

DESERT MONTHLY

AUGUST 2014

Gospel keeps Soldiers
close to God

pg 6

Desert Monthly

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Staff Sgt. Julius Clayton
Assistant Editor

Sgt. Kyle Fisch
Photojournalist

Sgt. William White
Photojournalist

Sgt. Tracy Myers
Editor/
Layout and Design



Command Sgt. Maj. Ronnie Kelley, U.S. Army Central, gives a coin to Spec. Luis Zapata, 687th Engineer Company, 315th Engineer Battalion, 45th Sustainment Brigade-CENTCOM Material Recovery Element, interior electrical, and native of the Bronx, New York, during a visit to Kandahar Air Field, Afghanistan, July 24, 2014. Kelley thanked Soldiers for their hard work and dedication to the unit's mission. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Tracy R. Myers)

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On the Cover Command Sgt. Maj. Tara M. Bryan, 54th Signal Battalion sergeant major, sings during the gospel service at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 11, 2014. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. William White)

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Around the AOR

Camp Buehring, Kuwait



Two Navy MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters, from the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush, take off during a joint-fire exercise with Army AH-64 Apaches from 3rd Battalion, 159th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, and Air Force joint terminal attack controllers, July 8, 2014, near Camp Buehring, Kuwait. (N.Y. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Harley Jelis)

Afghanistan



Crew members prepare a CH-47F Chinook heavy-lift helicopter before conducting nighttime sling load training with the 1569th Transportation Company, 369th Sustainment Brigade, 53rd Troop Command, June 30, 2014. The instructors were members of the crew team and would lead the Soldiers to the equipment that was ready to be hooked up to the Chinook. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Michael K. Selvage)

Camp Buehring, Kuwait



Capt. Mindy Wallace, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot from 3rd Battalion, 258th General Support Battalion, 42nd Combat Aviation Brigade, plays a mock casualty while being cared for by firefighters from Camp Buehring, Kuwait, during a downed Black Hawk crash drill June 30, 2014. Aviators and emergency responders are required to conduct frequent drills to maintain proficiency with responding to a wide variety of emergencies. (N.Y. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Harley Jelis)

Camp Arifjan, Kuwait



Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commander, United States Central Command, conducts a site visit with the command team of 1st Battalion, 44th Air Missile Defense Battalion, deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, from Fort Hood, Texas, July 27, 2014. The 1-44 AMD Bn. is one of many units within the CENTCOM area of responsibility. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Julius Clayton)

Afghanistan



Col. Tim Karcher, a Wounded Warrior and U.S. Army Operational Test Command chief of staff, leans on Rick Kell (left), executive director of Feherty's Troops First Foundation, after landing at Forward Operating Base Pasab, Afghanistan, July 10, 2014. Karcher and four other Soldiers who were wounded in combat visited Afghanistan during Operation Proper Exit to speak with Soldiers and exit the country on their own terms. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Ariel Solomon)

Army green is Army Strong!

STORY BY
Sgt. Tracy R. Myers

The Army tackles challenges today requiring more innovative and efficient ways to support the mission and minimize environmental impacts. U.S. Army Central is making significant strides supporting the Army's effort to conserve money and resources. The Army's energy goals, as defined in the January 2009 Army Energy Security Implementation Strategy, include reducing energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency, increasing use of renewable/alternative energy, assuring access to sufficient energy supplies and reducing adverse impacts to the environment.

"USARCENT is supporting the Army's energy goals by focusing on reducing energy consumption, increasing the supply of available energy [through] renewable sources and changing the command climate relative to energy consumption," said Col. Molly Harris, USARCENT Energy Efficiency Campaign representative.

Army operations span a diverse range of missions, from base infrastructure under lesser threat, to expeditionary operations and campaigns in hostile areas. Supplying energy to support these diverse missions is always a priority.

"Operational energy ultimately affects the Soldiers," said Harris. "It is about maintaining the Soldier on the battlefield and providing the optimum

amount of energy to the forward elements to increase survivability."

It is essential to provide Soldiers deployed to hot and austere environments energy for air-conditioned shelters, food services and water supply, to name a few. USARCENT is taking action in order to meet the Army's energy and budgetary demands.

