

F-16s support troops, Page 8



Photo by Staff Sgt. Brett B. McMillan

Tennessee National Guardsmen Sgt. Brad Slagle and Cpl. Tim Parsons pull security from the site of a car bomb explosion and suicide bombing shortly before 9 a.m. July 14 near a checkpoint of the International Zone, Baghdad, and an Iraqi police station.

Suicide bomber captured, attack thwarted

By Scimitar staff

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Security Forces and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers wounded and captured a suicide bomber before he could blow himself up near a Coalition checkpoint in central Baghdad.

“The actions of the Iraqi Police on the scene prevented an act of terrorism in Baghdad today along with the deaths of innocent Iraqi people,” said Col. Ed Cardon, 4th Brigade Combat Team commander following the attack.

U.S. military officials said two bombers with explosives

vests initially were spotted in front of the car that exploded, then they began walking toward the Iraqi police and Iraqi Army Soldiers who were responding to the car bomb. Officials said they suspect the two bombers might have been targeting the first responders to the car-bomb attack.

An Iraqi Soldier shot one suicide bomber, and, as the bomber fell to the ground, his explosives detonated.

Shrapnel from that explosion wounded the second suicide bomber.

“The [Iraqi] Soldiers were about to pick him up and treat him like one of the wounded but then they noticed that he was wearing a suicide vest,” said Maj. Alayne Conway, 4th

Brigade Combat Team spokesperson.

That bomber was then shot by the Iraqi police and put in the back of a nearby pick-up truck until an Iraqi explosive ordnance detonation team could arrive to disarm the vest, rendering the area safe and preventing further casualties.

“The Iraqi EOD Soldier was the real hero of the day as he approached the wounded suicide bomber and disarmed the vest,” Conway said.

The vest was eventually turned over to Coalition Forces as part of their investigation.

See *ATTACK*, Page 2

Inside

**What are you worth?
Honor amidst horrors of war** Page 3

**‘ER’ of the skies
saving lives** Page 9

**Army, Marine air delivery specialists
resupply troops on ground** Page 10

Attack

from Page 1

The wounded bomber, paralyzed by bomb shrapnel and gunfire, was taken to the 86th Combat Support Hospital here, where he remains in critical condition.

"This attack, which included three suicide missions, concentrated on a single target, failed in every way because of discipline and superb execution under fire by vigilant Iraqi Security Forces," remarked Air Force Brig. Gen. C. Donald Alston, the director of strategic communications, Multi-National Force - Iraq. "Casualties were minimized because they performed their critical job so well. We admire their courage and offer our congratulations for a job well done."

Four local Iraqi citizens were also wounded in the terrorist attack and evacuated to a local hospital.

"Once again, improved security measures are working. The Iraqi police and Iraqi EOD team performed their jobs well. These suicide bombers failed in their mission while the police succeeded in theirs," said Cardon. "I am in awe of the bravery of the Iraqi EOD specialist that disarmed the vest on the wounded suicide bomber at great risk to his own life.

"These suicide attacks are acts of terrorism that show wanton disregard for the Iraqi people and the forces that are working to improve security," Cardon said.

However, not all attacks are being prevented. A Task Force Baghdad Soldier was killed July 13 from wounds sustained during a car-bomb attack at 10:50 a.m. in east Baghdad.

At least seven Iraqi children died in the explosion. Multiple Iraqi civilians and three other U.S. Soldiers were wounded in the attack, which also set a nearby house on fire.

Iraqi police and firefighters responded to the blaze and immediately began evacuating the wounded to nearby hospitals. At least two critically wounded children were evacuated by U.S. forces to a U.S. Army hospital.

The Task Force Baghdad unit on the site reported that the vehicle, laden with explosives, drove up to a Humvee before detonating. Many Iraqi civilians, mostly children, were around the Humvee at the time of the blast.

"The car bomber made a deliberate decision to attack one of our vehicles as the Soldiers were engaged in a peaceful operation with Iraqi citizens," said Maj. Russ Goemaere, Task Force

Baghdad spokesperson. "The terrorist undoubtedly saw the children around the Humvee as he attacked. The complete disregard for civilian life in this attack is absolutely abhorrent. It is the responsibility of all Iraqi people to turn against the terrorists and protect their children, the Iraqi Security Forces and our Soldiers from this type of action."

"The terrorists are attacking the infrastructure, the children and all of Iraq," said one Iraqi man who preferred not to be identified. "They are enemies of humanity without religion or any sort of ethics. They have attacked my community today, and I will now take the fight to the terrorists."

Terrorists' wanton disregard for the Iraqi people continued Saturday evening as a suicide bomber detonated his explosive vest next to a propane fuel tanker near a gas station, setting off a massive explosion killing dozens and wounding as many as 100 more. (Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs contributed to this article.)



A U.S. Soldier along with Iraqi policemen look over what's left of the vehicle used as a bomb in a failed attack on an International Zone checkpoint July 14. Iraqi Security Forces fired upon the vehicle and caused its detonation before it could reach its target.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Brett B. McMillan
An Iraqi explosive ordnance disposal specialist takes apart the explosive vest worn by the wounded suicide bomber after his failed attack July 14 near an Iraqi Police station and a checkpoint to the International Zone.



Stop and Think!
IEDs are deadly killers.
Conduct 5 and 25 meter checks around your position.

0001 IEDs KILL

OPERATIONAL SECURITY
OPSEC

Keep cell phone and e-mail comms free of sensitive information

You don't know who's listening!

Soldiers charged with assaulting suspected insurgents in Baghdad

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — U.S. military officials in Baghdad, Iraq, announced Saturday they have charged 11 soldiers with assaulting suspected terrorists. The soldiers were charged July 13, Multi-National Force - Iraq officials said in a statement.

The charges are related to a report by a Task Force Baghdad soldier that other soldiers had allegedly assaulted suspected terrorists. The Army's Criminal Investigation Division immediately began an investigation into the incident, officials said.

Few details of the alleged assault are available. Officials said specifics couldn't be released until the cases have been resolved. However, they said none of the suspected insurgents required medical treatment after the alleged assault, and only one remains in custody.

"All Task Force Baghdad soldiers are expected to act appropriately and to treat all persons under their control with dignity and respect. Allegations of illegal activities will always be thoroughly investigated," said Army Lt. Col. Clifford Kent, a Task Force Baghdad spokesman. "The unit involved has been pulled 'off-line' to complete the inquiry and retraining."

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>MNF-I Commanding General Gen. George Casey</p> <p>MNF-I PAO Col. Dewey G. Ford</p> <p>Command Information Chief Maj. Patricia C. Anderson <i>patricia.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> <p>Command Information NCOIC Master Sgt. Michele R. Hammonds <i>michele.hammonds@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> |  | <p>Editor.....Staff Sgt. Brett B. McMillan <i>brett.mcmillan@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> <p>Assistant Editor.....Sgt. Misha King <i>misha.king@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> <p>Staff.....Staff Sgt. Timothy B. Lawn <i>timothy.lawn@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> <p>Staff.....Sgt. W. Watson Martin <i>william.martin@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> <p>Staff.....Spc. Ferdinand Thomas <i>ferdinand.thomas@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> | <p>Scimitar welcomes columns, commentaries, articles and letters from readers. Send submissions to <i>scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil</i></p> <p>We reserve the right to edit for propriety, clarity and space.</p> <p>The Scimitar can also be viewed on the Web at http://www.mnf-iraq.com/publications_theater.htm</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

The Scimitar is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of this paper are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government or Department of Defense. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office of the Multi-National Force - Iraq. Stars and Stripes newspaper is not affiliated with MNF-I and acts only as a distributing source for the Scimitar. Questions and comments should be directed to the editor at *scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil*.

