officers, examine x-rays with Dr. Mohammad Abdul Redha, K's PATH veterinarian, at the Kuwait Equine Center in Kuwait City, June 1, 2014.



Madhu Villiyatte of India, had a lifetime of veterinary experience to share with Cadiz and the Army vets. "Our work has an impact on Kuwait through these partnerships with local organizations we provide training to," said Miller.

That partnership was apparent in the small operating room, which compelled the vets to quite literally work side-by-side.

Now the Army vets and vets from abroad team up and go to work sedating, comforting, removing testicles and telling them everything is going to be okay.

The cats undergo a sedation method involving a needle and some ketamine. Rest assured, the cats feel no pain, less some dizziness and confusion, which the hardcore cats seemed to enjoy.

Our mission is to protect the health of humans and their pets.

here and catching as many strays as we can," said John Peaveler, managing director of K'S PATH.

The Scientific Center is something of a museum for Kuwaiti public elementary school children to burn calories on annual field trips.

The workspace, which appeared to be converted from a small storage room for cleaning supplies, is in an odd location on the east of the building 20 yards from the Arabian Gulf and 100 yards away from any building entrance, a previous inconvenience for Scientific Center janitors, but perfect for the cause of neutering cats.

After a morning of feral cat round-up along the Arabian Gulf, the cats are brought into the ocean-front, but not-so-spacious operating room.

Army vets introduced military techniques to the newest of the K'S PATH vets, Noel Cadiz of the Philippines, who only had spay/neuter experience from school. The more experienced K'S PATH vet,

Precision and skill prevail for the next few hours until 11 cats begin sobering up and planning their weekends, which thankfully for the city of Kuwait, will no longer involve unwanted pregnancies. Although they awake short an organ, the greater cause has been served.

"This will help control the population of feral and unwanted cats," said Peaveler. "These cats will live longer and healthier lives."

It is a small dent in the major obstacle that is the infestation of cats in Kuwait, but Peaveler is optimistic.

"Next week we are looking to do thirty more," he said.

For the military vets here in Kuwait, this mission was one of many. Whether it is controlling the feral animal population, diagnosing injuries on baby ponies or even inspecting the Soldiers' food supply here in Kuwait, the U.S. Army veterinarians are here to protect.

U.S. Army major graduates from Kuwaiti command and staff college

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Sgt. Tracy R. Myers

Among a crowd of foreign military personnel wearing a multitude of different hats and uniforms, one U.S. Army officer, Maj. Robert Bonham, graduated from the Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College June 17.

Bonham, a native of Shalersville, Ohio, participated in the U.S. Army's Schools of Other Nations program to further his career as an Army officer.

As a graduate of the Mubarak Al-Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College, or MAJCSC, he earned a master's degree in military science.

The Army's Schools of Other Nations program is a U.S. Army Central theater security cooperation program that aims to develop closer relationships between the U.S. and foreign armies.

Bonham is grateful for the knowledge and kinship he took away from his educational experience.

"Having the chance to attend the Kuwaiti command and staff college through the Army's School of Other Nations was a rewarding experience personally and professionally," he said. "I've developed lasting relationships with officers from across the globe. I have learned a great deal about how their militaries function and integrate nationally as members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and International Coalition."

The Gulf Cooperation Council, a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries comprising of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, was established in 1981 to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and their similar political and cultural identities.

"The most unique facet of the course was the joint-multinational aspect," Bonham said. "The majority of students were Kuwaiti officers from the Kuwaiti armed forces and Ministry of Interior, while the remaining students were from all military branches of Pakistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, United



U.S. Army Maj. Robert Bonham, receives his master's degree of military science from Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah after completing the Advance Staff College course at the Mubarak Al Abdullah Joint Command and Staff College June 17, 2014.

I've developed lasting relationships with officers from across the globe.

Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan and GCC countries."

This graduate-level course is ten-months long, and trains field-grade officers to perform as a member of a joint-multinational headquarters.

U.S. Army majors are required to complete Intermediate Level Education as part of their professional military education, said Bonham.

"I saw this as a means to complete my ILE, broaden myself and represent the Army," Bonham said. "This opportunity became available and I took it."

Bonham received an educational experience that reached beyond the boundaries of a classroom.

"As part of our regional studies we traveled to Jordan and were able to visit their staff college and training facilities," he said.

This rewarding experience also came

with many challenges, said Bonham.

"Being the only American in the course, there were times when I found myself being asked what the U.S. position was on an issue and why our government was following one course of action over another," Bonham said. "I realized that I am not just here as an Army officer, but I am also an ambassador for the citizens of the United States."

After graduating from the MAJCSC, Bonham plans to keep on working to advance his career as a military police field grade-officer.

He will continue on to complete the next phase of his professional development at Fort Hood, Texas, where he is projected to hold a key developmental position at the 11th Military Police Battalion as the officer-in-charge of operations, Bonham said.