"USARCENT has established the Operational Energy Working Group to spearhead the energy awareness campaign," explained Harris. "Section representatives are appointed to inform, advise, train and assist as the military transforms into a more flexible, efficient and sustainable force."

The OEWG has an aggressive awareness campaign.

"In an effort to change the energy culture, the group is developing training that empowers Soldiers to make energy informed decisions," said Harris. "At Camp Buehring, Kuwait, the group is demonstrating energy conservation technologies like solar shading and Cool Cam Covers."

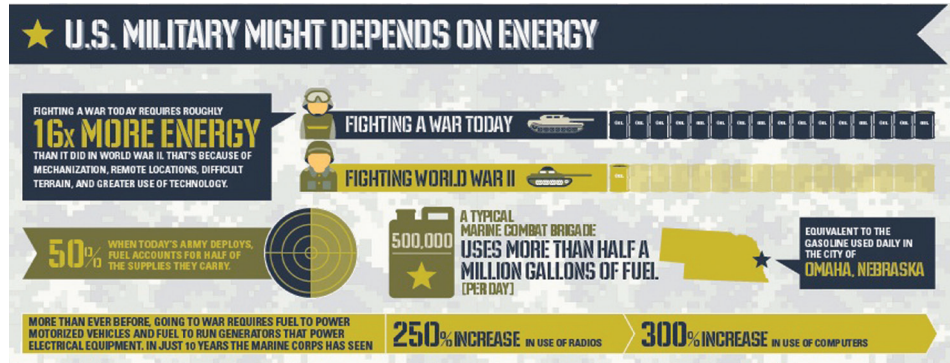
Soldiers assigned to B Company, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, set up Solar Shade Systems over two structures July 9 and 10 at Camp Buehring. Currently the shades are being monitored to test the overall energy and cost effectiveness.

"Kilowatt meters were placed within the air conditioning units of covered and uncovered tents to monitor and collect the amount of energy being used to cool the structure," said David Annas, Saab Barracuda engineering manager, who trained the Soldiers how to install the system.

"The solar shade solution is an ultra-lightweight camouflage net system used to save operational energy by reducing fuel cost," said Annas. "We have found that by putting it over structures it can reduce the solar loading by 85 percent, which studies have shown can typically reduce the temperature of the shelter by at least 15 degrees and have about a 22 percent fuel savings. On a small 150-man [forward operating base], that is a savings of approximately 100 gallons per day."

Camp Buehring is also the home of the Net Zero Technology Test Site and the Kuwait Energy Efficiency Project, said Harris.

KEEP is an operational energy project focused on rapidly leveraging proven technologies and best practices to significantly improve energy efficiency with shelters and microgrids to reduce fuel consumption within Camp Buehring, reducing operational energy re-



David Annas, Saab Barracuda engineering manager, teaches Soldiers assigned to B Company, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, how to set up a Solar Shade System, July 10, 2014. These shades typically reduce the temperature of the shelter by at least 15 degrees and result in a 22 percent fuel savings. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Woodbridge Dean Bullock)

quirements and fuel requirements by 30 percent.

"New technologies and energy efficient solutions make it easier to sustain and protect our forces in harsh environments," said Harris. "These solutions lighten the individual Soldier's load, reduce the need for dangerous resupply convoys, and increase the supply of available energy — making our Soldiers more combat effective."

The Army continues to look for ways to reduce environmental impacts and ensure the individual readiness and resiliency of our Soldiers.

"There are wind and solar powered light carts being tested for use on Camp Arifjan to see how they hold up in the extreme heat," said Harris. "New technology, such as shower-water reuse systems, will be employed at Camp Buehring as part of the Net Zero and KEEP programs."

"The Army's newest energy-efficient generators, power distribution equipment and improved environmental control units, are being retrograded from Afghanistan for use in Jordan and Kuwait," she continued. "Other plans include conversion of diesel-fired light carts to solar, and use of solar and/or wind energy for water heating and other power generation needs."