PERSPECTIVES

What are you worth?

Remaining warriors of honor amidst horrors of war

By Staff Sgt. David Green
Combined Press Information Center

“What man is a man that doesn’t make the world better?” This line from Ridley Scott’s new movie “Kingdom of Heaven” struck a deep chord in me. Ignoring the gender-specific language, it poses a profound question. What human is a human that doesn’t make the world better? Do people who commit an evil act sell their soul? Do they cease to be that unique thing that makes them human? The moral of the movie is, of course, yes. The only way to truly achieve heaven is in through moral action. In the movie, the hero never wavers from his moral path, and in the end you are led to believe that he finds heaven in his heart and soul.

So why does any of this deserve space in these pages? Because here in Iraq, military and civilian alike are confronted with choices daily. These choices end in one of two results: either you follow the moral compass of a heroic warrior, or you slip into the utter depravity of inhumanity. Nearly all make the heroic choice, but some do lose themselves and turn in the opposite direction.

But can you really blame someone surrounded daily by violence and war, one who has lost friends, seen children die and women weep, for slowly and unintentionally letting his humanity slip away? Blame would be the wrong word. Do you blame a dead man for being dead? No. But when you watch a man slowly dying and do nothing to save him, have you made the world a better place? What man is a man?

There is a war that rages within each of us every day here. It is a war to do what is right, when the collective anger at those that destroy life and respect nothing wells up inside. You see, I firmly believe that this war can’t be won with bullets alone. This is a war of ideas just as much as one of metal. Our grandparents fought an ideology called fascism by attacking the institutions that created it. Our parents fought communism by attacking the ideas at its core.

Our war is different. It must be fought on the battlefields of the earth and the limitless bounds of the mind. This is the charge of our generation. Fortunately, the generations preceding us prepared us well, but this is not to say we could not still lose.

This is a war for the very thing that makes us what we are. Our enemies use the most inhuman tactics known to man. Beheadings, suicide bombings, hostage taking and the mass murder of innocents are the standard M.O. for these people. They have lost their sense of humanity. In a way, it is easy for them to commit suicide bombings, because they are often

devoid of humanity, and therefore already dead inside long before their vest detonates. But we must learn a lesson from these people so that we never follow in their example. After all, what man is a man?

Prisoner abuse, sexual assault and murder are but a few of the things for which service members in Iraq have been convicted since the war started over two years ago. They are the exception to the rule, but they happened nonetheless. All of these things were crimes against human beings. Every step of the way leading up to the incident, there was a series of choices to be made, and ultimately they choose wrong. But their

“There are bound to be times when the temptation to punish others for the wrongs in the world reaches out and begs us to commit just one small act of inhumanity as payback to all the suffering and injustice we’ve witnessed.”

Staff Sgt. David Green

actions go beyond wounding individuals and embarrassing the military and their fellow troops. They took a step in the wrong direction, and as a result, scored a victory for the enemy, albeit an ideological one.

Every service has some form of code for honor. These are great first steps, but as the saying goes, “you can lead a horse to water ...” These codes exist for the same reason we wear helmets and vests — they exist to protect us. Whereas the helmet protects our head, the codes of conduct and values statements of each service protect our hearts. They were written by those that had been into the breach and seen the worst that war could make of men, to ensure that soldiers came back from battle intact, both mentally and physically.

But no man is perfect. There are bound to be times when the temptation to punish others for the wrongs in the world reaches out and begs us to commit just one small act of inhumanity as payback to all the suffering and injustice we’ve witnessed. There are times when we want to force those in our charge to atone for fallen comrades by delving ever so slightly into the nether regions of our souls. But these are battles like any other. These moments are just as dangerous as any bullet, for you risk losing your life just as easily as were you to get shot.

Just as you must look out for your brothers and sisters in arms on the physical battlefield, it is an inherent duty to watch out for your fellow soldiers when it appears that events may be teetering on the inhuman. Everyone must be on the lookout every day, because when we give over to the darker side of the human spirit, we don’t just lose the moral battle to the enemy — we join them.

Our enemy wishes to tear down the world that so many worked so hard to build and replace it with one that, by all accounts of those that lived under it, represented a type of hell. We have the will to win, but we must be on guard that we don’t defeat ourselves. What man is a man? What human is a human? Together we can build on the world that was left to us by generations past, but we must all be careful that our work doesn’t give way to evil and our sacrifices go for naught.

Scimitar Pulse

How do you maintain your humanity while dealing with the violence involved with Operation Iraqi Freedom?

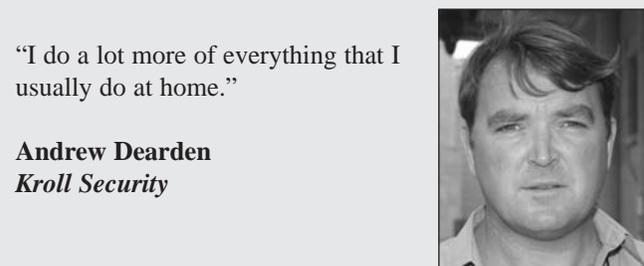
“Lately I have been reading a lot more.”

Andrea Phagan
KBR



“I do a lot of extra physical training.”

Army Lt. Col. Thomas Rahe
Multi-National Force - Iraq



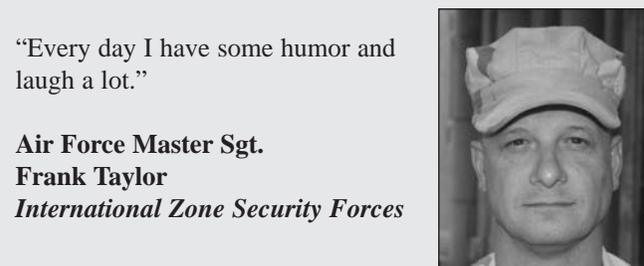
“I do a lot more of everything that I usually do at home.”

Andrew Dearden
Kroll Security



“I try to meet as many people, especially Iraqis, as possible.”

Army Sgt. 1st Class
Patrick McDonald
448th Civil Affairs Battalion



“Every day I have some humor and laugh a lot.”

Air Force Master Sgt.
Frank Taylor
International Zone Security Forces



“I shoot basketball, play video games and work out a lot.”

Army Staff Sgt. Warren Jones
3rd Infantry Division

“I probably smoke a lot more.”

Army 1st Lt. Seth Labadie
300th Military Intelligence Brigade



Don't let the heat beat you ...

Drink Water!



Iraqi woman supervises Basra city courthouse reconstruction project

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Timothy Lawn
Scimitar Staff

BASRA, Iraq — In a male-dominated society, being a woman, a civil engineer and in charge of one of the largest reconstruction projects in this city — population of more than 3,000,000 — is no small feat.

Iraqi citizen Hana Esmail, a contract employee with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is the courthouse reconstruction project manager. She stands no taller than 5 feet 6 inches, is slender in stature and soft-spoken, yet she supervises three male subcontractors and more than 70 workers.

Esmail, the Gulf Region South team leader, oversees workers constructing judicial chambers and courtrooms in the Basra public courthouse.

Reconstruction of the multistory building is under way, and Esmail plans to wrap up the work in a couple months. She hopes to see it completed no later than October.

The courthouse was severely damaged in the war, and it needed structural repair and reconstruction work. Esmail said they were starting from scratch.

