

THE RED BULL REPORT

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July 28, 2009

3-58, Skylink Arabia cooperate in air operations effort

By Sgt. Frank Vaughn
MND-S



COB BASRA – Air operations at Contingency Operating Base Basra cater to a wide range of travel needs. Service members and civilians utilize air travel for mission requirements and leave. Commercial aircraft land and take off at Basra International Airport on a weekly basis.

Service members of 3rd Air Operations Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment and civilian employees of Skylink Arabia work together to ensure the success of air travel to and from COB Basra.

Lt. Col. John Kornman, 3rd Bn., 58th Avn. Regt. commander, said his unit, which first activated at Illesheim, Germany in June 2007, is one of 10 AOBs in the U.S. Army and the first to deploy.

“AOBs are a new concept in the Army,” the Smithville, Texas native said.

“(Our deployment) is a huge step for Iraq as we work with contractors and the Iraqi airport manager to bring (Basra International Airport) up to international standards and enhance commercial travel here.”

Kornman made it clear his unit is a tenant of Basra International Airport, and while they are responsible for air operations here, their primary role is to strengthen the capabilities of Skylink Arabia.

“We have made big steps to bring the airport up to international standards,” said Kornman.

“There is an (International Civil



Photo by Sgt. Frank Vaughn

An Iraqi worker guides a vehicle across the tarmac at Basra International Airport July 23. Air operations at Contingency Operating Base Basra are currently a joint effort between 3rd Air Operations Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment and Skylink Arabia, a civilian company currently employing local national workers.

Aviation Organization) inspection scheduled for November and we are all working hard to make sure we are ready for it.”

Kornman stressed the importance of Basra’s airport being fully operational, saying commercial travel will enhance tourism and commerce in the local area.

“We have three to five commercial aircraft a week landing here,” he said.

“We hope to eventually see as many as

60 a week in the future.”

Tony Randerson, station manager for Skylink Arabia, said while this ef-

“Iraqis are helping us make the operation happen. We couldn’t do this without their efforts.”

– Lt. Col. John Kornman
3rd Bn., 58th Avn. Regt. commander

HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHT

On December 2, 2006 at the annual Festival of Lights, Smithville broke the Guinness Book of world record’s record for the biggest gingerbread man ever, measuring more than 26 feet.



fort will benefit the local economy once everything is in place, many local Iraqis have already benefited from the

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employment opportunities Skylink has to offer.

"We provide, in a joint venture with Iraqis, manpower and technical guidance to help develop operations here," he said. "Iraqis are covering about 50 percent of the air traffic control now."

Sgt. 1st Class John Fritz, 3rd Bn., 58th Avn. Regt., arrival, departure and traffic control group noncommissioned officer-in-charge said Iraqis also handle aircraft fueling, traffic control, cleaning, pallet construction and forklift baggage transport.

The cooperation of Iraqi citizens in this effort has not only been an opportunity for employment, it has also been essential for mission success, according

to Kornman.

"Iraqis are helping us make the operation happen," he said. "We couldn't do this without their efforts."

Fritz said the entire scope of air operations at Basra will eventually be contracted, but a couple of obstacles must be overcome first.

"We still need more manpower," the Knoxville, Tenn. native said. "We also have to get them through the vetting process for security clearances. Once we clear those hurdles, the entire mission will be contracted."

Most of the Iraqis currently employed by Skylink are in entry-level positions, according to Paul Greenaway, acting project manager for Skylink.

"We start them with basic jobs, but we have a training program to allow

for advancement," he said.

Randerson said they have identified some workers who have potential for added responsibility.

"They came to learn," he said. "They seem very eager to get the knowledge they need to succeed at what they do now and potentially promote as they go."

There is still much work to be done before air operations at COB Basra can be fully assumed by Skylink Arabia and its Iraqi employees. However, cooperation between Skylink and its military counterparts in 3rd Bn., 58th Avn. Regt., has this mission off to a good start.

For more of Sgt. Vaughn's stories, visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/Vaughn



Photo by Sgt. Frank Vaughn

An Iraqi worker stands his post on the tarmac of Basra International Airport as a plane is prepared for takeoff. Air operations at Contingency Operating Base Basra are currently a joint effort between 3rd Air Operations Battalion, 58th Aviation Regiment and Skylink Arabia, a civilian company currently employing local national workers.

THE RED BULL REPORT

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Education center offers guidance, services

By Sgt. Debralee P. Crankshaw
MND-S



COB BASRA – Deployment can alter a Soldier's plans, but there is a resource available so Soldiers can continue their education during this time.