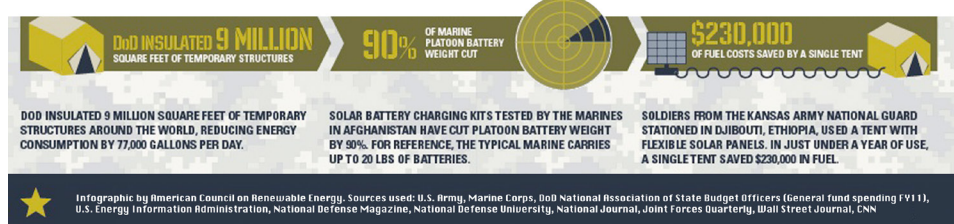
Many systems are already in place, while education and awareness of energy consumption is now one of USARCENT's major focuses. As the Army makes great strides toward energy efficiency among garrison and operational bases, they will rely heavily on the participation and cooperation of Soldiers, DOD civilians and Family members who work and live on post.

"Making energy conscious decisions is everyone's responsibility," said Harris. "Our military has a proud history of setting and enforcing the highest standards. Once Soldiers are informed and educated about the importance of energy efficiencies and how this relates to conducting missions and combat effectiveness, we are confident that Soldiers will strive to be innovative and do the right thing even when no one is watching."

"The desired end state is an energy informed culture in which we create an internal environment of energy accountability and discipline; change the way each Soldier, Army civilian and family member views, uses and thinks about energy and refocus our culture from energy consumers to energy stewards," said Harris. "All results are intended to ensure the Army can secure access to mission essential energy at a price it can afford."



David Annas, Saab Barracuda engineering manager, explains to Soldiers assigned to B Company, 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment, how the Solar Shade System works, July 10, 2014. This system can reduce solar loading by up to 85 percent. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Woodbridge Dean Bullock)



According to USARCENT, it consumed 583,000 barrels of fuel in Kuwait and Qatar last year through everyday operations such as transportation and powering equipment and structures, resulting in an overall cost of approximately \$60.6 million. By incorporating energy efficient technologies, renewable energy sources, awareness campaigns and improved power distribution networks, they can drastically reduce the amount of fuel consumed.

"There are several energy efficient and conservation actions that can be done daily. Taking five-minute showers, recycling, adjusting thermostats, and turning off extra lights are just a few methods that help save energy for the war fighter," said Harris. "Soldiers are developing their own energy-saving

methods like reusing water boxes as recycling bins in their rooms."

USARCENT believes conservation is the most easily achievable goal. By doing this, a noticeable impact can be made on the overall fuel and water usage by 20 percent, which equates to a savings of approximately \$12 million a year.

"Taking time to discuss energy issues with your peers is also a good way to help spread the news about operational energy," said Harris. "The key is to educate and reinforce energy conservation practices, so the Soldier understands the why."

By practicing smart and decisive decisions, everybody can make a serious impact on the overall decrease of resources, said Harris.

Gospel keeps Soldiers close to God



Command Sgt. Maj. Tara M. Bryan, 54th Signal Battalion sergeant major, sings during the gospel service at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 11, 2014.



Members of the choir and attendees hold hands during a musical prayer at the Zone 6 Chapel, Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, July 4, 2014.



Command Sgt. Maj. Tara Bryan, a Minister at the Zone 6 chapel, leads the gospel choir during joy night July 4, 2014, at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY Sgt. William White

At 6:50 p.m. on any given Friday, the Zone 6 Chapel at Camp Arifjan is a desolate structure. It is a familiar presentation to those who have seen a chapel in a deployed environment; a reinforced tent filled with subdued pews, an altar and a fridge full of water bottles. Less a few leather couches and the finished shine of the maple altar, this chapel isn't much to look at. Stained glass at the chapel wasn't in the budget plan for Camp AJ.

At 6:55, the vacant chapel transforms. Around 50 smiling, happy faces illuminate the walls of the hard-shelled tent, greeting each other and finding their places. At 7:00, a man wielding drum sticks taps a high-hat four times to establish a tempo, and the once-bleak chapel becomes a beating heart full of love and worship.

Its blood is the people of Christ who have taken temporary residency in Kuwait, away from their homes; but not far from God. Many of them come to Kuwait as U.S. Soldiers, present or past, with varying missions, but they have all come to the Zone 6 Chapel for a similar purpose.

"It is not about rank, status, skin color or gender," said Command Sgt. Maj. Tara M. Bryan, 54th Signal Battalion sergeant major and minister at the chapel. "We are all there for one reason and that is to praise the Lord."