To monitor courthouse reconstruction progress, the project was divided into five phases. Esmail explained the five phases as follows: roof and ceiling work; all external work including stone, masonry, windows and doors; mechanical, fire detection, extinguishing system, and



Hana Esmail, a contract employee and team leader with Gulf Region South, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, stands near some of the original Islamic facade work that her contractors are restoring.

plumbing; and restoration, plastering and landscaping. The final phase also includes the rehabilitation of a small notary office building adjacent to the courthouse and entails adding elevators.

The courthouse is a mammoth building, approximately a \$5 million project, with an area of about 8,188 square meters or 88,134 square feet. It contains a basement and more than four stories spanning more than an entire city block. The courthouse will have temporary prison cells for people awaiting trial, and there will be seven main courtrooms and smaller courtrooms. Twelve chambers will be furnished for more than 30 practicing judges, who will have to share space, and it is expected that up to 700 people may visit the courthouse on a daily basis, Esmail said.

"All cases will be tried here," including war crimes, criminal, and civil trials, said Esmail while at the construction site.

Esmail, who is a civil engineer, spends much of her time out at the reconstruction site. Born and raised in Basra, she comes from a typically large Iraqi family; she has five brothers and two sisters. Her family members are all highly educated with several employed as doctors, engineers and teachers, Esmail said. She credits her parents for instilling in her and her siblings the importance of a good education.

She graduated from Basra University in 1989 with a four-year civil engineering degree. Esmail's career began with UNICEF, where she supervised the delivery of more than 3,500 liters of free water in and around Basra, primarily to women and children.

After leaving UNICEF, she went to work for the British subsidiary of Kellogg, Brown and Root. While working for KBR she attended a women's conference, where GRS asked her to join them, Esmail recalled. On the second day after she took the job, she was offered the courthouse project.

Esmail re-affirmed her intention of completing the courthouse project this fall, "God willing."

When asked why she took the job and stayed in Basra, Esmail smiled and said, "I have spent my life in Basra."



U.S. Army Col. Peter J. Rowan (left), commander, GRC, and Marcelo Salles (right), area engineer for 3ID's Area Office, meet with GRC's on-site representative Craig Schoenberger at Qudas Power Station earlier this month.

Qudas generating station to be operational soon

Story and photo by Norris Jones
Gulf Region Central District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Many Iraqis look to electricity as a benchmark of how well their nation is doing. With repairs nearing completion, the Qudas electric power generating station located 25 kilometers north of Baghdad could soon have a significant impact on that outlook.

Once operational, Qudas could increase the nation's electric production 10 percent, as it is capable of generating 492 megawatts.

"That is a significant contribution," said Dennis Karns, electricity program manager with the U.S. Project and Contracting Office. "It's one of the larger gas turbine power plants in Iraq."

"Currently, Iraqis nationwide have about 4,700 MW available, slightly up from the pre-war levels of 4,400 MW," he said.

Qudas has eight turbine generators. Four are GE Frame 9 gas turbines and run on crude oil producing 90 MW each. The other four are GE LM6000 gas turbines and run on diesel fuel producing 33 MW each. One megawatt of electricity is enough to power about 1,000 Iraqi homes.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District (GRC) is overseeing the \$2.1 million contract to repair the facility and get those turbines back on line. Living at the Qudas facility and overseeing the work is GRC's Craig Schoenberger, who said he enjoys what he is doing.

"Being forced to think and improvise and get the job done is a very satisfying feeling," he noted. "You get more experience here in a year than a decade back home."

He also pointed out that what his friends and neighbors are hearing back in the states is not the reality he sees every day.

"The Iraqi people are very warm, friendly, and respectful. They are very appreciative of our help," he said.

Prior to deploying to Iraq last year, Schoenberger worked at U.S. Military Academy at West Point as an electrician. He said the staff there was supportive of his decision to volunteer for duty in Iraq.

"I wanted to be part of something bigger than myself," he continued, "... a part of history in the making."

Repairs are now 85 percent complete and should be finished within a month.

Nearly 100 Iraqis work at the \$140 million facility.

"The long-term outlook for Qudas to be a dependable source of electricity is good," Karns said. He pointed out that power generating facilities require continued maintenance, so rarely will Qudas' eight gas turbines be operating at the same time. Karns projected that Qudas' average output would be about 370 MW daily.



Contractors pause for a moment while hauling a bucket of cement up to a second floor window of the courthouse.

Coalition remembers London bombing victims

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Lek Mateo
56th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

ALI BASE, Iraq — American Soldiers and Airmen joined their British partners in a somber memorial service July 9 to remember victims of the subway and bus bombing attacks in London and show solidarity with Britons struggling to cope with the tragedy.

The memorial service was held in the chapel at Ali Base, located about 30 miles northwest of Basrah in southern Iraq.

For many in the crowd, the painful memory of the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City Sept. 11, 2001, resurfaced again as heart-wrenching pictures of the devastation and carnage from the London attack flashed across a plain white screen on stage.

The congregation of military men and woman sang "God Save the Queen" together as a tribute to everyone who was injured or killed in London July 7.

Chaplain (Maj.) Donald E. Sides, chaplain of the Texas Army National Guard's 56th Brigade Combat Team, 36th Infantry Division, said the attack on London is an unspeakable horror.

Terrorism that attacks freedom is an attack against all the free people of the world, Sides said, adding that everyone needs to stand together and say that terrorist acts and evil ideologies that permit the killing of innocent people will not stand.

The worship service was a way for everyone to share sympathy and compassion for the people of London, Sides said.

"I hope that God brings comfort and strength in the midst of terror and death and that all Britons know that we remember them and are praying for them," Sides said.

Flight Lt. Tania M. Thomas of the British Army 3rd Medical Corps, of Watring, England, said she lived in London for six years and was shocked when she found out about the attack on her city because she has close friends there.



Flight Lt. Tania M. Thomas, of the British Army 3rd Medical Corps and Trooper Liam Holden, of the King Royal Hussars, bow their heads in prayer during a memorial service at Ali Base, Iraq, for their countrymen who were killed or injured in the terrorist attack on London July 7.

"It took almost 48 hours to find out that none of my friends living in the city were hurt or killed in the bombings, and that was a great relief," she said.

The lieutenant said that the attack has brought Britons closer to how Americans felt on 9-11, and it made her more committed to helping improve Iraq and making it a safer place so this event doesn't happen to anyone else.

She expressed her pride in all the British people who continue to go to work days after the attack to show the terrorists that they are not defeated. Thomas was very thankful that her

country was thought about during the somber ceremony, which made her feel much closer to all the Coalition service members serving here in Iraq.

"We Britons are very resilient people, and we will continue living our lives. Otherwise, the terrorists will win," Thomas said. "We've been fighting terrorism for years, and we won't give up now."

Trooper Liam Holden, of Accrington Lancashire, England, and a Soldier of the King Royal Hussars, said he was also very moved that America and the rest of the world share in their sadness. He explained, after seeing the attack on the innocent civilians back home, he now knows how the Iraqi people feel enduring daily, indiscriminate bombings by insurgents. The young trooper said he is also more determined to help in the fight against terrorism in Iraq.

"I feel like I need to be here in Iraq to help ensure peace for the Iraqi people and give them a future and an opportunity for a better life," Holden said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Timothy Grant Sr., of Houston, Texas, the senior noncommissioned officer of the 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery, 101st Airborne Division, said he came to the ceremony to honor those who were injured or killed in

the London attack.

"I think that it is important that we show our support to the British people during their time of need because they are our allies and partners in the fight against terrorism," Grant said.

