

Freedom Watch

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Photo by Spc. Erica Leigh Foley, 28th Public Affairs Detachment

On the job ...

Spc. Bryan Zapp, 310th Psychological Operations, Forest Park, Ga., hands out fliers to the local community outside of Bagram Air Base.

Soldier celebrates Kwanza with poetry

By Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Kwanza is a celebration of history, traditions and food of the African-American culture. It is not a religious holiday, but some soldiers celebrate it because they do not celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah.

Spc. Kenneth Campbell is one of these soldiers and prefers it that way because of his religion.

“Being Muslim, my family doesn’t celebrate Christmas so to have the same effect in our lives, we celebrate Kwanza because it’s not about material things. In the Islam faith we learn it’s more about what’s inside you, than what you can buy somebody,” said Campbell, an operating room technician with the 48th Combat Service Hospital, Fort Meade, Md.

Kwanza is a week-long celebration beginning on Dec. 26. On December 31, there is a feast called the Kwanza Karamu. The feast is normally combined with history, culture, art and music.

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Troops can now view days deployed data on AKO

By Patrick Swan
Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Soldiers can now track their total deployment days on their Army Knowledge Online accounts.

This greater visibility for soldiers is a result of collaboration between AKO and the U.S. Total Army Personnel Command, which is establishing a link to AKO with its PERSTEMPO Web application.

“Posting deployment data to AKO offers numerous advantages, makes best use of available technology at a rea-

sonable cost and allows the Army greater flexibility to disclose PERSTEMPO data to soldiers in the field,” said Capt. Rob McCaslin, an action officer for PERSCOM’s Field Systems Division.

The initiative follows a July meeting between PERSCOM officials and those at AKO, McCaslin said. The AKO staff offered to explore including deployed days on the “My Personnel” page of AKO.

The deputy secretary of Defense suspended the PERSTEMPO per diem payment provision in October 2001, following the terrorist attacks of

Sept. 11, 2001. Tracking of deployed days continues, but not for payment consideration, PERSCOM officials said. Until November 2001, individual PERSTEMPO counts were posted to a soldier’s leave and earning statement. Based on a unanimous recommendation by the military services at an October 2001 PERSTEMPO meeting the Office of the Secretary of Defense instructed that the posting of PERSTEMPO data on the LES be suspended.

Following recommendations from a number of senior Army leaders earlier this year,

PERSCOM and AKO staffs proposed posting the relevant PERSTEMPO information on AKO in a format similar to that recently implemented for individual soldier dental readiness information, McCaslin said. This information will be available to soldiers in the Personnel community of the AKO web site, under the “My Personnel” channel.

“Using AKO in this way leverages technology to the Army’s advantage,” McCaslin said. “Unlike the once-per-month LES remark, deployment

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)

U.S. aid workers killed in Yemen

SANAA, Yemen — Authorities were questioning a suspected Islamic extremist who allegedly shot dead three U.S. humanitarian workers and wounded a fourth at a missionary hospital early Monday morning in southern Yemen, the U.S. ambassador to Yemen told CNN.

Shortly after the attacks, the suspect, Abid Abdulrazzaq al-Kamil, 30, told authorities he did it “to get closer to God,” but the motive for the shootings remained unclear, said Faris al-Sanabani, a Yemeni journalist. Al-Sanabani said officials believe the man has ties to Muslim extremists.

Authorities weren’t sure whether the gunman acted alone and were probing al-Kamil’s background, al-Sanabani said.

Yemeni sources said the gunman “was unhappy with the activities of medical personnel” at the hospital, according to U.S. Ambassador Edmund J. Hull.

War victims crowd orphanage

KABUL, Afghanistan — Every day, more children arrive at the Allauddin Center Orphanage in Afghanistan’s war-ravaged capital, living reminders of what poverty can do to families.

Many of the 950 children, most between 3 and 14 years old, are not orphans in the traditional sense. They still have a parent living — but one who is not financially capable of caring for the child.

Director Yousef Faiz says as many as six new arrivals come daily. “We’re running out of room,” he said. “We can’t refuse them.

We just need more space.”

