

Teams help troops send smiles home

SAN ANTONIO — Army Sgt. 1st Class **Peter Rimar** tried to catch at least a few hours' sleep on the C-130 Hercules transport before hitting the ground at the next destination. As soon as his desert boots hit the dusty tarmac of his 20th base, he knew he had his work cut out for him. The public affairs office told him they had about 400 excited people waiting. Luckily, he was not alone.

No, Rimar isn't part of a USO Tour, but as a member of the Army and Air Force Hometown News Service's Southwest Asia Holiday Greetings Team, he's often viewed as a morale booster in his own right.

Three teams of Army and Air Force broadcasters set out in early September from San Antonio for a whirlwind tour of 75 military installations in 12 countries, including eight forward-deployed locations supporting Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The teams' goal — to capture as many holiday greetings from their fellow troops as possible in less than six weeks. Teams made stops in Europe, the Pacific and Southwest Asia, and, in 45 days, the group recorded more than 13,000 greetings.

"The greetings give soldiers, airmen, sailors and Marines an opportunity to get a message back home," Rimar said. "But this is for families, too. It lets them know where their sons and daughters are. To see them during the holiday season means a lot to them."

For families to see their loved ones' messages from afar means the Hometown Greetings teams' job isn't over once they return home.

In mid-October, work began on editing the 13,000 15- to 30-second greetings. This effort required around-the-clock hours over the course of another five weeks.

by Tech. Sgt. Charlein Sheets



Tech. Sgt. Emmett Tibbs, 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, waits for his cue from Army Sgt. 1st Class Jamie Posten during a hometown greeting at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq. During the four days at Kirkuk, the Army and Air Force Hometown News Team taped more than 400 greetings.

by Master Sgt. Robert R. Hargreaves Jr.



Helping a country

SWABE, Iraq — Senior Master Sgt. **Tommie Tracey** treats an infant's bedsores during a medical and humanitarian assistance mission in Iraq. Tracey deployed with the 101st Expeditionary Rescue Squadron from the Air National Guard's 122nd Medical Group in Fort Wayne, Ind. The three-member medical team helped treat more than 60 Iraqi citizens. Although most patients had common ailments, some had chronic illnesses like cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy.

For 20 years, Hometown News has recorded holiday greetings from service members deployed or stationed overseas. The greetings are broadcast on more than 1,100 television and 1,400 radio stations nationwide. The greetings also appear on programs such as "Good Morning America" and "The NFL on CBS."

"It's definitely a team effort when it comes to producing these holiday greetings for families," said **Tom Taylor**, the service's chief of broadcast news. "The folks here work long hours to get these messages out to the media outlets."

— Capt. Christine L. Kunz

Record review available online

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas — Airmen can now complete record reviews online through the virtual military personnel flight.

Airmen will receive annual e-mail notifications near their birth dates advising them to review electronic records maintained in the military personnel data system.

After logging on to the system and reviewing the records, airmen should print a copy for their files, said Master Sgt. **Don Taylor**, superintendent of customer support operations at the Air Force Personnel Center. If the information is correct, no further action is required until the next annual review.

Errors should be corrected as soon as they're discovered. Some errors, not yet updateable online, must be corrected by the local military personnel flight or commander's support staff.