The sergeant major added that he hopes to pass on to his Soldiers that the mission they are tasked with in Iraq is making a difference for the future of every free nation.

"The attack on London reaffirms and brings to light the reason of why we are here in Iraq, and that is to take the fight to the terrorists," Grant said.

Coalition handing over mission

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Duane M. Brown
22nd Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

FIRE BASE BARBARIAN, KIRKUK, Iraq — As the battle against insurgency continues in Iraq, U.S. forces in Kirkuk are taking the backseat and putting Iraqi police up front and in control.

Soldiers of 3rd Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 116th Brigade Combat Team have been working with the Kirkuk police for almost six months and said they feel confident that it is time for the Iraqis to be seen as in charge.

"The Iraqi police have been running traffic control points since May, and they have been doing a pretty good job," said Staff Sgt. Brad E. Attebery, a Soldier with the 3rd platoon and native of Weiser, Idaho. "Now we stay out of sight so the town of Kirkuk sees its police out in front doing their job."

Even though the IP are running the TCPs, it doesn't mean Coalition support is no longer needed.

"We're in the background to make sure they are doing their job right," Attebery said.

Attebery said Soldiers pull security in the back of the TCP to make sure no one attacks from the rear.

On the backside of the TCP, members of



Iraqi policemen search a car stopped at a traffic control point in the city of Kirkuk.

the community are often curious about the Soldiers.

"They are very cautious of us at first. They want to feel us out and see what type of people we are," said Sgt. Samuel E. Tozer, team leader, 4th squad, 2/116 and native of Meridan,

Idaho. "They treat us pretty good. We give them respect and they give us respect.

"Most of the citizens like Coalition Forces being in Kirkuk. They think we're doing a good job working with the IP and Iraqi Army," he added.

The majority of people are helpful and cooperative with the IP. They volunteer information on anti-Iraqi force activity, Iraqi policemen said.

"They do this because they know it will help everyone," said an Iraqi police officer.

Now that the police are getting more comfortable with their mission and the community continues to support them, the IP will run daily operations alone.

"When we leave country, they will pretty much be on their own," Attebery added.

Saddam Hussein to face trial soon, Iraqi officials say

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein will soon go to trial, a senior Iraqi judge said during a July 17 news conference in Baghdad, Iraq.

Judge Raeed Juhi, the chief judge of Iraq's special tribunal, said the trial date is expected to be set "within days," according to press reports.

Saddam and three other former regime members will stand trial for a July 8, 1982, massacre in Dujail, Iraq, following a failed assassination attempt against the former president. Iraqi forces, acting on Saddam's orders, allegedly massacred an estimated 150 villagers.

Also facing trial are Barzan al-Tikriti, Saddam's half brother and former chief of Iraqi intelligence; Taha Yassin Ramadan, former vice president; and Awad Hamed al-Bandar, former chief of the Revolutionary Court, press reports said.

Meanwhile, Iraqi investigators are continuing to prepare charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide against Saddam and former regime members in 12 other cases. They include the 1988 chemical attack on the Kurdish village of Halabja, which left 5,000 dead, and the brutal crushing of a Shiite revolt in southern Iraq in 1991.

Juhi said the investigation into those cases is "in its final stages."

U.S. forces captured Saddam, who was hiding in a spider hole near his hometown of Tikrit, in December 2003. The Iraqi government maintains legal custody of the former dictator, although Multi-National Force - Iraq officials have physical custody of him at the Iraqi government's request, defense officials said.

Saddam's upcoming trial is expected to help bolster the security situation in Iraq, Foreign Minister Hoysnar Zebari said during a June interview.

Zebari said the evidence against the former dictator is staggering — from mass graves of those who opposed him to the laundry list of atrocities he inflicted against his own people. "Every family has suffered from the rule of Saddam Hussein, so there is no lack of evidence whatsoever," Zebari said. "There is an abundance of evidence to try and prosecute him."

The Iraqi government "is very committed to putting Saddam and other members of his former regime on trial, and I personally think that this will impact the security situation," the foreign minister said.

"It is very important that we start — the sooner the better," he said. "That is the view of this government. It is a widely shared view across the country."

Saddam will "be eligible for all the benefits of a free trial" and to choose his own defense team, Zebari said. "We will give him the same justice he has denied us for many years," he said. The final verdict, he said, "will speak for Iraqi justice."

U.S. commander says Iraqi Forces improving

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Iraqi Forces are shouldering more of the security burden in north-central Iraq, the Coalition Forces commander there said July 15.

Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the commander of Task Force Liberty and the New York National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division, said U. S. troops in north-central Iraq are working to build independent and self-sustaining Iraqi Security Forces and to maintain pressure on the insurgency. "Our work is protecting the process that will allow Iraqis to develop their new government and build their own sustainable security forces," Taluto said.

The region, from Kirkuk to outside Baghdad, is about the size of West Virginia and is home to about 6 million Iraqis. "Task Force Liberty represents nearly 23,000 Soldiers who partner with our Iraqi counterparts," Taluto said.

The Iraqi contribution is large and getting larger and more capable, the general said. There are 50,000 members of the Iraqi Army, border patrol and police services in the area. "In recent months I have seen the contribution of our Iraqi Army partners rise dramatically," Taluto said. "Iraqi units now conduct over half of the counterinsurgency fight. They do this either independently or jointly with our Soldiers."

The Iraqi Ministry of Defense is establishing a clear chain of command in advance of Iraqis taking over the total security burden, he said.

North-central Iraq has two Iraqi Army division headquarters, with five Army brigades. Earlier this year, Iraqi units took over security responsibility for Kirkuk. Coalition units will continue to provide command and control and logistics support for the units until the Iraqi divisions become effective, Taluto said.

The Iraqi division headquarters have administrative — but not operational — control of the brigades and battalions. The divisions are putting together their staffs and developing processes to effectively run the units, Taluto said. They will eventually plan and conduct the operations. "That's going to take them ... somewhat longer," he said. "They're not going to be in a position to do that for a while."

The Iraqis are doing more by themselves. Taluto spoke about an incident in Kirkuk to illustrate his point. "There was a vehicle-borne [improvised explosive device] that was parked in Kirkuk in a very busy market area," he said. "Citizens saw the car parked. They thought it was strange. They reported it to the local police that are there in Kirkuk on the street."

"The police reacted to that, cordoned off the area, brought in their own [explosive ordnance disposal] team, had the car inspected, and sure enough, it was rigged for explosion," he continued. "They defused it; they got rid of the vehicle-borne IED; and they reported it out to their media."

Not one Coalition Soldier took part in the mission. "That is happening more frequently," he said.

In June more than 4,000 Iraqi citizens provided Iraqi Forces with information and intelligence. Taluto said these tips lead to finding eight out of 10 arms caches. The general said this is "a sign of Iraqi confidence in their police and Army forces and the cooperation of the Iraqi people to ensure their security. Our assessment is that the Iraqi Security Forces are greatly improved and are striving to get better every day."

The place to access the latest MNF-I/MNC-I news, information and policies, is online.

Check out: www.mnf-iraq.com

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraqi, U. S. Forces capture al Qaeda leaders

WASHINGTON — Multi-National Forces in Iraq have captured two high-ranking al Qaeda operatives with ties to wanted terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, military officials announced July 14.

The two men, Abdulla Ibrahim Muhammed Hassan al Shadad, or Abu Abdul Aziz, and Khamis Farhan Khalaf Abd al Fahdawi, or Abu Seba, were among more than 30 suspected terrorists captured during raids throughout the country.