And the praise echoes throughout the front atrium of the

chapel. This is not the typical worship music one might hear on a Sunday morning AM radio broadcast. This is the music God has on his iPod in 2014.

The twenty-seven piece band features bass guitar, drums, rhythm keyboard, piano, saxophone and a company of sopranos, altos and tenors. It adapts elements of traditional choir with a grand-soul funk feel that phases through about ten more music genres.

Through those varying stages of music, the choir and service attendees alternate between two primary postures.

The first renders eyes closed and hands in the air as to accept the healing power and forgiveness being bestowed upon them by the Lord. The second returns the favor to the Lord.

The verb dance is an injustice to the ritual movements the body creates when offering praise to the Lord and Savior. These are movements of passion and fulfillment you won't find in the club on Saturday night.

Many have come to the chapel for healing. Some are trying to overcome the stresses of deployment or the burden of being away from family. Others have come to give. They give support to their brothers and sisters in need and give praise and thanks to the Lord.

Bryan came to do just that. A native of Goose Creek, S.C., she not only leads a battalion of troops in Kuwait, but also directs the choir at Zone 6 every Friday.

Unlike the typical music director, Bryan uses her whole body to communicate to the choir through dance. Her spirited steps move the choir from triumphant lifts to angelic heights to jubilant musical prayer and back again.

Though the role may be physically taxing, Bryan doesn't have to look hard for motivation.

"I love the Lord, and I love praising and worshiping Him with people that love Him as much as I do," she said.

Bryan encourages Soldiers and civilians serving in Kuwait to attend and help give praise to the Lord.

"If you truly want an awesome worship experience, come out and join us at the Gospel Joy Night Service on Friday Night," she said.

By the end of the evening, the previously desolate tent has become a warm, uplifting place. The music rings on and many continue to dance and give praise while others exchange hugs and blessings and bid each other farewell.

When the music stops and all the praise and worship have been made, the evening comes to a close. The tent returns to its dormant state until Sunday morning.

Air defenders strike first for equality



Runners line up with glow sticks for the Pride Night Equality 5-kilometer run at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, June 28, 2014, hosted by 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment. Soldiers came together to observe Pride Night, in recognition of the White House's designation of June as Pride Month.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Staff Sgt. Regina Machine

“Strike First” is a motto that has long been with the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, based out of Fort Hood, Texas, and they live up to that motto.

Soldiers from 1-44 ADA and volunteers from units at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, participated in Camp Arifjan's first-ever “Pride Night” June 28 as part of national Pride Month 2014.

Pride Month, declared by a Presidential Proclamation on May 30, recognizes the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Americans and the need to work toward equality in our society.

The president also called upon the people of the United States “to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists, and to celebrate the great diversity of the American people.”

Being the first of its kind, the unit initially couldn't gauge the possible response to their event.

“It was a bit nerve wrecking because we had no idea what the turnout would be or if we would encounter any resistance,” said Capt. David Endter, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1-44 ADA. “We couldn't estimate if there would be only ten people to show up or hundreds.”

“Once the word got out that we were hosting the event, we started getting emails from units across the camp ask-

ing for more information, and [wanting to know] what they could do to participate and to put the word out,” he said. “It put things into perspective that this is something the Soldiers really wanted to celebrate and observe.”

More than 70 people showed up for the evening's events.

The event kicked off with opening remarks from guest speaker Col. Linda Jantzen, 160th Signal Brigade commander, who spoke about the impact of change throughout military history and how life in the military has changed since the repeal of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy.

The evening continued with a viewing of the documentary “Coming Out Under Fire.” This film, released shortly after the implementation of DADT, shares the stories of veterans who served during World War II and addresses how homosexuality was handled during that time. It describes how gay and lesbian service members had to hide their orientation, but also how they made friends. For some, it was how they met their partners. The documentary also covered how gay service members were targeted by policies that could remove them from service if they were found to be homosexual.

Following the documentary, Endter led the group in an open forum discussion. This gave Soldiers the opportunity to share testimonials, provide feedback on their experiences and address issues that developed as a result of their sexual orientation.

After the open forum, the participants were greeted by instructors of Camp Arifjan's Zumba class who offered a high-intensity warm-up session in preparation of the Pride Night Equality 5-kilometer Shadow Run.