U.S. Army divers survey Kuwait Coast Guard Base



Kuwaiti Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer Ali Awadh, harbor master of the Kuwait Coast Guard Base, looks on as Staff Sgt. Brian Winter and Spc. Jacob Feyers, engineer divers with the 511th Engineer Detachment (Dive), conduct a hydrographic survey of the Kuwait Coast Guard Base harbor, June 22, 2014.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY Sgt. William White

The Kuwait Coast Guard Base stands in the northwestern corner of the Arabian Gulf, isolated from international waters; an ideal location to harbor military watercraft.

On June 22, the divers of the 511th Engineer Detachment (Dive) plunged into the Kuwait Coast Guard Base harbor; paving the way for an aquatic partnership.

“Our mission today was to conduct a hydrographic survey of the port and the boat ramp for possible watercraft operations in the future,” said Staff Sgt. Brian Winter, 511th Eng. Det. diver.

“The impact of this mission is significant because we will now know what Army vehicles and watercraft the harbor can support,” said Chief Warrant Officer Kevin K. Willis, 1st Theater Sustainment Command sea section officer in charge.

According to Willis, the Kuwait Coast Guard Base has never harbored U.S. watercraft. Use of the harbor will advance the Army’s training and mobilization capabilities in the Arabian Gulf.

Though the Army has not yet made plans of using the harbor for watercraft operations, the mission served a greater purpose, Willis said.

“This mission helps further the partnership and communication with the Kuwaiti Coast Guard,” said Willis. “The mutual cooperation between the U.S. and Kuwait is very strong.”

“The Kuwaiti Coast Guard has been very helpful and made sure all our questions were answered. I love working these types of missions because for me to play a part in furthering relationships is always gratifying, no matter how big or small the role is,” said Willis.

While Kuwaiti Coast Guardsmen looked on, the Army divers prepared their high-tech machines to begin navigating and mapping the harbor. The divers put their engineering skills to work, synchronizing multiple systems to obtain the most accurate measurements possible.

The survey equipment was built for mapping land data and is generally used by Army topographical engineers; but the divers were able to adapt it for aquatic use.

“We modified the survey equipment in order to collect water-depth data and match it with [global positioning system] findings from satellite,” said Winter.

Though much of the work was done with the Army’s most advanced engineering technology, the divers used more primitive means to conduct the ramp inspection by hand.

The divers disappeared into the depths of the gulf for more than a minute at a time, taking measurements and analyzing the ramp’s foundation, equipped with no more than a tape measure and the air in their lungs. By the end of the day, the divers had collected enough data to determine what the boat ramp could hold.

The role of the Army divers in Kuwait is well established. Whether they are furthering partnerships or geographically mapping harbors, the U.S. Army deep-sea divers are making a splash in Kuwait.



Soldiers' guide to Ramadan

Understanding the cultures of various nations is a big step in furthering U.S. partnerships. Every Soldier's efforts make a difference.

STORY BY

Sgt. William White

The holy month of Ramadan is a time of fasting, prayer and charity for Muslims. As they prepare to observe the practices of Ramadan, Soldiers stationed in the Middle East must be mindful of how their actions may be perceived by Muslims during this time.

"Ramadan is a time for an internal look and not normally a time where they conduct business as usual," said U.S. Army Central Chaplain (Maj.) Kevin Mateer.

According to Muslim teachings, Ramadan is the month in which the Holy Quran was revealed as guidance and clarification to mankind and a distinction between right and wrong. The guidance given by the Holy Quran is followed closely by most Muslims.

Mateer said it is not difficult for Soldiers to show respect during Ramadan while in predominately Muslim nations.

"Generally Muslims will be fasting throughout the day. This is the key thing for Soldiers to be aware of when considering Ramadan," said Mateer. "Understand they will be less active and may be tired during the daytime."

Fasting is considered to be an act that is between the individual and God, and is an important element of Ramadan. Soldiers should also be mindful not to eat, drink or smoke in public, as it could be considered offensive.

Music should not be played loudly during Ramadan, but headphones are acceptable. When going off base, Soldiers should dress conservatively.

Mateer said Soldiers should be sensitive when interacting with Muslims, keeping their meetings earlier in the day to accommodate them.

"What you don't want to do is schedule some visit where they might feel obligated over the noon-hour to

provide some kind of refreshments for you knowing they cannot participate. If you can, interact with them in the evening," he said.

According to Mateer, most Muslims are generally sensitive to Western ways as well.

"If you were to ask them 'can I smoke or eat in front of you,' they

time to have a rich cultural experience with them," he said.

At the end of the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims will have a feast called Eid al-Fitr which symbolizes the breaking of the fast.

"You should attempt to celebrate the breaking-of-the-fast meal with them at the end of Ramadan," said

In the evening, they have a big meal together. This would be the time to have a rich cultural experience with them...

would be gracious and would say 'yes.'

However, that would be very culturally insensitive," said Mateer.

When working with Muslims, simply taking lunch in private could be seen as an act of respect, Mateer added.

Mateer encourages Soldiers to share cultural experiences with Muslims during Ramadan.

"In the evening, they have a big meal together. This would be the

Mateer. "This is a time of celebration."

This year, Ramadan begins June 29. Muslims will participate in Ramadan traditions for 29 or 30 days.