Aziz served as both a terrorist cell leader in Baghdad and as an operations officer for al Qaeda in Iraq. He was captured July 10.

According to authorities, Aziz is cooperating with Coalition Forces.

Abu Seba was captured July 9 in Ramadi after intelligence provided information on his whereabouts, the military said.

Seba served as an al Qaeda senior lieutenant in Iraq and is suspected in attacks against diplomats from Bahrain and Pakistan and the recent murder of Egyptian envoy, Ihab Salah al Din Ahmad al Sharif.

The military said in capturing the two leaders it also found vital information, evidence and equipment implicating both Aziz and Seba as members of Zarqawi's leadership cell.

Computer equipment, weapons, pornography, propaganda and documents were also seized during the raids.



Abdulla Ibrahim Muhammed Hassan al Shadad



Khamis Farhan Khalaf Abd al Fahdawi

Operation Warrior's Rage nets eight terror suspects

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Eight terror suspects were captured during Operation Warrior's Rage, launched by Iraqi Army and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers in the early-morning hours of July 14.

Iraqi forces from 4th Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, along with Task Force Baghdad Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 156th Armor Regiment and 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment (both of the 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division), conducted raids targeting terrorist safe houses in the Ghazaliyah and Abu Ghraib districts of west Baghdad.

The Soldiers also found a former regime general officer's uniform, three safes, two AK-47 assault rifles, and a document with a list of names.

"The Iraqi Army had the lead in this operation and are taking decisive steps to get these terrorists off the streets and make life better for all Iraqi citizens," said Lt. Col. Clifford Kent, a Task Force Baghdad spokesperson.

Task Force 2-116 Armor exceeds \$1,000,000 in reenlistment bonuses

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq — Soldiers from the 116th Brigade Combat Team are choosing to continue military careers with the Army National Guard by reenlisting — and Task Force 2-116 is the first battalion in the brigade to exceed \$1 million dollars paid out to Soldiers in reenlistment bonuses.

Staff Sgt. Gerald McConnell, a Soldier from Task Force 2-116 Armor, has been working with Soldiers to ensure that they are aware of the benefits available to them if they reenlist while deployed here in Iraq.

The brigade's main goal is to keep the brigade's numbers up to par, by getting as many Soldiers to reenlist.

Iraqi Police rescue child, detain four, and seize large weapons cache

MOSUL, Iraq — Iraqi Police and Multi-National Forces from Task Force Freedom rescued an Iraqi child, detained 13 suspected terrorists, and seized a large weapons cache during operations in northern Iraq July 15 and 16.

Iraqi police detained four individuals suspected of kidnapping an Iraqi child during a raid west of Mosul Friday. The police also rescued the child and seized a large weapons cache during the operation. The cache consisted of more than 50 missiles and mortar rounds, missile and mortar firing systems, numerous explosives, and various other weapons and ammunition. The weapons and ammunition were confiscated for future destruction. The suspects are in custody with no IP injuries reported.

In other operations, Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment detained five individuals suspected of terrorist activity at a checkpoint near the Syrian border Friday. Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment detained two individuals suspected of terrorist activity during two separate operations in Mosul today and Friday. Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment detained two individuals suspected of terrorist activity during two raid operations in western Mosul today and Friday. Suspects are in custody with no MNF injuries reported.

Deploying troops discover the STAR® treatment

DALLAS — In an attempt to ease the financial stress associated with assignment to contingency locations overseas, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service offers two Military STAR® Card options to deploying troops.

Military STAR® cardholders on their way to locations in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom may be eligible for a plan that offers: a six percent interest rate with no monthly payments and deployment credit limits or an option that also

Continued on next page

Georgian troop gets presidential visit at Walter Reed hospital

4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

President George W. Bush visits with Georgian 1st Lt. Mikeal Kutateladze from Company A, 13th Battalion of the Georgian Army at Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he is recovering from wounds received in Baghdad, Iraq, while working with 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. Bush presented him a presidential coin during the visit.



NEWS IN BRIEF

provides six percent interest rate with monthly allotment payments and increased credit limits. A deployed credit limit stabilizes the credit limit for the length of deployment while an increased credit limit raises credit limits while deployed.

Further benefits of both options include no annual or late fees, online account management and exclusive promotional offers.

Keith Howell, Exchange Credit Program Marketing manager, explained that the unique options offer powerful financial tools for the exclusive use of deployed troops. "This is a great opportunity for deployed service members to effectively manage their finances while they are stationed in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom," said Howell.

While the nearly 60 AAFES PX/BXs located throughout Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom do accept other credit cards, the Military STAR® Card offers more benefits and assistance than many other cards.

The Military STAR credit program is specifically tailored to service members and their family's credit needs. Its many financial benefits include a 24 hours/7 days per week online and call center account management capability; exclusive special promotions; and free standard shipping on exchange catalog and exchange online store purchases at www.aafes.com. Military STAR cardholders are also not subject to over limit, late payment or annual fees which can amount to as much as 37 percent of other credit cards issuers' income.

Engineers work to complete repairs at power plant north of Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Iraq — A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers repair project at the Qudas electric power generating station 25 kilometers north of Baghdad is 85 percent complete.

Engineers predict the work will be finished within a month.

Once operational, Qudas could increase the nation's electric production 10 percent. The plant's output capacity is 492 megawatts.

Qudas has eight turbine generators. Four are GE Frame 9 gas turbines and run on crude oil producing 90 megawatts each. The other four are GE LM6000 gas turbines and run on diesel fuel producing 33 megawatts each. One megawatt of electricity is enough to power about 1,000 Iraqi homes.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District is overseeing the \$2.1 million contract to repair the facility and get the turbines back on line.

Nearly 100 Iraqis work at the \$140 million facility.

Multi-National Forces nab 14 suspects, weapons cache

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Task Force Baghdad Soldiers captured four terror suspects believed to be senior members of a terror cell operating in the Beida district of north Baghdad July 11.

After detaining the four men, the Soldiers went to a nearby lumberyard thought to be used as a weapons cache site.

At the lumberyard, the Soldiers uncovered a number of freshly buried AK-47 assault rifles and seized 8 more terror suspects.

Earlier July 11, Iraqi police, Iraqi Security Forces from the 3rd Public Order Battalion and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers teamed up to capture two more suspected terrorists in the Salman Pak neighborhood of East Baghdad. The cache contained 30 hand grenades and three mortar rounds.

Security Forces provide medical aid for children



U.S. Army photo

Over 250 Iraqi children and their mothers received medical screenings from Multi-National Force Soldiers from Task Force Freedom during an operation in western Mosul July 15. Soldiers and medics from 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment along with Soldiers from the 25th BSB and 113th Engineer Battalion, participated in an operation highly supported by a local mukhtar who helped bring the mothers and children together for the medical screenings. The citizens were pleased with the care provided by the medics.

"The Coalition is increasingly coordinating operations and teaming with Iraqi Security Forces to continue building ISF capabilities," said Lt. Col. Clifford Kent, a Task Force Baghdad spokesperson. "The pride and confidence Iraqis have in their security forces has risen, and tips from the Iraqi people have increased."

Multi-National Forces detain nine and seize weapons cache

MOSUL, Iraq — Multi-National Force Soldiers from Task Force Freedom detained nine suspected terrorists and seized a weapons cache during operations in northern Iraq today.

Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment detained nine individuals suspected of terrorist activity during three separate operations in Tal Afar. Suspects are in custody with no MNF injuries reported.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment seized a weapons cache during a search operation in southeastern Mosul. The weapons were confiscated for future destruction.