Two decades of violent conflict in Afghanistan have taken a toll on families, producing about a million orphans and abandoned children across this mountainous country.

Five escape Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Five inmates escaped Monday from a maximum security prison in Puerto Rico via a helicopter that had been hijacked by two accomplices, police said.

The two rented the helicopter in San Juan and hired a pilot, saying they were engineers who wanted to survey some roads, police said. They then forced the pilot at gunpoint to fly them to maximum security prison Las Cucharas in Ponce, on the southern part of the island.

The aircraft landed in the middle of a high-security area at the prison, where four inmates quickly got on and a fifth held onto the railing as the helicopter was taking off, police said.

The hijackers forced the pilot to fly to Jayuya, in the north-central part of the island, where the helicopter landed and all seven fled, according to CNN affiliate WLII.

Police said the seven remain at large.

Diana Ross arrested for DUI

TUCSON, Arizona — Singer Diana Ross was arrested early Monday on suspicion of drunken driving, police said.

A breath test showed the pop diva with a blood-alcohol level of 0.20 percent, more than twice the legal limit of 0.08 percent, Tucson police Sgt. Judy Altieri said.

Police pulled Ross over after someone



Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Adam Johnston

Chow time ...

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Donovan Lindo of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Group, tosses a box of meals ready-to-eat, on the back of a truck during a camp wide issue of the meals at Air Force Village on Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Lindo is deployed here from the 16th Medical Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, Fla

alerted them to a swerving vehicle, Altieri said. She added that the arresting officer said Ross was polite and cooperative.

Ross, 58, received misdemeanor citations for driving under the influence; driving with a blood-alcohol content over 0.08; and extreme DUI, or having a blood-alcohol level greater than 0.15 percent. Her initial court appearance was set for January 13.

Re-up bonuses cut with new retention budget

Reenlistment bonuses took a big cut in the latest selective reenlistment bonus/targeted selective reenlistment bonus message. Due to receiving a drastically smaller budget, the Department of the Army has removed 249 entries from the current bonus message and reduced several others.

That message can be viewed at the Personnel Command Web site for military personnel messages: <http://PERSCOMND04.ARMY.MIL/MILPERmsgs.nsf/All+Documents/03-053?OpenDocument>, or soldiers can visit their retention noncommissioned officer or career counselor

for details. Soldiers in their reenlistment window, or on assignment instructions that they do not have sufficient time remaining to complete the minimum tour requirements, are encouraged to contact their retention NCO, or the closest career counselor (located at Bagram Air Base, Camp Stronghold Freedom (K-2), and Kandahar Air Field) for details on getting reenlisted prior to Jan. 10, 2003 which is when the cuts take effect. They should also keep in mind that processing their reenlistment paperwork could take several days, so any delay in initiating the reenlistment could be costly.

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data posted to AKO is updated throughout the month. This allows soldiers easy access to their individual PERSTEMPO counters anytime/anywhere. In addition, soldiers can keep up to date with the PERSTEMPO program through a Frequently Asked Questions link in AKO.

“We’re really excited about working with PERSCOM (specialists) because they understand how we can get something to soldiers today at little or almost no cost,” said Maj. C.J. Wallington, an AKO team leader with NETCOM’s Chief Technology Office, Fort Belvoir, Va. “This is one more example of how we can help soldiers take care of themselves simply by making information available to them.”

“This gives soldiers one less thing to be concerned about, so they can concentrate on the mission,” said Sgt. Maj. Freddie L. Davis, Jr., CIO/G-6 visual information sergeant major. “It is easy to tell soldiers you care. But they are more comforted when they see evidence, such as

this, that supports what they are doing. Seeing this information via AKO reassures soldiers that what they are doing counts and it is important.”

AKO officials are constantly exploring new ways to serve soldiers, Wallington said. These include using AKO User ID and password from the Army Portal (www.us.army.mil) to let soldiers view their leave-and-earnings statements online and to conduct TRICARE business as well.

Wallington added that the medical community is “right on their heels” with some initiatives like online appointment scheduling.

“These things help our troops in the field focus on soldier tasks rather than on someone to help them do administrative tasks,” Wallington said.

Issues pertaining to basic data entry may be referred to the PERSTEMPO help desk at 703-325-3829 or DSN 221-3829.

