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13th ESC Release #

Gamers raise awareness of suicide prevention

By Capt. Murray Shugars

2/198th Combined Arms Battalion

SUSTAINMENT OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Soldiers brought awareness to suicide and suicide prevention by participating in an evening of video game play at the outdoor theater here September 4.

Sponsored by the Q-West Moral, Welfare, and Recreation Directorate, the event brought together four teams of doubles, the winning team receiving a \$25 gift certificate donated by AAFES.

“We believe that such group activities reduce the conditions that lead to suicide by bringing Soldiers together with fun activities,” said Maj. John B. Herd, MWR director, 2/198th Combined Arms, 16th Sustainment Brigade, a Florence, Miss., native.

Herd also served as master-of-ceremonies for this event.

Four two-person teams, two for an undercard and two for a main event, battled against the computer in the Xbox 360's Gears of War 2 game, a popular third-person shooter in which a player's animated character appears on screen.

The winners of the undercard team were Sgt. 1st Class Adam V. Shaw of Garden Grove, Calif., public affairs chief, and Spec. Kammal J. Peterson, brigade personnel specialist, both of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Sustainment Brigade, headquartered in Bamberg, Germany. The main event winners were Spec. Daktaryai D. Fox of Kuscusko, Miss., and Spec. Kelby Cheney of Vancouver, Wash., day and night radio operator for the Base Defense Operations Center, respectively, 2-198th CAB, headquartered in Senatobia, Miss.

The contestants unanimously agreed that such games improve moral.

"Video games relieve stress, and they're a great way to spend free time with friends," said Fox.

"Before this deployment, I really didn't play video games that much, but when my friends and I started playing this game with networked computers, we could all be in our own room, talking to each other through the head set," said Shaw, whose unit is nearing the end of a 15-month deployment. "It basically turned into people talking smack every day, even at work. It was just so much fun to talk about how we killed each other the night before."

The event was the brainchild of Command Sgt. Maj. Perry Campbell, 2-198th CAB, Mississippi National Guard.

“Recently, I was listening to some Soldiers bragging about how good they were at this game, so I got with the MWR director and urged him to have a competition. We need to encourage any uplifting activity that brings Soldiers together for good fellowship, whether it’s a video game or sports competition or some other group activity,” said Campbell, a native of Senatobia, Miss.

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SUSTAINMENT OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Soldiers compete in a video game competition at the outdoor theater at Contingency Operating Base Q-West to bring awareness to suicide and suicide prevention September 4. Sponsored by the Q-West Moral, Welfare, and Recreation Directorate, the event brought together four teams of doubles, the winning team receiving a \$25 gift certificate donated by AAFES. (Photo by Capt. Murray Shugars)