Coordinated efforts net 39 suspects

WASHINGTON — Iraqi and U.S. forces established a joint combined operations center to develop intelligence and track operations during a series of missions July 15, military officials in Baghdad said.

This was the first time Iraqi and U.S. forces established such an operations center, Task Force Baghdad officials said. The staffs of each unit worked side by side in the JOC, resulting in the capture of 39 suspected terrorists in several operations.

"Coordination between our respective units has never been

better," said U.S. Army Brig. Gen. John Basilica Jr., commander of the 256th Brigade Combat Team. "The 1st Iraqi Brigade is well on its way to being a well-trained joint staff."

On the evening of July 15, elements of the 6th Iraqi Army Division and the 256th BCT successfully detained targets in their areas of operation through cordon-and-search operations and combat patrols.

Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army, and 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th BCT, searched houses suspected of holding terrorists in the Ameriyah district of Baghdad. The mission was successful and resulted in the capture of three suspects, two of whom were Syrian.

The search found 10 to 12 122 mm and 130 mm rounds enhanced with propane to make a larger fireball in the explosion.

In another 256th operation, Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, captured three personnel, all positively identified as targets. The 2/156th personnel knocked on doors when the targeted houses turned up empty, and citizens of the neighborhood led Soldiers to the suspected terrorists.

The combined efforts of other 256th and Iraqi Army units resulted in the capture of 33 detainees.

Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, and 3rd Battalion, 4th Iraqi Army, brought in 15 detainees after conducting their cordon-and-search missions. While conducting patrols in their area, the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army, performed a hasty cordon and search and brought in 18 suspected terrorists. The detainees are being held for questioning at an undisclosed location, officials said.

Traffic control point nets mortar system

TIKRIT, Iraq — Task Force Liberty and Iraqi Army Soldiers discovered a mortar system in a vehicle during a joint operation near Balad at about 5 p.m. July 15.

The Soldiers were operating a traffic control point when they found an 82 mm mortar tube, tripod, base plate and breach cap in the back of a truck. The items were confiscated and the driver was detained and brought to a Coalition Forces base for questioning.



Do you
know
where
your



Is?...

FREEDOM RADIO

| Frequencies | Al Asad | 107.3 FM | Mosul | 105.1 FM |
|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | Ar Ramadi | 107.3 FM | Q-West | 93.3 FM |
| | Baghdad | 107.7 FM | Taji | 107.3 FM |
| | Balad | 107.3 FM | Talil AB | 107.3 FM |
| | Fallujah | 105.1 FM | Tall Afar | 107.3 FM |
| | Kirkuk | 107.3 FM | Taqqadum | 107.3 FM |
| | Kirkush | 107.3 FM | Tikrit | 100.1 FM |

Always there and always on the air!



AMERICA SUPPORTS YOU
★ OUR MILITARY MEN & WOMEN ★

F-16 maintainers make sure curtain gets raised

By Senior Airman Shaun Emery
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — Like a Broadway show, the stars get all the attention. But behind the scenes, key roles must be performed for the show to go on.



U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman Tim Beckham

Tech. Sgt. Brad Smith with the 510th Aircraft Maintenance unit, conducts a final inspection on hook lever bolts along the sides of an F-16 Fighting Falcon cockpit. If a pilot must eject, the bolts break off, releasing the canopy. Smith's job ensures the safety of pilots..

The theater the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing performs in features fast, agile fighter planes providing air support for troops on the ground. But without the hard work and dedication of aircraft maintainers working behind the scenes, the curtain could not be raised.

Airmen with the 510th and 332nd Aircraft Maintenance Units here provide daily maintenance and preflight checks for F-16 Fighting Falcon sorties. Their mission is to ensure that pilots get in the air and back on the ground safely. It is a mission each Airman takes seriously.

"We want to ensure our pilots have a quality product for their missions," said Lt. Col. Dave Salva, the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron maintenance operations officer. "Whether we're providing close-air support for troops, a show of force or serving as an eye from the sky, without maintained aircraft we couldn't do our mission."

Each plane is inspected from front to back before each mission. The planes are stripped and rebuilt, ensuring each part works properly. The work is tedious, and the ratio of flight hours to maintenance hours is stacked heavily on the maintenance side, Salva said.

Although deployed life may be new to some maintainers, the aircraft they maintain are not. The planes they maintain here are the ones they have been working on at their home stations.

"We already know the systems on these aircraft," said Senior Master Sgt. Lloyd Muranaka, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 332nd EAMXS. "We know their history and their systems and what it takes to get them in the air."

Just like an automobile, aircraft have key systems that need great attention. Each one, like the egress system, is vital to pilots.

"It's their last resource to survival," said Tech. Sgt. Larry Vasquez, 510th AMU egress shop chief.

The checks maintainers make are the same ones they have been making since day one, but maintainers say complacency and shortcuts have no place in a deployed environment.

"Each check has a purpose," said Senior Airman Justin Foulsham, a 332nd EAMXS assisted dedicated crew chief. "It's not about rushing; it's about getting planes in the air."

With multiple curtain calls every day, aircraft maintainers are hard at work knowing the show must go on.



Tech. Sgt. Brad Smith conducts a final inspection on hook lever bolts along the sides of an F-16 Fighting Falcon cockpit. Sergeant Smith is the 510th Aircraft Maintenance Unit's aircrew egress supervisor here. His peers look on as he performs the mission critical services to this aircraft.



Airmen with the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron here prepare to move an F-16 Fighting Falcon in preparation for a mission.

F-16 pilots provide support for troops on the battlefield

Story and photo by Senior Airman Shaun Emery
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — In an instant they are gone, but the 510th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron's F-16 Fighting Falcons can be found in the Iraqi sky providing air support for service members fighting against insurgents on the ground.

The 510th EFS provides support for ground commanders countrywide. These tasks include close-air support, shows of force reconnaissance and scouring the countryside for insurgents.

But their mission begins on the ground with operations Airmen handling preflight briefings, mission planning, intelligence reports and detailed coordination with the Army. Pilots inspect their aircraft before takeoff, working hand in hand with skilled maintainers to ensure each mission goes off without a hitch.

While the "stick and rudder" flying aspect has not changed, some sorties find these pilots using their weapons system in nontraditional ways, such as convoy escort, raid support and infrastructure reconnaissance.

Pilots tackle these missions with the same vigor as the 510th's bread and butter — close-air support — said Maj. John Bosone, 510th EFS assistant director of operations.

"We were well-prepared for this mission," he said. "We



Following his preflight checks, 1st Lt. Christopher Jones closes the canopy to his aircraft before a mission supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot with the 510th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron.

train, exercise and tactically integrate with our Army counterparts every day back home."

"We train to take out fixed targets defended by surface-to-air and air-to-air defenses," said 1st Lt. Christopher Jones, an F-16 pilot.

Although challenging, engaging fixed targets is not nearly as rewarding as supporting Coalition Forces on the ground, he said.

"During interdiction missions, the nearest friendly forces may be hundreds of miles away," Bosone said. "In [close-air support], our guys may be within hundreds of feet of the enemy."

Fortunately for troops on the ground, the Air Force has equipped its aircraft with the latest technology for dropping precision-guided munitions, Jones said.

"We have some of the most advanced capabilities at our disposal," he said. "Our success comes from realistic training, hard work, fantastic equipment and sometimes just making a lot of noise."

"We are involved in major operations here," Bosone said. "But we are just a small part of this important mission."

"I am proud of the work we have done so far, and I look forward to supporting the operation in the future," Jones said.

