

Marines FROM THE TRENCHES

In this edition, *Marines* highlights stories about Marines who push the envelope—in training, at work, for fun and to help others. Training with their Thai counterparts, Marines at Cobra Gold subdue deadly snakes. Marines with 1st Force Service Support Group move massive amounts of mail in Iraq. One Marine runs the Boston Marathon while deployed in Iraq. Another Marine coordinates a 229-mile run on the Appalachian Trail to raise funds for a small child battling cancer. In Okinawa, Marines compete for bragging rights as the “strongest man,” while others on island speed into the motocross club, Hard Corps MX. On the West Coast, a fallen pilot inspires a cross country trek in a Model T, and one Miramar unit controls the skyways.

Only the Strong Survive 'Strongmen' compete for championship

By Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte
CAMP HANSEN, Okinawa, Japan



▲ Daniel Campos grimaces in pain as he holds up two sand bags during the iron cross event. Campos won second place in the lightweight division of the Okinawa's Strongest Man competition. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

The Marines of Camp Hansen tested their mettle; each determined to prove he was the strongest during the first Okinawa's Strongest Man Competition at the Camp Hansen Recreation Sports Complex in April. “This is the first event of its kind and of this magnitude that has been held here,” the Dan Jordan, event coordinator and intern with Marine Corps Community Services, Camp Hansen. “I've researched different strongman competitions throughout the world to put together a contest made up of the more popular events. I wanted the kind of competition that would really pump up the crowd.”

The islandwide competition, open to everyone, attracted 16 participants and more than 200 spectators. The five events of the contest were the iron cross, the dumbbell carry, the humvee pull, the tire-flip and the joust. Competitors were divided into two categories, heavyweight-in excess of 200-pounds and lightweight-less than 200-pounds. There were no entries in the women's categories.

► Patrick Lynn, lightweight champion of the Okinawa's Strongest Man Competition, puts on a monstrous effort as he hauls a humvee down the pavement during the humvee pull event of the competition. Each competitor struggled their way through five events to prove who was the strongest.

Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

Patrick Lynn won the lightweight division. Daniel Bullock won the heavyweight division.

The first event was the iron cross, where participants held a sandbag in each hand, at arm's length and above their shoulders for as long as possible. Heavyweights held 20-pound sandbags and lightweights held 15-pound bags.

“There is no doubt in my mind about our strength,” Lynn said of himself and fellow competitor, Greg Lundberg. “We are going to take first and second in this competition.”

Lynn dominated the dumbbell carry. The event required each person to carry a weight in each hand for as far as they could, and the winner would be judged by distance. The heavyweights carried 150-pound dumbbells and the lightweights carried 125-pound dumbbells.

A scare came when one of the competitors, Daniel Campos, fell over backwards when trying to adjust the weight in his hands. Both weights landed squarely on his stomach. He was not injured, but said he was disappointed because he did not win the event.

Next was a timed event, the humvee pull. Competitors were strapped to a humvee and had to pull the vehicle 50 feet with the aid of a hand rope.

In the tire-flip, each challenger had to flip a truck tire as many times as they could in 60 seconds. Competition was tight as competitors were within a few flips of each other.

After a break, the final event, a joust, started.

The joust was a pugil stick match on top of a two-foot-wide, ten-foot-long beam. To win the match, each contender had to knock his opponent to one knee, off the beam or behind the red starting line on each end of the beam. The chal-



lengers with the fewest points started the event and had to joust everyone for any hope of winning the day. Those with more points went last and conserved their strength.

All finesse was thrown out the window as the matches disintegrated into a cross between pugil stick fighting and sumo wrestling. The competition became a simple shoving match with sticks, as each competitor would simply “bum-rush” his opponent in hopes of knocking him off the beam first.

Again, Lynn was a winner in the lightweight division.

The heavyweight match was another story, as the third place challenger

from behind to take the tournament. According to Daniel Bullock, the heavyweight champion, weight was a factor in the competition, but he knew he had the will to win.

“I had no doubt that I would win, because it all came down to the joust, and I am the chief instructor for the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program, Far East School,” Bullock said.

Win or lose, the competitors were happy with the contest, said Lynn.

“It was fun for all of us just to get out here and compare to other people,” Lynn said. “We all wanted to come and see how strong we really are and now we know.” M

“I wanted the kind of competition that would really pump up the crowd.”

