

# Sports

*America Supports You:*

## WWE's 'Mouth of South' meets G.I. Joe

**JOHN J. KRUZEL**

*American Forces Press Service*

WASHINGTON – While stage crews prepared for a wrestling match at the Verizon Center here Dec. 18, promoter Jimmy “The Mouth of the South” Hart replaced his signature Ray-Ban sunglasses with reading glasses to dial his son’s phone number at Fort Dix, N.J.

Hart told his son he was among the World Wrestling Entertainment stars about to meet and greet U.S. servicemembers at a pre-event reception. Hart’s son, Army Reserve Spc. Jimmy Hart, Jr., 486th Civil Affairs Battalion, will soon deploy to Iraq for his second tour.

WWE invited 30 wounded servicemembers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center to the reception and to the Monday Night Raw event. WWE is a member of the Defense Department’s America Supports You program, which highlights the public’s support for the nation’s troops and their families.

WWE has visited troops in Iraq four consecutive years, and this month they delivered the 2.6 millionth letter from Shauna Fleming’s “A Million Thanks” effort to deliver a letter to each servicemember in Iraq. On Christmas day, WWE will air a Tribute to the Troops filmed Dec. 8 in Baghdad.

Hart, who visited Kuwait in August, said being invited to entertain U.S. troops ranks at the top of his list of career milestones along with performing at Madison Square Garden and being inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame.

“It was thrilling,” Hart said. “It felt like I was in the service myself. It was sweaty, my bouffant hair style was porcupining up and collapsing on one side. But I kept all the memorabilia, all the (military)

coins. It was just awesome.”

Hart called pro wrestling, with its outrageous costumes, feigned emotions and trash-talking personas, “the longest-running soap opera.” The on-stage performance may be just an act, but off stage, the wrestlers’ appreciation for the troops’ performance is very real.

“I jump around in tights for a living; I’m not changing the world,” pro wrestler Edge said about his recent meeting with U.S. servicemembers in Iraq. “But at least we changed servicemembers’ mood for the day.” “I think a lot of time people take for granted the luxuries we have here” Edge said, “and that’s what they’re fighting for.”

WWE Diva Victoria said her father served in the Air Force during her childhood. “It’s really a good feeling to give back to the military because they do so much for us,” she said. “Every time I step on a military base it’s like I’m at home.”

Bringing servicemembers and their families together with the pro wrestling entertainers they look up to is a great way to boost troop morale, said Maryland National Guard Pfc. Christopher Long.

“As you can see, I’m a hardcore wrestling fan,” said Long, donning a custom-made wrestling jersey and a replica gold-plated pro wrestling belt over his shoulder. “I appreciate that they gave us the opportunity to see (the wrestlers) today.”

For many veterans, the chance to meet the entertainers they’ve followed for years was an important break from reality.

“It’s a relief of stress,” said Army Spc. Martin Jackson, 1st Armored Division, who has watched wrestling since age seven. “It feels good to let us know that people care about the job we’ve done.”



**U.S. Army Pfc. Christopher Long, left, hefts a heavy weight belt as Jimmy “Mouth of the South” Hart poses with him for a photo. Long was one of 30 patients from Walter Reed Army Medical Center invited by the World Wrestling Entertainment to attend the Monday Night Raw held in Washington Dec. 18.**



**Marines Cpl. Patrick Murray (left) and Sgt. Jesse Diaz hoist the U.S. Marine Corps flag during the World Wrestling Entertainment Monday Night Raw event in Washington Dec. 18. Murray and Diaz were two of the 30 servicemembers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center invited to attend the event.**

### Joe Hall Basketball Tournament

Lackland AFB, Texas Dec. 9 and 10  
Tournament Results

1.	AFA Prep	4-0
2.	Fort Bliss	3-2
3.	Lackland	3-2
4.	Barksdale	2-2
5.	Luke	1-2
5.	Davis Monthan	1-2
7.	Brooks	0-2
7.	Fort Sam Houston	0-2
<b>Game</b>		
14.	AFA Prep.....	88
	Fort Bliss.....	67
13.	Fort Bliss.....	124
	Lackland.....	119 4 Overtimes
12.	Lackland.....	75
	Barksdale.....	73
11.	AFA Prep.....	94
	Fort Bliss.....	71
10.	Lackland.....	71
	Luke.....	60
9.	Barksdale.....	82
	Davis Monthan.....	68
8.	AFA Prep.....	87
	Barksdale.....	86
7.	Fort Bliss.....	106
	Lackland.....	102 1 Overtime
6.	Luke.....	77
	Fort Sam.....	72
5.	Davis Monthan.....	64
	Brooks.....	60
4.	Barksdale.....	74
	Luke.....	57
3.	Fort Bliss.....	98
	Brooks.....	69
2.	AFA Prep.....	106
	Fort Sam.....	68
1.	Lackland.....	70
	Davis Monthan.....	59