'ER' of the skies *saving lives*

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta
42nd Infantry Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq – Odd, red flecks – like random, crimson snowflakes – float about inside the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter where a wounded Iraqi Soldier lies. Their source soon becomes clear: drops of his blood have fallen on the aircraft's warm surfaces, dried, flaked off, and are being blown around like so much confetti. Meanwhile, two Soldiers of the 1159th Medical Company work, with coolness and efficiency, to save the Iraqi soldier's life.

Scenes like this — horrible to some — are the daily work of the 1159th Medical Company's Soldiers. Every day they drop from the sky to scoop up and treat wounded Iraqi and Coalition Forces Soldiers, Iraqi civilians and suspected insurgents. Their helicopters are airborne emergency rooms, and though they field a robust array of Army training and civilian medical experience, some of them say their main life-saving skills are teamwork, professionalism and dedication — rooted in compassion.

"Some people say our job is to make sure the Thanksgiving Day table is full ... so no one is missing when everybody gets home," said Chief Warrant Officer Patrick Fallon, a medical evacuation pilot with the 1159th. "If it was me, I'd want someone to do all they could to help me, and that's why we do everything we can to help whomever is in the back to survive."

Members of the company are assigned to the New Hampshire and Maryland Army National Guard. They deployed to Iraq in early February. Since then, they've flown nearly 900 patients on almost 600 missions, according to a unit fact sheet. These missions include patient transfers, blood and hospital resupply runs and the most critical of all, aeromedical evacuation — picking up wounded, sometimes under fire, and transporting them to a combat surgical hospital.

Unit flight crews consist of a flight medic, a crew chief and two pilots. The crews are on a tight, rolling on-call schedule, which they call first up, second up, third up and fourth up. The schedule ensures there is always a flight crew "on deck," so to speak, and available to perform aeromedical evacuation.

"From the time you start on fourth up, you are on call for 24 hours a day for a total of 96 straight hours," said Flight Medic Sgt. Matthew Miller, of Anne Arundel, Md. "Obviously there are operating procedures for crew rest, but working within the parameters set forth by the commander, it is 96 hours of duty. The first up aircraft is the first to go, second up the second, and so on."

The first and second up aircraft's response time for nine-line medevac requests is also immediate, Miller said. Once the wounded are in the helicopter, their lives are in the hands of the flight crew — especially the medic and the crew chief, who administer direct medical care to the wounded while in the air.

"Before we came here, I never had anyone's life in my hands except for my newborn daughter's," said Staff Sgt. Gary Hitch. As a medevac crew chief with the 1159th Medical Company, Hitch is part of a tight loop of communication and care that forms inside the aircraft whenever wounded are aboard. The flight medic, crew chief and pilots are all talking, working together to provide a stable platform for the flight medic to work and to make every second count.

"Our whole purpose in life is to get the medics to the patients and the patients to the hospital," Fallon said.

"Everyone is an expert in their own field," said medevac pilot Chief Warrant Officer George Munson, of Lyndeborough, N.H. "The flight crew works as a cohesive unit. So if the medic says, 'Speed it up, this guy's dying,' the pilot complies. They respect the professionalism of each other."

Like all medical professionals, the flight crew is trying to

maximize the golden hour — the 60 minutes immediately following the occurrence of a life-threatening injury, when they have the best chance of saving the patient's life. The golden hour starts counting down when the wound happens, and the flight crew is using every second to perform life-saving procedures.

"You just concentrate on patient assessments, like airway, breathing and circulation," said Flight Medic Sgt. Amanda Watkins. "Those are the ones that will keep them alive. Without those, you haven't got a patient."

Watkins, who is from Lincoln, Neb., said the unit's flight medics are constantly learning from each other — trading notes and sharing experiences.

On calls, she said, crew chiefs help perform life-saving procedures like helping to stop bleeding and helping a patient breathe using a bag-valve mask, which is called "breathing for a patient," or "bagging a patient."

"A lot of them will ask how to do things because they want to help out," Watkins said. "A lot of them can give IVs, too, if we have multiple patients."

"Everyone helps out," Hitch said. "You can't have one person taking care of the optimum of four patients that the Black Hawk can carry."

All the crew chiefs in the 1159th are qualified in Basic Trauma Life Support, also known as BTLIS.

"That's quite a few steps higher than combat life saver," said Hitch. "I can assess the patient, I can breathe for the patient, I can pump fluid into the patient, and I can secure the patient so his or her spine or limbs are not in danger."

"With the crew chiefs helping out, I'm free to take care of the other things that have to be done, like administering CPR, drugs and hooking up monitors," said Flight Medic Sgt. Robert McColligan, of Baltimore, Md.

"All our crew chiefs are BTLIS-qualified," McColligan said. "They understand trauma and basic airway management

skills. If we need to bag a patient, they know how to do it. They help us dress lacerations and cuts."

The crew chiefs are like "another care provider in the aircraft with the medic," said Miller.

Miller is the unit medical standardization instructor. He and unit member, Sgt. James Phipps were the driving force behind getting the unit's crew chiefs BTLIS-qualified.

"Sgt. James Phipps and I recognized a long time ago that there were some shortfalls in combat medicine," said Miller. "One of those shortfalls is that the crew chief is left out of the loop."

The BTLIS training, which the unit approved and carried out while mobilizing at Fort Dix last year, taught the crew chiefs rapid trauma assessment, airway assessment and knowledge of injuries and how to treat them.

"It gives them a better understanding of what's going on with the patient," Miller said.

"We can get things done a whole lot faster," Miller said.

The time in the aircraft, when the patient is being transported is the "platinum 10" said Miller — the time period when the flight medic is "rapidly finding injuries, treating lethal injuries and restoring breathing."

"The stuff they have to know is amazing," Hitch said, "like what drugs to use, and how to counteract those drugs, because you don't know if an Iraqi is allergic to morphine. When something goes wrong with the aircraft, I can stop what I'm doing and look it up in a technical manual. When something goes wrong with a patient, the medic can't stop caring to look it up in a manual — they just have to keep trying."

As a National Guard unit, the 1159th Medical Company comprises Soldiers who are full-time, civilian medical professionals.

See *ER*, Page 14



Sgt. Amanda Watkins, flight medic with the 1159th Medical Company (right), escorts stretcher bearers with a wounded Iraqi soldier to a waiting Black Hawk helicopter for evacuation.

Air Delivery Platoon keeps Marines, and vehicles off dangerous roads

Story and photo by
Sgt. Kristin S. Jochums
2nd Force Service Support Group

ALASAD, Iraq – Bundles of goods and supplies, varying from bottles of water to parts for Humvees, float from the sky suspended by parachutes under the cover of darkness. Waiting on the ground to collect parachutes and gear are the Marines with Air Delivery Platoon.

The 24 Marines with Air Delivery Platoon, Transportation Support Company, Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 2nd Force Service Support Group, are responsible for making the drops possible at different forward operating bases throughout the CLB-2 area of operations.

Since arriving in February, AD has completed seven drops to the various forward operating bases, delivering supplies essential to the overall mission.

“Air delivery was first made to re-supply service members who were behind enemy lines or heavily laden enemy territory, where it was tough to get supplies,” said Staff Sgt. Kevin L. Johns, AD platoon sergeant and Midway, Ga., native. “Doing it in this war takes people and trucks off roads covered with mines and improvised explosive devices.”