For additional information, visit <https://www.perscomonline.army.mil/perstempo/default.htm>

KWANZA, from Page 1

“Kwanza is a celebration of togetherness of family. You make gifts for other people. It’s about bringing people together,” said Campbell.



Campbell

There are a variety of things that can be made for Kwanza, Campbell explained, but the deployment makes things different.

“It is the same celebration in the field, but I don’t have the resources to make a lot. I am a poet, so I give poems to people. I give these to my close friends here. They don’t celebrate Kwanza, but they understand why I give the poems to them,” said Campbell.

The gifts that are given are defined by the days. Each day has a core principle including unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. A candle is lit for every day.

During Kwanza, three colors are important. They are red, black and green. The red stands for the blood of African ancestors, the black represents the skin of all the people of African descent and the green symbolizes a remembrance of land, new life and new ideas.

Campbell will have his own feast in his tent and has makeshift candles for Kwanza.

“Nobody in my unit really knows the meaning so therefore a lot of people do not know what it actually stands for,” said Campbell.

“I feel left out because most of the people around me celebrate Christmas so it’s kind of difficult for me,” said Campbell.



Happy New Year from the Freedom Watch!



Happy New Year around the world:

- Dutch:** Gelukkige Nieuwjaar
- Farsi:** Shoma Mobarak Bashad
- French:** Bonne Annee
- German:** Gutes Neues Jahr
- Hawaiian:** Hauoli Makahiki Hou
- Italian:** Buon Capo d’Anno
- Korean:** say hay boke-mahn he pah du say oh
- Norwegian:** Godt Nytt Ar
- Polish:** Szczesliwego Nowego roku
- Romanian:** La Multi Ani
- Russian:** S Novym Godom
- Spanish:** Feliz Ano Nuevo



Deployed tax extensions

By Spc. James Merrill
Claims/legal assistance NCOIC

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — With Jan. 1 quickly approaching, tax season looms. The good news is the IRS has given an extension to those in the armed forces serving in a combat zone.

Certain periods of time are disregarded when determining whether certain tax matters have been taken care of on time. Your deadline for filing taxes with the IRS is extended for 180 days after the last day you are in a combat zone. In addition to the 180 days, your deadline is also extended by the number of days that were left for you to file taxes when you entered a combat zone. If you entered the combat zone before the period of time you have to file taxes began (Jan. 1, 2003) your deadline is extended for the entire period of time you have to file taxes. For example, you would normally have three-and-a-half months (Jan. 1 - April 15) to file your 2002 tax return. The number of days you are deployed during tax time are added to the normal 180 days.

An example would be if Sgt. Smith entered the combat zone on Dec. 31, 2002. He then left the combat zone on May 1, 2003. SGT Smith's deadline would be Feb. 9, 2004. This deadline is 285 days (180 plus 105) after SGT Smith's last day in the combat zone (May 1, 2003). The 105 additional days are the number of days in the three-and-a-half month filing period that were left when he entered the combat zone (Jan. 1 - April 15). So, if he deployed on March 1, 2003, he would have 226 days (180 plus 46) after his last day in the combat zone, the 46 additional days being the number of days missed in the filing period (March 1-April 15).

While you can wait this amount of time, we encourage you to file soon after your redeployment. It would be a good idea to hold onto a copy of your orders if any problems arise from the IRS. Your spouse can also file your taxes for you as long as you have given them a power of attorney, or a statement signed by you authorizing that person to act on your behalf. A copy must be attached to the tax return. The legal assistance office can prepare affidavits for you to send to your spouse.

If you have any further questions you can stop by the legal assistance office located in Motel 6, or contact us by phone at 318-231-4603.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

2000 hrs. at the MWR building: "Sleepy Hollow," The classic story of "The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow" is brought to life by the gothic film maker Tim Burton. Johnny Depp plays Ichabod Crane, and to win the heart of Katrina Van Tassel (Christina Ricci) he will have to brave the nearby woods, even though several decapitated bodies have been found.

Tomorrow's movie will be "Seven."



