

Sirs, Ma'am

April – October

2007 I was lucky enough to be part of a team deployed in Kuwait for the recreation of British troops for a 3 – 4 day stand down period during their tour.

I was stationed in the American base called Camp Arifjan which is an Army installation located in the State of Kuwait which accommodates elements of the US Air Force, US Navy, US Marine Corps and US Coast Guard. The camp was funded and built by the government of Kuwait. Military personnel from Australia, Romania, Poland and of course the United Kingdom were also forward deployed there. Camp Arifjan is located south of Kuwait City, and west of the Shuaiba Port (Military Sea Port of Debarkation/Embarkation, or SPOD) and Kuwait Naval Base (KNB). It was divided into 7 zones with the British compound located in zone 7.

The compound was basically designed around a sand volleyball court with accommodation in the form of porta cabins surrounding it. Each cabin was split into 3 rooms with each room comprising of 2 bunk beds, wardrobes and a TV/DVD combi. The idea being that British troops serving on the front line could get away from their operational environment for 3 – 4 days, take off their body armor, put on civilian clothes and just relax. Whilst on their stand down time there were opportunities to sign out one of 6 minibuses or three 4x4 jeeps and take trips into Kuwait to visit local attractions such as water parks etc. We also set up cheap hotel package deals with hotels such as the Hilton so the troops could get a bit of comfort etc, some even flew over wives and girlfriends.

Feed back from the troops during my time out there indicated that this was invaluable. To be plucked out of a potential threatening environment and be able to get back to some kind of normality even if it was only for 3 – 4 days was as good as a 2 week holiday according to some. They were able to get good nights sleep, sample the delights of the American cook houses, visit the two PX's, even go to the on camp cinema and enjoy the weekly entertainment in the outdoor arena, as well as treat themselves to the various eating houses such as Kentucky, burger houses and even a chinese. It truly was a fantastic experience and one that should not be underestimated. It was also used on several occasions for de-compression post tours which had many benefits.

It was a great honor to be one of the Staff out there and I felt we really made a difference to easing the stresses and strains of individual tours.

Hope this is of some benefit.