Marine Makes Major Difference One Mile at a Time

By Staff Sgt. Thomas Arntz
APPALACHIAN TRAIL, Pa.



▲ After 65 hours traversing the Appalachian Trail, runners reach the Mason Dixon Line. Pictured are John Donovan, Army Capt. Lauris Trimble, Capt. Troy Pugh, Maj. Frank Donovan, Capt. JR Reiman, Mike Muffy, Capt. Chris O'Connor, Aurora O'Connor and Danielle Donovan.

A chance meeting between a Marine and a 2-year-old boy spawns the desire to overcome a seemingly insurmountable challenge all in the name of making a difference.

Maj. Frank L. Donovan, commanding officer of Recruiting Station Harrisburg, was leaving his hotel to visit to one of the recruiting substations under his command when he first saw the little boy with the patch over his eye.

"I met James Campbell and his family in a hotel lobby in Philadelphia. James, the same age as my 2-and-a-half-year old

son, had a patch over his eye. When I asked his mother what happened to him, she told me his eye had been removed that day as part of a cancer treatment," said Donovan as he recalled that first chance meeting. "I spent only a short time with James, his twin sister Amber Rose, his parents and grandmother, but I easily recognized the love and strength of this family."

Listening to more of James' story being told by his mother, Donovan found out for each of his treatments, James' family had to travel from South Carolina to Philadelphia at their own expense. A trip that was both emotionally and financially burdensome.

The strength and courage he saw in this little boy touched him emotionally, and inspired him to create a physical challenge in hopes of making a difference in the little boy's life, Donovan said. "I knew right then I wanted to somehow help this little boy and his family, I just didn't know quite just how."

From that chance meeting, an idea was born.

"During my tour in Pennsylvania, I have spent a good amount of time training on the 229 miles of the Appalachian Trail that runs through Southeastern Pennsylvania," said Donovan. "That is how I realized I could help that courageous little boy and his family. So combining my love for endurance events with my desire to raise funds for James, I organized the 'PA Traverse.'"

The mission—traverse 229 miles of the Appalachian Trail from where it

crosses the New Jersey and Pennsylvania state borders, known as Delaware Water Gap to hiking enthusiasts, all the way through Pennsylvania to PenMar, at the Maryland border.

The challenge was to complete the 229 miles of mountainous, rocky terrain in 72 hours or less.

The Appalachian Trail is a continuous marked footpath through the Appalachian Mountains that goes from Katahdin, Maine, to Springer Mountain, Ga., a distance of about 2,160 miles. White paint markers on trees or rocks blaze the trail at approximately 20 to 30 meter intervals. The trail's difficulty varies from flat open valley floors; steep rocky inclines to rocky mountaintops with occasional sheer drop-offs, making it a very challenging trail to hike and even more challenging to run.

The traverse began at the gap the afternoon of May 14 with the best weather the runners would see the entire time, cloudy skies with temperatures in the mid 60s. That weather did not last long, as rain soon blew in and stayed almost the entire length of the event.

The distance was divided up into smaller sections, ranging from three to 17 miles, wherever the trail was accessible from the roadway. During the daytime, one of the eight core members of the team would run a section of the trail,

while the other runners would drive to the next access point and wait for him there. Like a long-distance relay race, once a runner arrived at a stopping point, the next assigned runner would gear up and begin his section of the trail. At night, runners ran the trail in teams of two or three for safety reasons and to help navigate through the dark and rocky trail. Runners were equipped with a safety pack containing water, a first aid kit, a two-way radio and a cell phone to help maintain contact with the rest of the team.

With the core team of eight taking on most of the strenuous task of running the trail, temporary relief in the form of guest runners provided much needed rest for the weary travelers.

"Even though it rained almost the entire time and the temperatures remained low, guest runners continued to show up to add their fresh legs to the core group that covered the majority of the distance," Donovan said.

Come Saturday morning the team crossed the Susquehanna River and quickly traversed the Cumberland Valley west of Harrisburg. By the time the team entered the South Mountain Region, they were ahead of schedule and picking up more time because of better-marked trails and more forgiving terrain.