The Education Center on Contingency Operating Base Basra assists Soldiers continuing their education.

"The education center is a one-stop shopping center (for your educational needs)," said 1st Lt. Lisa Cullen, education officer for COB Basra.

The education center offers a variety of services including education counseling, a computer lab, proctor services

and classes.

The computer lab is available for researching colleges, attending online classes and doing homework.

In addition to existing programs, the education center will offer two functional academic skills training classes – short courses designed to improve the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery general technical score.

"Everybody took the ASVAB when they entered the military," said Cullen, a resident of Greenwood, Wis. "That general technical score in the ASVAB is something that Soldiers often times need to get up to 110. If you're just be-

low the 110 mark, the FAST class will help you study. It's like a refresher course. So, when you do take the exam, you can get that squared away."

The FAST classes will be conducted in the beginning and middle of August. While the first class is full, Soldiers may still sign up for the second.

The education center is also offering a CPR certification class in mid-August. CPR certification is not only a good skill to have, but can also be used toward a Soldier's education. C P R certification can be transferred to most colleges as a one credit hour elective, according to Cullen.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) standardized test exams are also offered, at no cost to the service member, once a month or once every other month based on availability. These tests are designed to allow Soldiers to earn credit for certain college subjects they are knowledgeable in. The test proctor will visit the Basra center from Camp Victory to administer the official exams.

"It's a great way for Soldiers to get the college credit without having to attend the class," said Cullen.

One of the other services provided is guidance on transferring a Soldier's military training to college credits. Cullen said she can assist with this process.

"It's a huge boost for Soldiers looking for promotion points or getting a degree," said Cullen.

While the education center offers these services, the most important thing to Cullen is getting Soldiers' school paid for.

"Our greatest goal here is to get Soldiers set up with their educational benefits, meaning their tuition assistance," she said. "One of the great things is that for all enlisted Soldiers, while on deployment, Uncle Sam is going to give you \$4,500 a year to go to school while you're here."

However, this only applies to enlist-



Photo by Sgt. Debralee P. Crankshaw

1st Lt. Lisa Cullen, Contingency Operating Base Basra education officer, talks with Staff Sgt. Edward Ortiz, 1078th Military Police Company, 34th Infantry Division squad leader, from Buford, Ga., about the options offered by the Post 9-11 GI Bill Chapter 33.

Fire Department fires up Soldiers about safety

By Pfc. Bethany L. Little
172nd Inf. Div.



FOB KALSU – Safety is a concern Soldiers should have on their minds at all times. From overloaded electrical strips to proper use of fire extinguishers, the Forward Operating Base Kalsu Fire Department is working hard to prevent fires and educate Soldiers with proper fire safety training.

“We hold a fire safety awareness class every

Wednesday at 9 a.m. at the FOB Kalsu Fire Department,” said Richard M. Praeger, FOB Kalsu Fire Department chief, Wacken Hutt Limited Liability Corporation.

Training includes how to report emergencies, general fire safety, housekeeping techniques, smoke detectors, fire extinguisher use and other electrical safety hazards.

“We want Soldiers to be safe,” said Praeger.

“So we teach them what to look out for and what to be cautious of.”

Possible fire hazards include exposed wires, overloaded power strips, blankets and rugs being used as room dividers, wires and cords running across walkways and objects hanging over electrical outlets.

“Overloaded power strips and daisy-chained power strips are common fire hazards, especially in offices.

The amount of outlets on the power strips doesn't matter, the most the strip can hold is three small appliances,” said Praeger. “Larger appliances such as refrigerators and microwaves should be plugged directly into a wall outlet.”

The training also includes teaching students how to use fire extinguishers with a live fire demonstration.

Each Soldier uses techniques learned in class to put out a fire.

“The class taught us how to use the fire extinguisher, to roll the fire down towards the ground and successfully put the fire out,” said Pvt. Ian M. Ellsworth, mechanic, 10th Group Special Forces.

“Teaching a Soldier how to use a fire extinguisher is like teaching a Soldier how to shoot their weapon,” said Praeger. “A Soldier is taught how to properly aim and shoot. Without that knowledge, the weapon is useless. Using a fire extinguisher is the same concept.”

Any Soldier can attend the class without signing up in advance. The class is approximately an hour and a half long, depending on the attendance. Soldiers will also receive a certificate upon completion of the class.

“The most important aspect of the training is safety and teaching Soldiers to prevent fire hazards,” said Praeger. “The Soldiers have more life-threatening issues outside of the FOB. They shouldn't have to worry about a potential danger in the place where they lay their heads at night.”