Mateer said Soldiers should not be afraid to ask a Muslim if they have questions about the rules during Ramadan, as many will be happy to help. Understanding the cultures of various nations is a big step in furthering U.S. partnerships. Every Soldier's efforts make a difference.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jessi Ann McCormick

Coalition forces and local Afghan representatives from Uruzgan eat together during an Eid al-Fitr at Multinational Base-Tarin Kot, Afghanistan, July 18, 2013. Eid al-Fitr is the meal eaten to break the fast after sunset during the religious observance of Ramadan, and is often eaten with a group or community.

Stars align for Soler reunification



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Victor Antonio Soler, a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter pilot with Task Force Warhawk, and his father, Victor A. Soler, share stories with each other on the flight line of Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan June 6, 2014. Soler works as a UH-1 Huey mechanic government contractor in Kabul, Afghanistan, but transferred to KAF for a few weeks to see his son.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY Staff Sgt. Bryan Lewis

A little boy follows his father around an Army hangar, meeting crew chiefs and climbing on Apache and Huey helicopters trying to be a part of his dad's world.

Now, more than 20-years later, the roles have reversed as the father, a government contractor with the U.S. State Department, follows his son, a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter pilot deployed with Task Force Raptor, 16th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Victor Antonio Soler reunited with his father, Victor A. Soler, after three years of separation due to scheduling conflicts, missions and deployments.

The stars aligned in Afghanistan a couple weeks before Father's Day. Elder Soler, currently working in Kabul, worked out a one-for-one swap with another UH-1 Huey helicopter mechanic in Kandahar so he could be with his son.

"I'm glad that they sent him down here this close to Kabul so that I could be with him for a while," said elder Soler.

During their time together, the Soler duo spent every minute together, enjoying everything from touring the flight lines to watching movies, drinking coffee and reminiscing.

"It's been about 16 years since we've got to do this," younger Soler said as he looked at his dad.

"It's been way too long," elder Soler replied.

Elder Soler is a Vietnam veteran who eventually retired as an aviation first sergeant, settling in Enterprise, Alabama. His son followed him into the military in 1999 but started on a different path as an airman before transferring over to the Army.

"It surprised me that he went into the Air Force, because he knew how the Army was," elder Soler said as he chuckled. "He spent 10 years in the Air Force and then switched over as a pilot. I was extremely proud of him."

His father pushed for him to reach for the stars when he was Tech. Sgt. Soler, advising him to put in an aviation warrant officer application.

He and his dad were both home for a visit during Christmas of 2007 when his

dad asked him: "How come you never put in an [Aviation] packet?", younger Soler said.

"Dad said that if he was me, he'd put it in and if it's meant to be, then it's meant to be," he continued.

After watching his son deploy to Iraq in 2003, elder Soler said he missed the military atmosphere so he decided to begin his new career as a government contractor, spending a large part of his time overseas. But that never stopped him from being there for his son's military milestones.

It was six-years ago that his father pinned him with

his first warrant officer rank, younger Soler said.

"It felt great to have him there to support me," he continued. "It's pretty unique to be here together six years later."

Even with the infrequent meetings between father and son, elder Soler's advice and impact in his son's life is consistent.

The father got to watch his son in action as he flew an American flag around the base, and afterwards they shared in a special military moment of folding it together.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Victor Antonio Soler, a UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter pilot with Task Force Warhawk, shows his father, Victor A. Soler, around a Black Hawk on the flight line of Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, June 6. Soler works as a UH-1 Huey mechanic government contractor in Kabul, Afghanistan, but transferred to KAF for a few weeks to see his son.



Hydration



The best way to beat the heat

With temperatures reaching near 120 degrees this month, staying hydrated is the number one key to staying healthy. With lack of drinking water, a person can become dehydrated and develop hyponatremia, a deficiency of sodium in the blood. With lack of water in the blazing sun, a Soldier can easily become a heat casualty and suffer from heat cramps, exhaustion and stroke.

Water Consumption Table

Heat Category	WBGT Index, °F	Easy Work	Moderate Work	Hard Work
		Water Intake (Quart/Hour)	Water Intake (Quart/Hour)	Water Intake (Quart/Hour)
1	78° - 81.9°	½	¾	¾
2	82° - 84.9°	½	¾	1
3	85° - 87.9°	¾	¾	1
4	88° - 89.9°	¾	¾	1
5	> 90°	1	1	1
Body Armor = +5°		Easy Work – walking on a hard surface at less than 2 mph with less than a 30 pound load, weapon maintenance, marksmanship training; drill and ceremony	Moderate Work – patrolling, walking in the sand at 2.5 mph with no load, calisthenics; patrolling; individual movement techniques (i.e., high/low crawl)	Hard Work – walking in the sand at 2.5 MPH with a load, field assaults
MOPP 4 = +10°				
Rest - sitting or standing in the shade if possible				
The fluid replacement volumes will sustain performance and hydration for at least 4 HOURS of work in the specified heat category. Fluid needs can vary based on individual differences and exposure to full sun or full shade.				
CAUTION: Hourly fluid intake should not exceed 1.5 quarts. Daily fluid intake should not exceed 12 quarts.				