At the end of the round-the-clock jaunt, runners parked the transport vehi-

> Sleep deprivation was taking a toll, and restless runners waiting for their next section of trail started to think of ways to pass the time. John Donovan received a surprise welcome near the end of one of his sections of the trail by a teammate.



cles and completed the final three-mile section as a team. Tired but victorious, they crossed the Mason Dixon Line and the Maryland state border.

They accomplished the mission well ahead of schedule in only 65 hours.

Support of companies such as Petzl America, Gregory Packs and Equinox, whose donations provided the gear to sustain the runners along the trail, allowed all proceeds from the run itself to go to the Campbell family. A \$4,000 check, donations from more than 95 people, was mailed to the Campbells May 28, James' third birthday.

"The reason for maintaining both a good attitude and pace through the rain, cool weather and rocky trail was that we were running for James," Donovan said. "We accomplished the mission and covered all 229 miles in less than the planned 72 hours and proved that a few dedicated people can make a world of difference for one little boy—one mile at a time." M

< Planning and organizing the traverse proved to be the toughest part of the event. Coordinating each link point and determining who should run the various terrains and distances to get the best overall time was always an issue.



"A few dedicated people can make a world of difference for one little boy."

Fallen Pilot Inspires 'Model T' Trek

By Staff Sgt. Marc Ayalin
MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.



▲ Ashley Ford, 2, and her mother, Deon R. Ford, the widow of Capt. Travis A. Ford, a Marine killed in a helicopter crash during Operation Iraqi Freedom, pose in the 1912 Model T Ford that will travel cross country in his memory. Photo by Staff Sgt. Marc Ayalin

A century after Orville and Wilbur Wright made their indelible mark on American history by flying the first machine-powered aircraft in Kitty Hawk, N.C., two more brothers are making their impression on a local aviation squadron. They drove across the continent in the name of one of the squadron's fallen Marines to raise money to benefit children whose parents have died in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Twin brothers Ray J. and Roy W. Galdi visited with Marines from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267 May 17 before departing on a journey from California to New York City. The brothers' journey is to honor the memory of Capt. Travis A. Ford, an Ogallala, Neb., native and Camp Pendleton Marine killed in an AH-1W Super Cobra helicopter crash during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The brothers will attempt their 3,000-

mile trek in a refurbished 1912 Model T Ford. They'll stop in Dearborn, Mich., for the Ford Centennial Model T Tour.

Ford was chosen as the campaign's namesake largely because of his first initial and last name — T. Ford — a reference to the model and make of the brothers' vehicle of choice.

Deon R. Ford, Travis' widow, said she's glad her husband's name is associated with the fund-raiser.

"I think it's important for people to remember that freedom is not free," she said. "There are people who aren't returning home and children who are left behind who are dealing with the ultimate sacrifice for freedom."

"This is our way of helping out and paying respects to all the fallen service members who gave up their lives to protect our freedoms," Ray said. "We feel this is just some small way that we can show our appreciation and help these children who no longer have their dads."

HMLA-267 Marines took time out from a busy schedule to acknowledge the

brothers' effort.

"I'm hoping that a lot of people see this and know that there are people out there that are doing this just because it's a good thing to do," said 1st Lt. Kevin L. Rusch, the squadron's family readiness officer and an AH-1W Super Cobra pilot.

A national memorial fund account has been established and donations will be accepted at any U.S. Bank branch. Donations should be made in care of the T. Ford Memorial Fund.

For additional information on the "drive-a-thon," visit www.tfordmemorial.org. **M**

Air Traffic Controllers Police Miramar Skyways

By Cpl. Krystal N. Leach
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif.



▲ Lance Cpl. Juan P. Velazquez, radar supervisor, trains to be a flight data operator at Miramar's air traffic control tower.

Keeping track of the sky's highways is no easy task for the Marines of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar's air traffic control tower.

The group of Marines who man the 115-foot tower boast that their job leaves little to no room for human error.

"Everyday is an emergency for us," said Sgt. Colin E. Oliva, tower supervisor. "Everything we do is looked at through a magnifying glass—one mistake on our part could cost a life and we can't allow that to happen."

The Marines keep track of numerous fixed and rotary-wing aircraft housed by the 17 flying squadrons stationed here, in addition to other aircraft that fly within Miramar's airspace at any given time.

"We go to military occupational school for three months, and during that time we learn all the basics," Oliva said.

The learning doesn't end with school. For these Marines everyday is a training day.