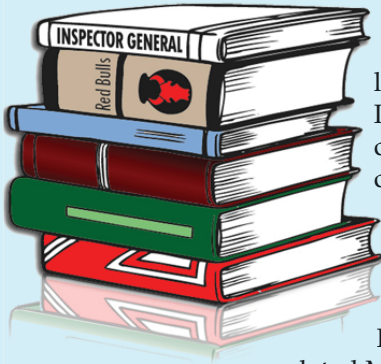
Photo by Pfc. Bethany L. Little

Spc. Henrique L. DeHolleben, combat camera, 10th Group Special Forces and native of Porto Alegre, Brazil, uses a fire extinguisher and the techniques learned from the fire awareness class to put out a small fire under the supervision of Marc R. Cobb, firefighter, Forward Operating Base Kalsu Fire Department, Wacken Hutt Limited Liability Corporation, here July 22. Soldiers are also taught how to identify potential fire and safety hazards, improper wiring and proper use of safety devices.

For more of Pfc. Little's stories, visit:

www.TheRedBulls.org/Little

BY THE BOOK: LEAVE AND PASSES



We have received some recent inquiries into the leave and pass policies in Iraq. The two major policies and regulations that cover leave and passes in the area of responsibility are AR 600-8-10 Leaves and Passes and ARCENT R & R Leave Policy and Procedures

dated March 15, 2009. This is an overview of the most frequently asked questions.

Can my commander require me to take R & R leave?

No, a commander cannot require you to take R & R leave because it is chargeable leave. Many units require a counseling statement be completed on a Soldier who does not wish to take Environmental and Morale Leave. This should not be taken as a negative action but that the command is being proactive in making sure you know your option. If you turn down EML when the unit is looking to forecast everyone for dates, you are probably turning down your options to take leave for the tour.

We have found several members of the Guard and Reserve want to take the estimated 30 days of leave when they are done with their tour for a wide variety of reasons. That could apply to a college student who wants to take a month-long back-packing trip in Europe and have additional income. After Soldiers are released

from the mobilization station they will be placed on leave for the number of days of leave they have remaining. While on leave they will still collect BAS and BAQ, if authorized, and will also accrue additional leave days while on leave (30 days leave +2.5 days during the month of leave). Also, any leave days accrued in country are tax free when you take leave. It also is another month of Tricare benefits which may be important to self-employed members.

How many days do I get on EML leave?

Soldiers expected to be in Iraq for 270 days boots-on-the-ground get 15 days of leave. Soldiers deploying for 15 months earn 18 days of leave. The leave must be taken as a single block and is chargeable starting the day after reporting to your final destination. To take less than the full number of authorized days requires an endorsement by the first general officer in the chain of command and approval by USARCENT.

Why didn't I get the leave dates I asked for?

Commanders have a tough task of managing leave and mission requirements in the theater. No more than 10 percent of the Soldiers in a unit can be gone for leave, passes, emergency leave or TDY for active duty units. National Guard and Reserve units are authorized up to 12 percent.

For more detailed information see your first sergeant, battalion personnel office or e-mail the 34th Division IG at James.E.Doten@iraq.centcom.mil.

For more of IG's comments or to leave a comment of your own visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/ByTheBook

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EDUCATION

ed personnel. National Guard officers must go through their state to receive their educational benefits, but the education center can assist in contacting the education officer in the service member's state to initiate the process.

The education center already has many services set up, but is in the process of expanding what they can offer.

"We are also working on getting other classes started here. It's a matter of getting instructors approved and the class times set up," said Cullen.

A certified testing center is also in the works. This will allow firefighters and support staff a place to complete their annual certification. This certification must take place in a certified testing center. Estimated completion of this project is August.

Cullen said an average of 20 Soldiers a day visit the education center and a majority of those are first-time college students.

She said while it may seem like a big step to start college, the education center can help guide Soldiers.

"Sometimes going to school can seem like a mountain. It's just too big, there's no way I can go to college," said Cullen.

"Well, how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. An elephant is too big to eat all at once and that's kind of the same thing with college, just one little bite at a time."

"The first bite is tuition assistance, the second bite is researching colleges and finding a college friendly for you, that's going to work for your needs and desires. We'll get you enrolled and we're going to have you start with one course here, two max, just to see how you do. Most of the units out here are really busy with their mission so typically if you're a first-time student I don't want Soldiers take off more than they can chew."

Cullen is the only person currently working in the education center so she is also looking for volunteers to assist in the daily operations a few afternoons a week.