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER REPORT:

	<i>Today</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>
Bagram:	<i>Partly cloudy</i> H: 48F L: 19F	<i>Haze</i> H: 43F L: 23F
Kandahar:	<i>Haze</i> H: 55F L: 28F	<i>Haze</i> H: 57F L: 32F
Kabul:	<i>Haze</i> H: 46F L: 21F	<i>Haze</i> H: 46F L: 21F
Uzbekistan:	<i>Fog</i> H: 39F L: 13F	<i>Fog</i> H: 40F L: 15F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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- CJTF-180 Commander — Lt. Gen. Dan McNeill
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- Public Affairs Officer — Col. Roger King
- Public Affairs Sergeant Major — Master Sgt. Kelly Tyler
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- Commander — Maj. William Mott
- NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Christina Bhatti
- Editor — Sgt. W. Cullen James
- Journalists — Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw, Pfc. Christina Carde

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To be added to the daily distribution list email william.james@us.army.mil



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)



Wake's Jason Anderson caught three passes for 157 yards and two TD.

Coker changing the rules of coaching

PHOENIX — Larry Coker is the worst thing to happen to coaches since talk radio.

In a profession whose role models have been autocrats and egoists, Coker deflects credit. In a sport in which coaches adapt all too well to the militaristic nature of the game, Coker refuses to wield an iron hand.

The coach as tyrant is a well-known figure, for the two or three of you who didn't see a commercial for The Junction Boys. Coker, after two seasons as head coach at Miami, is loved by his players and admired by his assistants. Leo Durocher couldn't have been more wrong about Coker. Nice guys no longer finish last. Coker has won the first 24 games of his head-coaching career, second only to Walter Camp's streak of 28 wins to start his career.

For coaches who have used their stature to win through intimidation, this is not good. They don't have to bully the media. They don't have to chain their assistants to their desks. The glower has been replaced by the smile.

"He's a really tremendous human being," said Miami athletic director Paul Dee, the man who promoted Coker in February 2001. "Nice family. Low-key. There are people who, it's about them. Not him. It's not about him."

It's not about him, even when he has done things no coach before him has ever done. "I think so much of it is that you can't take yourself too seriously," Coker said. "It doesn't take very long to be humbled. This has not been coaching reality for anybody. We never went in there saying, 'You know what? We're going to win all our games.' That's not reality. Being a little older, I appreciate it a little more. I've had people tell me how much I deserve this job. That's not true. There are plenty of people who deserve this job."

He paused a beat. "But they can't have it," he said.

Casteen wants 'unfounded stereotypes' to stop

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — West Virginia Gov. Bob Wise wants an apology from the University of Virginia after a halftime show by the school's pep band

2002 Bowl Championship Series

TEAM	TOTAL
1. Miami	2.93
2. Ohio State	3.97
3. Georgia	8.37
4. USC	10.51
5. Iowa	10.79
6. Washington St.	16.14
7. Oklahoma	16.79
8. Kansas State	20.13
9. Notre Dame	20.93
10. Texas	21.08
11. Michigan	23.91
12. Penn State	26.97
13. Colorado	33.27
14. Florida State	33.95
15. West Virginia	35.97



Music to Minnesota's ears ...

Arkansas quarterback Matt Jones is sacked by Minnesota's Mark Losli. Minnesota atoned for a season-ending four-game losing streak with a 29-14 victory over Arkansas on Monday. Kicker Dan Nystrom tied a school record with five field goals, becoming the Big Ten's all-time leading scorer in the process, and Asad Abdul-Khaliq threw for 222 yards.

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in the Tire Bowl lampooned West Virginia's rural image.

"This type of performance merely perpetuates the unfounded stereotypes that we in West Virginia are fighting so hard to overcome," Wise said Monday in a letter to Virginia president John T. Casteen. "The incident on Saturday was conduct unbecoming of the University of Virginia."

During the Cavaliers-Mountaineers matchup at Charlotte, N.C., Virginia's independent pep band staged a parody of "The Bachelor," with a male Virginia student choosing between two female contestants.

One female, purported to be from West Virginia, had blue overalls, pigtails, a talent for square dancing and a dream to move to Beverly Hills, Calif. — a reference to "The Beverly Hillbillies."