"Every facility has different runways and aircraft," Oliva said. "Therefore, you have to qualify for each station's facility. The training is on-going through your entire time here."

Miramar includes two runways and can land just about every kind of aircraft, said Staff Sgt. Greg L. Guthrie, radar supervisor.

There are several different positions to be mastered during their time in the station's tower. The tower supervisor makes sure operation goes according to

plan and by rules and regulation. The north and south local control positions clear aircraft for take off and landing within Miramar's air space consisting of a 3,000 feet to five-mile radius. The flight data position assists local controllers and grants permission for aircraft to enter and land within the station's airspace. And the ground control position is responsible for talking to pilots while on ground and preparing for take-off.

Although the operation tempo has decreased since the squadrons' deployment overseas in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, the Marines of the Miramar's air traffic control tower are still hard at work, training around the clock, to ensure no life is lost on their watch. **M**

"One mistake on our part could cost a life and we can't allow that to happen."

Marines Take a Bite Out of Survival Training

By Cpl. Trevor M. Carlee
LADTRAWEND, Kingdom of Thailand



◀ Cpl. Justin Fiemann, with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, slowly places his index and middle fingers on the top of a Cobra's head before picking it up. This technique for Cobra catching was developed by Thai marines. The training prepares Marines to catch prey in the jungle—even deadly prey—for their meals. Photo by Cpl. Trevor M. Carlee

The training prepares Marines to catch prey in the jungle—even deadly prey—for their meals.

"Catching a Cobra is a very exhilarating experience," said Sgt. Robert Boyce, a team leader of B Company, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, and Big Piney, Wyo., native. "It's like flirting with disaster."

Boyce was one of many U.S. (and Thai) Marines to "play" with the snakes during the Jungle Survival Training May 18 as part of Exercise Cobra Gold 2003, a Joint-Combined land, sea and air operation between Thailand,

The seven-foot Cobra curled on the ground slowly rears his head and stares at the Marines encircling him. One Marine edges closer to the deadly snake, takes a knee and stares back. Carefully, patiently—fighting the urge to snatch his hand back from the poisonous fangs—the Marine hovers his hand above the snake's head. Two of his fingers make contact, and he slowly pushes the Cobra's head to the ground. Victorious, the Marine pinches the snake's neck and lifts it.

Singapore and the United States. The focus for this year's exercise was peace enforcement, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

Thai marines of Reconnaissance Battalion conducted the daylong training how to survive with next to nothing in the jungle. Classes included cooking, making fire, building traps, finding edible plants and bugs, catching snakes, and killing chickens.

"We're getting to understand real primitive ways to survive in the jungle,"

said U.S. Marine Maj. Thom Atkinson, commanding officer, E Company, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion.

The training not only taught the Marines jungle survival, it also helped to "bring together the Marines of Recon," said the Los Gatos, Calif., native.

It's great to get this training from the Thais because the U.S. Marines aren't trained in jungle survival like the Thais are, Atkinson said.

"The Thai marines are amazing instructors," he said. "They are really good people. They share everything and they do everything they can to accommodate us during this training. They change the way they live so we can come here and train with them. We received a very warm welcome."

Thailand was a big change for the Marines of 4th Recon Bn., Atkinson said. "My Marines and I are from Alaska where it's very mountainous and cold, so this is brand new terrain for us. However, Marines train in 'every clime and place' so we are capable of enhancing our skills in any climate."

In addition to training in new terrain, it is also a great experience to interact with Thai marines, said Boyce.

"The Thai marines are great and I think we're going to learn a lot from each other throughout this exercise," Boyce said. "Today alone, I've had a blast catching a Cobra, eating bugs—everything. This is great training and we're receiving really good knowledge that will help us survive in the future." **M**

Postal Marines Push Mountain of Mail to Deployed Troops

By Capt Alison L. Salerno
AD DIWANIYAH, Iraq



▲ Postal Marines from Combat Service Support Battalion 10, 1st Force Service Support Group, handle a mountain of mail headed to Marines and Sailors deployed throughout Iraq April 27. Photo by Cpl. Jeremy M. Vought

Think you had a lot of mail built up the last time you returned from a two-week vacation? Picture a similar situation for the Marines and sailors deployed to Iraq—but multiply the amount of mail by about 25,000. Laid out, the mail would fill a football field three feet deep and keep rising as more arrives.