The run shadowed the annual Chicago “Proud to Run” 5k. The participants lit up the night with glow sticks as a way to display their freedom of expression and appreciation of LGBT equality.

“All of the activities that 1-44 ADA and OutServe worked to put on during Pride Month were a huge success. I heard nothing but positive comments coming from many of the participants,” said Maj. Matthew Wood, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 108th Sustainment Brigade, based out of Chicago, Illinois, who was a key member of planning the festivities. “It was an honor to work on planning Camp Arifjan's celebration and recognition of the efforts of the Department of Defense's lesbian, gay, and bisexual service members. While we obviously have a ways to go, it was great to see such a turnout.”

OutServe-Servicemembers Legal Defense Network represents the U.S. LGBT military community worldwide. They are major supporters of the LGBT Service Members.

The event was a strong success and showed the U.S. military is stronger and more capable because of its diverse population and its values that place equality and unity first.

Blood, sweat and summa cum laude



Sgt. 1st Class Sidney Haynes, 10th Sustainment Brigade senior communications specialist, graduates from Grantham University with honors and summa cum laude.

STORY BY AND PHOTO BY
Sgt. Michael Selvage

Being a leader in the Army and taking college classes can be a challenge, but graduating top of the class is impressive.

Sgt. 1st Class Sidney Haynes, a Baton Rouge, La., native, and senior communications specialist for the 10th Sustainment Brigade, graduated from Grantham University with honors and summa cum laude.

Being a full-time Soldier, father and husband can be a lot to handle by some, but Haynes decided he needed more of a challenge, so he started to take college courses.

"There just has to be a balance," said Haynes. "The needs of the family have to come first."

He said his family knew what he was doing was for their benefit as well as his career.

"They were understanding of the situation and let me achieve my goals," said Haynes. "Family first, then the Army and then college; I just kind of focused on that triangle. When one didn't need my attention, I was able to shift my attention to the other one."

He started working towards his bachelor's degree in 2009 using military tuition assistance, which is a program

that provides financial assistance for military service members' college courses that are offered in the classroom or by distance learning.

He said that when he used up the TA for one year, the next year was just starting.

"The majority of the time working toward my bachelor's degree, I was a recruiter," said Haynes. "It was rough, working 12 to 14 hours a day."

He said there were days he had assignments due but his Army responsibilities had to come first.

"At times, it was hard leaving a long day at the office only to return home and do six more hours of school work," said Haynes. "There were a lot of late nights."

Haynes would get home late and spend some time with his family before he started school work. Saturdays and Sundays he would do the majority of his work.

After recruiting, Haynes was assigned to the 10th SBDE at Fort Drum, New York.

"I've been a platoon sergeant since I arrived to the 10th SBDE," said Haynes. "I've also been the section noncommissioned officer in charge for a year, making me dual hatted."

The brigade deployed for a year to Bagram Air Field, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Free-

dom in 2011. He is currently deployed again to BAF in support of OEF.

While deployed, he continued to work towards his degree, never letting up.

"Because my family isn't here, it's basically back and forth between work and school," said Haynes. "Work is a steady 12 to 14 hour day."

He said the mission always came first.

"Some days you will be in a position where you don't have a lot of mission work, so you can shift your attention to college," said Haynes. "But just like recruiting, you could have a 12 to 14 hour day but still have assignments due; you just do what you have to do to get things done."

When he returned from his previous deployment, he went to Advanced Leaders Course and Senior Leaders Course back-to-back. He earned honor graduate for both courses. He also competed for and won the student leadership and the student first sergeant while at SLC.

"I completed 12 credit hours while I was at ALC and SLC," said Haynes.

He said he doesn't compete against other people, he only competes against himself.

"When I do something like get honor grad, it's because I'm competing against myself," said Haynes. "I like to find my limits and I try to be better than that."

Haynes said raising his grade point average slowly started turning into a fun challenge.

"I started playing a little game with myself about getting a 4.0 GPA," said Haynes.

His goal was a 3.95, but he ended up graduating from Grantham University summa cum laude in February 2014 with a 4.0.

"I would say that the last four years of my life has

been the busiest, time consuming and schedule-intensive time ever," said Haynes. "My whole drive and motivation is to be better than I was yesterday."