Virginia officials said they plan to address the issue Tuesday. A West Virginia spokesman said school president David C. Hardesty would wait for Virginia's statement before issuing his own.

Leonard Sandridge, Virginia's executive vice president and chief operating officer, declined to say what, if any, sanctions could be imposed on the pep band. In previous years, officials barred the band from marching at halftime of home games.

"I wouldn't rule out any possible outcome, as we look more carefully at what has occurred and the reactions," Sandridge said. "The performance of the band was perceived as offensive by a number of persons — Virginia fans as well as West Virginia fans. A performance that causes that kind of reaction is inappropriate."

Brooks gets job first offered to Parcells

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Rich Brooks had been out of football for nearly two years, so he started to think his coaching career was over.

Then the University of Kentucky called, and the 61-year-old Brooks was hired Monday as the Wildcats' new coach.

"Age is always a factor. I was very concerned. There were periods in the last six months to a year that I thought I wasn't going to get a shot at it," said Brooks, who signed a five-year contract worth \$725,000 a year.

Brooks, who previously coached Oregon and the St. Louis Rams, has been out of football since January 2001, when he resigned as the Atlanta Falcons' defensive coordinator.

When Guy Morriss left Kentucky for Baylor on Dec. 9, Kentucky athletic director Mitch Barnhart immediately called Brooks at his Springfield, Ore., home.

The two worked together at Oregon in the early 1980s.

Barnhart didn't offer Brooks a job, he was only seeking for advice.

"I didn't think I was at the top of his list. What I did was comment on the people he had," Brooks said.

"Basically, I expressed an interest and we proceeded from there," he added.

MacPherson's 3 TDs power Wake's rout

SEATTLE — For his last game at Wake Forest, James MacPherson was grateful that the game plan called for a bit more passing than usual.

MacPherson completed 9 of 16 passes for a season-high 241 yards and two touchdowns as the normally grounded Demon Deacons beat Oregon 38-17 on Monday in the Seattle Bowl.

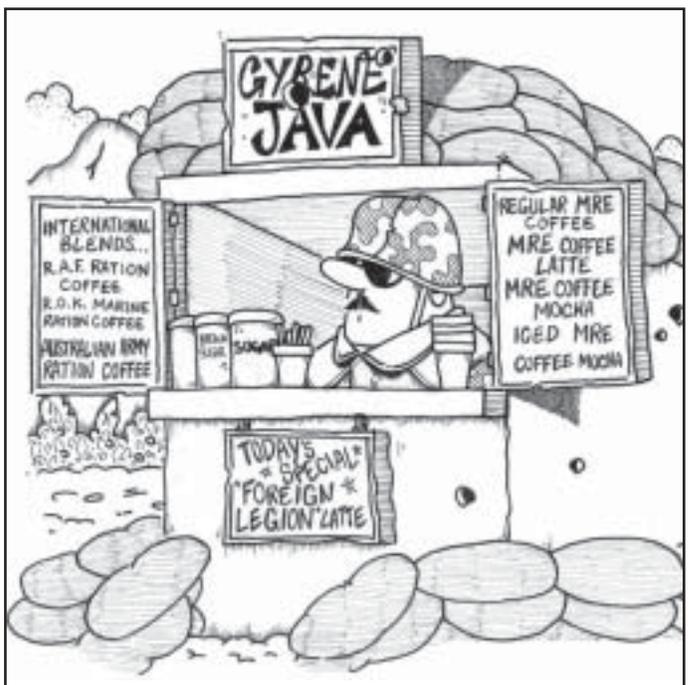
"Going into the game, I knew there were going to be opportunities to throw a couple of deep passes on them, and maybe score a few touchdowns," the senior said. "Luckily, we were able to do that."

MacPherson, who also ran for a score, hit Jason Anderson with TD passes of 57 and 63 yards as Wake Forest (7-6) finished with a winning record for the second straight year. The Deacons last had consecutive winning seasons in 1987-88.

"I couldn't ask for a better game to finish out my career here at Wake Forest," MacPherson said.



Samie Parker and Oregon couldn't get anything going against Wake Forest in Seattle.



kevin_kilgore@hotmail.com

By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support