The ten Marines of the Camp Edson postal section in Ad Diwaniyah coordinated the delivery of more than 115 20-foot containers of mail during the last weeks of April in a massive effort to get packages and letters to the nearly 25,000 Marines of 1st Marine Division and 1st Force Service Support Group scattered throughout Iraq.

Postal Marines and working parties from units in the area worked 20 to 24 hours a day just to keep up with the volume of mail arriving in containers from Kuwait.

Packages were difficult to deliver during combat operations in Iraq, because of constant movement of forces on the ground, says Lt. Col. Tony Poletti, deputy services officer for the 1st FFSG. "In order to set up a supply area in a forward operating area where we can break down mail, the ground combat forces have to first secure the location."

Then came the task of getting the

transportation to move the mail. "During the war, the priority of 'lift' was focused on food, water, fuel and ammunition going to forward units, not on package mail," said Poletti.

Letters sent to forward deployed troops, being lighter and easier to fit in smaller spaces on both ground and air transportation, were transported forward steadily throughout the war. But it still took a lot of coordination to get it to ground combat units in a timely fashion.

The upswing of the "postal push" began April 21 soon after Marines established Camp Edson. Postal Marines then handled more than 147,000 cubic feet of mail, averaging about five to eight containers a day depending on the contents of the container.

Compounding the difficulty of delivering mail, the Marines have no automated label readers, conveyor belts and little heavy machinery to assist them. Most of the mail is handled the old-fashioned way—addresses are manually read and Marines unload and re-load using the human chain method.

Camp Edson is a prime location for coordinating the delivery of the mail build up. It's central to the current locations of many 1st Marine Division units. Some of these units haven't seen the delivery of large package mail since two days before the ground war started, when

division commanders asked the 1st FSSG to stop delivery.

The camp, located aboard Al Qadisiyah University campus in Ad Diwaniyah, provided existing buildings for work-space. The building the postal Marines used was the former main library of the university campus. Although the building was damaged and slightly burned by looters in early April, it presented a larger

space than the tents they used at previous field locations.

The postal Marines don't have to beg for volunteers from the units they support.

"Everyone's willing to help out," said Staff Sgt. Mack Reed, postal chief at Combat Service Support Battalion 10, a native of Savannah, Ga. "The units realize how much mail we're dealing with here, and everyone wants to speed up the process of getting their mail."

Once the mail containers arrive at Camp Edson, postal Marines and working parties unload every container, and separate the bright orange bags of mail into separated piles for various units to collect. When the units arrive to pick it up, the Marines haul the bags into waiting transportation.

The postal Marines of CSSB-10 won't be heading south right away, even as U.S. Central Command begins to authorize many Marine units to move back to Kuwait, in preparation for redeployment back to the United States. They will stay in Iraq for a while longer. Their mission will be to make sure Marines and Sailors of the 1st Marine Division involved with security and stability operations in southern Iraqi cities continue to receive the mail sent by their loved ones.

"We'll continue to support the division until the end," Reed said. **M**

"Catching a Cobra is a very exhilarating experience. It's like flirting with disaster."

Okinawan Motocross Marines Foster Civic Responsibility on the Fast Track

By Cpl. Michael D. Darbouze
CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa, Japan



▲ Rob Fox, a member of Hard Corps MX, jumps over a hill during one of his many practice runs. Eight motocross enthusiasts started Hard Corps MX, the first and only American motocross team in Okinawa, Japan.

Courtesy photo

The legal speed limit on Okinawan freeways is less than 50 mph—a sore spot for many service members stationed on the tiny Japanese island. But on the dirt track it's another story.

To satisfy their need for speed, without breaking laws and risking the name “ugly Americans,” an eight-man group of Marines led by team captain Gunnery Sgt. Anthony W. Erwin, formed a motocross club known as Hard Corps MX.

Hard Corps MX, the first and only American motocross team in Okinawa, is open to all Status of Forces Agreement members ages 6 and up of all experience levels.

Though they get their thrills speeding around the track, Erwin said the group was put together for another reason.

“We aren't exactly concerned with who rides the fastest time,” said the 20-year motocross rider. “The goal of the team is to improve skills, enhance performance and develop members into more competitive riders. The most important thing is to learn from each other and pass our knowledge on to our kids. When new members join, we are looking more at (their) attitude than (their) performance.”