The education center is open Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Soldiers needing to use the computer lab when the education center is closed can make an appointment. For more information, to make an appointment or to volunteer call Cullen at 858-4526 or email lisa.cullen@iraq.centcom.mil.

For more of Sgt. Crankshaw's stories visit:

www.TheRedBulls.org/Crankshaw

CHIPPING CONTEST

August 2
0700-0900

PRIZES for 1st, 2nd and 3rd
Twenty openings, on a first contact basis

Contact Spc. Belland, RBVB at james.belland@iraq.centcom.mil



PODCAST
"Drive on: Continuing the mission after loss."
www.TheRedBulls.org/Podcast

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For puzzle solutions visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/puzzlesolutions

WORSHIP

DAILY MASS

Mon. - Fri., 8 p.m., DFAC 3 Chapel Room

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Saturday Vigil - 8:30 p.m., DFAC 2 Chapel Room
Sunday Mass - 9:30 a.m., DFAC 2 Chapel Room
Sunday Mass - 8 p.m., DFAC 3 Chapel Room

PROTESTANT SUNDAY:

General Protestant - 10 a.m., DFAC 3 Chapel Room
General Protestant - 11 a.m., DFAC 2 Chapel Room
Holy Communion - 11:30 a.m., DFAC 3 Chapel Room
Gospel Worship - 2 p.m., DFAC 3 Chapel Room
Chapel Next Protestant - 6:30 p.m., DFAC 3 Chapel Room
General Protestant - 7 p.m., Division Chapel Trailer Annex, Division Main

LDS SUNDAY:

2-4 p.m., DFAC 2 Chapel Room

JEWISH SERVICE:

Saturday, 7 p.m., Division Chapel Trailer Annex, Division Main

Around the world in 34 seconds



SEOUL, South Korea - North Korea has indicated its interest in holding direct talks with the United States, a news report said, after the two sides traded barbs over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs at a security forum. "We are not against a dialogue. We are not against any negotiation for the issues of common concern," Japan's Kyodo news agency quoted North Korean ambassador to the United Nations Sin Son Ho as saying July 24. But the ambassador, speaking in New York, dismissed the possibility of a return to stalled nuclear negotiations involving the two Koreas, the U.S., Japan, China and Russia, saying "the six-party talks are gone forever."



RICHLAND, Washington - The U.S. government is trying to find a location to store the country's excess mercury deposits, with seven states being considered. But the government is quickly finding out that very few people want the stuff. The United States still exports surplus elemental mercury, the purest form, often to developing countries with less restrictive environmental regulations. Then-U.S. Sen. Barack Obama sponsored a bill last year to bar mercury exports beginning in 2013, and President George W. Bush signed it. The bill also requires the Department of Energy to identify a safe, long-term storage site for up to 17,000 tons of mercury. Residents are swiftly voicing opposition because mercury is such a toxic substance. Its use has been in decline in this country since it was linked to health issues, including pulmonary and neural disorders.



INDIANAPOLIS - Jimmie Johnson cashed in on the most expensive speeding ticket in NASCAR history, grabbing an improbable third victory at Indianapolis Motor Speedway when a penalty to Juan Pablo Montoya blew the race wide open. In a performance that mirrored his dominating Indianapolis 500 victory nine years ago, Montoya was in cruise control as he led 116 laps and built a 5-second lead over the competition. Then NASCAR flagged him for speeding on a routine pit stop with 35 laps remaining, and the driver became unglued. "I swear on my children and my wife that I was not speeding!" he shouted over his radio. "There is no way! Thank you NASCAR for screwing my day." The penalty took him out of contention and relegated him to an 11th-place finish. Montoya, who had moved as high as sixth in the Sprint Cup standings as he ran out front, instead lost a spot and is now 10th in the race for the Chase for the championship. NASCAR said the electronic timing system caught Montoya twice exceeding the limit as he drove down pit road. Mark Martin finished second, followed by Tony Stewart, Greg Biffle, Brian Vickers and Kevin Harvick.



OAKLAND, Calif. - Oakland police say a man impersonating a police officer tried to pull over a real undercover officer and was arrested. Police say 21-year-old Antonio Fernandez Martinez of Oakland was arrested July 22 in the Fruitvale district after trying to pull over an unmarked police vehicle. Martinez was driving a Ford Crown Victoria outfitted with flashing lights, a microphone and speakers. Martinez, a convicted car thief, will have his felony probation revoked and could face a prison term. The officer, Jim Beere, says Martinez probably thought he would be an easy mark to rob.