Haynes pushed himself and never let his school work interfere with his duties as a NCO, said Maj. Joseph G. Govocek III, the brigade communications officer.

His next challenge for himself is to start working towards his master's degree.

"I can't seem to bring myself to do it," said Haynes. "I'm really just taking a knee and catching my breath. I've done so much in the last three years putting myself in a position for success."

Haynes received a multidisciplinary degree.

"It's like a general studies degree, but it has more layers to it," said Haynes. "There is a concentration in digital forensics."

The last seven classes he took were focused on digital forensics and criminology.

"The growing trend in today's market place is cyber security," said Haynes. "I'm basically the digital detective that goes behind the cyber guys to figure out the who, what, when, where [and] why something happened to collect evidence and build a case for the prosecutor."

He said he is a little tired after recruiting, two deployments, more than 70 credit hours of college, two professional development schools and balancing his family and work load.

"I'm just sorta burnt out," said Haynes. "But it's a good burnt out. I gave myself a six month break, because I really just needed it to be honest."

He said he is going to start working toward his master's degree in August.

Haynes said none of this would have been possible without the support he received from the TA program.

Bittersweet reunion

STORY AND PHOTO BY

Sgt. Tracy R. Myers

Deployed Soldiers can experience a wide range of feelings, physically and emotionally. A reunion in Kuwait was bittersweet for two high-school wrestling buddies from the small town of State College, Pa.

U.S. Army Sgt. Adam Hartswick, a Wounded Warrior at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and Spc. Jason Lingo, U.S. Army Reserve Soldier assigned to the 374th Military Police Company out of Chambersburg, Pa., have been good friends since high school.

"We've always been really close," said Hartswick. "We first met on our way to wrestling practice in ninth grade. We had to walk from our high school to the elementary school, which was almost a three-mile walk."

It turned out they had more in common than their love of wrestling — both boys were "military brats."

"I think we became friends so quickly because both of our dads were first sergeants who were in [the military] for such a long time," said Hartswick. "Before that walk to wrestling practice, we never knew each other, but we just started talking like friends."

They both decided to join the Army after graduating high school in 2009.

Lingo chose to join the Army Reserves and attend college, he said. It was a more natural decision for Hartswick to enlist for active-duty service.

"I always knew I was going to join the Army," said Hartswick. "My father and both of my grandpas were veterans. It's in my blood and something I have always wanted to do."

While Lingo was attending Pennsylvania State University, Hartswick shipped off to Afghanistan.

Hartswick was deployed to Afghanistan when his life was altered by a devastating attack on his unit May 14, 2013.

"I was the company senior medic responding to an attack on our second platoon," Hartswick said, recalling that day. "When I got to the scene, the platoon medic, one of my Soldiers, was dead along with two other Soldiers."

"I was doing human-remains recovery and treating the walking-wounded when the [Explosive Ordnance Disposal] team showed up," he continued. "The EOD team leader went to interrogate a device and it blew up, killing him, about ten meters in front of me."

Hartswick suffered minor injuries from that explosion and was able to continue his medic duties.

"I shook that off and went to retrieve him when I was blown up," he said. "I was still conscious, so I treated myself. The platoon leader came to me and tightened my tourniquets."

He survived the deadly blasts of three explosions, but lost both of his legs above the knee and a finger from his right hand.

"I was back in the States within six days," said Hartswick.

The word spread quickly once he arrived to the hospital in his hometown. Lingo said a mutual friend of theirs called to deliver the news.

"I didn't even know what to say when I got the call," said Lingo. "It was just pure silence on the phone for a long while. I was angry and sad."

Lingo returned home from college and had to

wait almost a month to visit his friend in the hospital.

"They were only allowing my family to visit me for a while," said Hartswick.

Seeing Hartswick made coping with the news much more bearable for Lingo, he said.

"When I saw how he was handling everything, it made it so much easier for me to deal with," said Lingo. "I was able to see that it didn't slow him down at all, he was the exact same person that I saw before he left."

Now, after recovering from his physical injuries, Hartswick was ready for some emotional healing, and chose to participate in the Troops First Foundation's Operation Proper Exit.