What started as eight friends riding together has grown into a 31-man organization. Erwin said he wants to see the group continue to grow.

The group is a close-knit family and hopes to have an impact on the community, said Gunnery Sgt. Robby G. Fox, assistant captain, Hard Corps MX, and one of the original eight. “We want to promote a positive image of ourselves to the younger generations and the local nationals.”

“When we are finished with practices we police the tracks that we used,” Erwin said. “We go around and pick up trash and make sure the track is safe for other riders that come out to ride.”

The team practices every week and those who feel comfortable enough can compete in one of the island's many motocross competitions, Fox said. The team takes full advantage of all motocross events on the island and members can get their fair share of competing if they chose.

“Our hopes are that all future motocross enthusiasts who arrive on island can join in the excitement and fun from the most extreme sport available on Okinawa,” Fox said. **M**

When Capt. Steve Hahn applied for entrance into the 2003 Boston Marathon, he had no idea he would be miles away, deployed to a small town in the southern desert of Iraq, working to help rebuild a country. Indeed, when April 21 came around, it appeared Hahn's hopes of running the legendary marathon had come to an end. But after some personal deliberation, he decided that if he couldn't run Boston's marathon, he would run his own.

“To simplify it, I didn't want Saddam to get the best of me,” Hahn said. “It was his fault that I had to miss my first Boston Marathon. Saddam had already lost his big battle—I wasn't going to let him win this one.”

Hahn did a little math and measured out a 5.8-kilometer track. Seven and one quarter times around would put him roughly at the marathon length of 26.2 miles. However, measuring the course was only the first step to preparing for his run, Hahn said. Running a distance of this magnitude requires a little more than “just do it.”

“I had been running on a pretty regular basis, doing work-ups for the real deal,” he said. “But because of the work load here, I just haven't had the time to train the right way, doing my carbohydrate loads and my training runs.”

At 110 degrees on an April afternoon, training for a marathon is a difficult endeavor, Hahn said. Prime running conditions are early morning and evening, when the sun is but a sliver in the sky and the desert winds race across the sand to cool the brow. Fortunately for Hahn, his marathon would begin shortly after the sun slipped below the western horizon.

At 8:30 p.m., a simultaneous start time with the Boston Marathon, Hahn began his own run, the first unofficial marathon run in a “free Iraq.”

Mile after mile, Hahn's feet pounded the asphalt, running a race pitting man versus himself — or so he thought. As he began his race, an SUV with a flashing blue light pulled up behind him to ensure his safety throughout the run. On his fourth lap, as miles started to wear on his

Boston Marathon – Marine Style

Marine runs course despite deployment to Iraq

By Sgt. Jacques-René Hébert
UMM QASR, Iraq



▲ Fellow Marines lend some motivational support to Capt. Steve Hahn as he runs his very own “Boston Marathon” in Umm Qasr, Iraq, April 21.

Photo by Sgt. Jacques-René Hébert

body, his fellow Marines joined him to give him some extra motivation to complete his marathon mission.

“The intangibles in a marathon that help you get through it — the excitement of the crowd, the intensity of the other runners — all the things missing from this run, were more than compensated by my fellow Marines, some of (whom) I had known for less than a week, running with me and standing by to help me out with water and emotional support,” he said. “What I thought would be a long, painful run really turned into a motivating experience I'll never forget. The only difference is that there's no t-shirt at the end of this race”

Hahn finished his “Boston Marathon” in roughly three and a half hours. He said later that his goal wasn't to run the fastest marathon he could, since the next day, he had to return to work, business as usual.

Hahn, a Marine since 1996, said his marathon pales in comparison to the efforts of U.S. and coalition forces in bat-

tle, and the sacrifices the Iraqi people have made. But his fellow service members believe he is a credit to his service and his country. “The determination Steve displayed in running the Umm Qasr, Iraq version of the Boston Marathon is the very determination we need to rebuild this country,” said retired Army Brig. Gen. Buck Walters, director of ORHA South.

As for Hahn, he is excited about the possibility of going home soon, though he values his experiences in the desert of Iraq.

“We all want this to be over so we can get on with our lives. Though I'm still out here doing my job, I decided that running this race anyway would be my first step in getting on with my own life” he said. **M**

“I didn't want Saddam to get the best of me.”