Operation Proper Exit is a program providing Wounded Warriors capable of returning to theater the opportunity to tour forward operating bases in Afghanistan. The recovering Soldiers benefit from seeing the progress they helped achieve, the camaraderie among deployed troops and the closure they need by leaving the battlefield on their own accord.

"The best thing about this trip was experiencing the companionship and brotherhood again," said Hartswick. "There is such a deep bond forged in fire that you can't find it anywhere else."

The high school wrestling buddies reunited during Lingo's deployment to Kuwait. Hartswick traveled through here on his way to and from Afghanistan July 8 and 13.

"I found out he was coming here only a few days prior [to his arrival]," said Lingo. "It was a pleasant surprise."

"It was awesome to see him here. I knew he would need the morale boost" Hartswick said. "Being in Kuwait isn't like being in Iraq or Afghanistan. Even though you are serving a purpose here, it's not the Super Bowl for us. Pro football players are always training to play in the Super Bowl, we train for combat; that's our Super Bowl."

Wrestling brought them together, now they are brothers in arms; they share more than just memories, they share principles and standards.

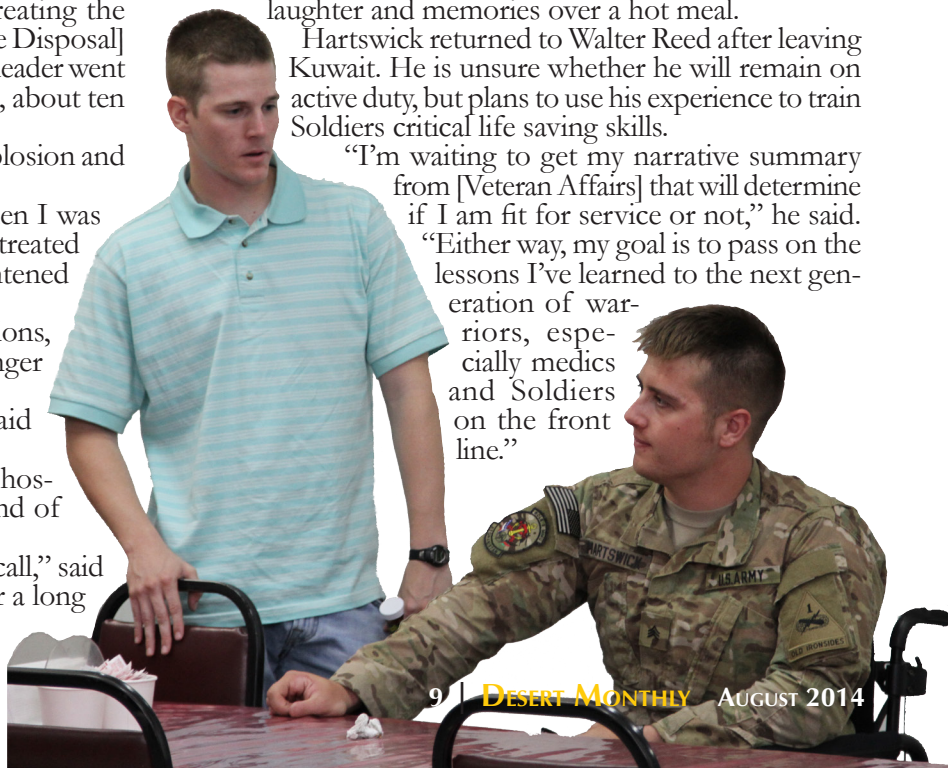
"Wrestling teaches you so many values that translate over to an Army career, like having the mental grit to fight through the pain and onward toward your objective," said Hartswick. "Hardship brings you closer."

While unconventional, they were able to visit each other on an operational Army base in the Middle East, enjoying laughter and memories over a hot meal.

Hartswick returned to Walter Reed after leaving Kuwait. He is unsure whether he will remain on active duty, but plans to use his experience to train Soldiers critical life saving skills.

"I'm waiting to get my narrative summary from [Veteran Affairs] that will determine if I am fit for service or not," he said.

"Either way, my goal is to pass on the lessons I've learned to the next generation of warriors, especially medics and Soldiers on the front line."



WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY

August 26th



“We honor the pioneers of women’s equality by
doing our part to realize the great American dream.”

President Barack Obama
2013