If not for AD those supplies would be



Cpl. Jacquelyn M. Gibson, a Miami native and Marine with AD Pltn., Transportation Support Co., Combat Logistics Bn. 2, 2nd Force Service Support Group, removes and collects straps and other air delivery gear from a supply bundle after an air delivery was made June 26. Air delivery is used to reduce the number of Marines and vehicles conducting convoy operations to deliver supplies to the various FOBs throughout the CLB-2 area of operations.

taken to the FOBs by convoy, which places lives and gear in danger of mine strikes or IED attacks. Delivering the supplies by air lessens the number of service members conducting convoy operations in harm's way.

“I think what we are doing out here has a big impact; we are saving lives,” said Gunnery Sgt. William C. Frazier, AD platoon commander. “The gear we deliver is needed to fight the war. By us doing the drops, we are getting Marines and vehicles off the road.”

The bundles are dropped mainly from C130-J Hercules aircraft because they can hold more supplies and weight than a helicopter. Drops made by the AD Marines have included as much as 30,000 pounds of supplies.

The platoon, made up of 12 active-duty and 12 reserve Marines, has nearly a 95 percent success rate on the drops, according to Frazier, a Springhill, La., native.

“One bundle of pita bread went bad waiting to be dropped,” laughed Frazier, “but it wasn't our fault.”

Once the requests for the supplies come in from the FOBs, the Marines get to work rigging loads, attaching parachutes and inspecting the loads before the drop.

The platoon consists of three sections, in which all the Marines are proficient, and they rotate between the jobs.

The packing section deals with the personnel and cargo parachutes, making sure they are packed correctly and serviceable.

“Preparation for the packing section is an ongoing process,” said Sgt. Ryan Cooper, a jumpmaster and squad leader with the platoon. “Especially out here, because we are constantly repacking the parachutes from the missions.”

“For the most part we are proactive on the packing of parachutes; we have them ready before we even get tasked,” continued the Carthage, N.C., native. “Once we receive the gear we go to work immediately and can have the load ready in a matter of hours.”

The maintenance section is in charge of maintaining and repairing the parachutes and other air drop items.

“They are modern day Betsy Rosses,” Cooper said. “They can repair pretty much anything we have.”

The rigging section is responsible for rigging the loads and gear onto the platforms.

After the loads are ready and all the other working parts are ready, such as preparing the drop zone and making contact with the aircraft, the AD Marines get to the drop location and wait for the delivery.

“Air delivery is the Marine Corps' expeditionary arm for logistics,” Cooper said. “It can rapidly increase the time in which the Marines on the battlefield can receive logistical items, whether it is ammunition or chow. We can get it there almost as quick as we receive it.”

Once the gear has been collected and the AD Marines' job is done, they head back to their base and await another request to rapidly re-supply the ongoing operations throughout western Iraq.

Quartermaster riggers go all out in support of War Fighter's mission

Story and photo by
Spc. Jerome Bishop
1st Corps Support Command
Public Affairs

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq – Inside a dark, spacious warehouse here, nine Soldiers are making their contribution to an upcoming operation taking place hundreds of miles away.

These Soldiers are parachute riggers with the 623rd Quartermaster Company in support of the 372nd Transportation Company, 129th Corps Support Battalion, 507th Corps Support Group, and their mission is to prepare two weeks worth of rations and water to be air-dropped to sustain operations in Iraq.

“Right now we're loading Meals Ready to Eat for ongoing operations,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Hanrahan, air operations sergeant for the 129th Trans. Co. “The most important thing is we're taking people off the road by doing this. The key is sustaining the people who are setting up this operation with 15 days worth of food.”

Although the operation is still in the works, the riggers are getting a head start by preparing the pallets of MREs before it begins.

“We'll be dropping almost 4,000 cases of MREs,” Hanrahan said. “This is the only mission that has been dictated to us so far. As the operation moves on, that will dictate what we drop.”

The supplies being loaded aren't the only ones that will be dropped during the course of the operation. The riggers are prepared to get more supplies ready as time goes on.

“Once [the unit we're supplying] gets established,” Hanrahan said, “we'll move on to support a different group.”

Since the beginning of their deployment, the Soldiers of the 623rd Qm. Co. have had little opportunity to serve as riggers. Much of their time is spent on the roads as convoy gun-truck escorts.

Though their talents are in high demand, the Soldiers are excited to support the war effort by doing the job they enlisted to do.

“I feel like I'm making a difference,” said Pfc. Thomas Hutchinson, a parachute rigger with the 623rd

QM Co. “I think it's necessary for us to do air drops to move on with mission of helping the Iraqis take control.”

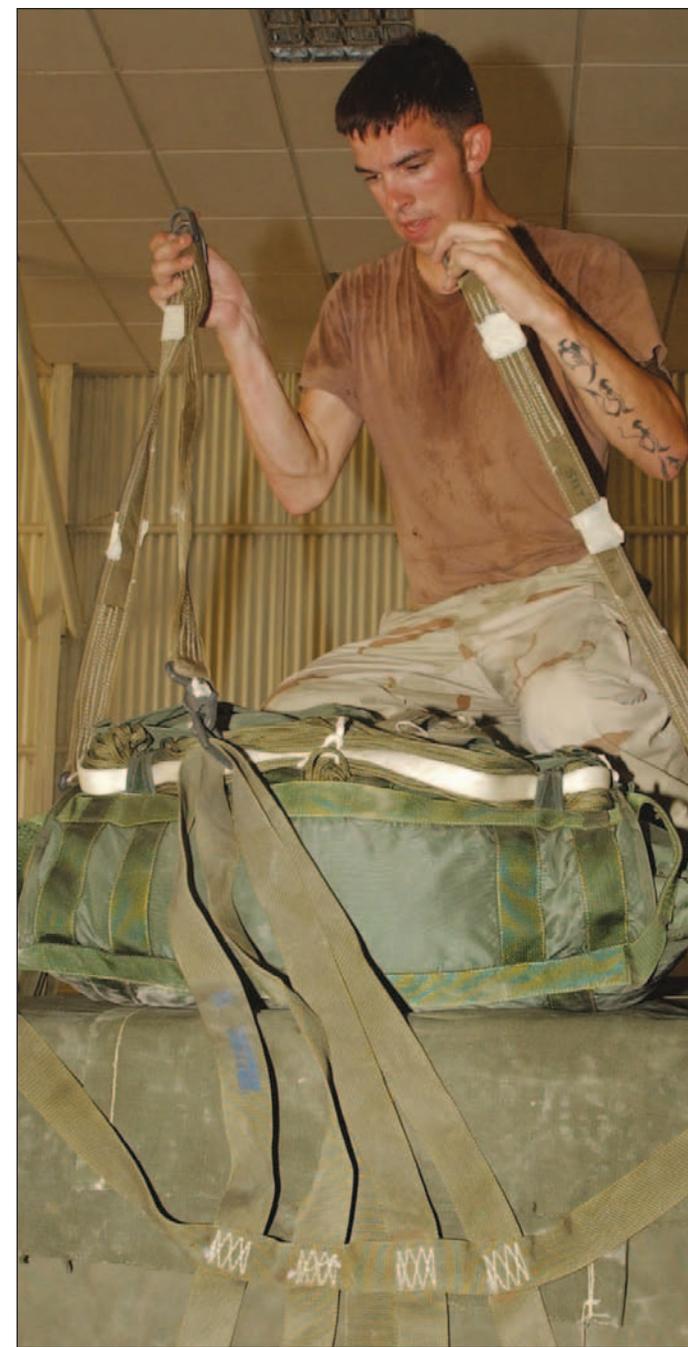
“[The Soldiers] are very happy to be doing this,” Hanrahan said. “They're all excited to come off the road and actually do their job. It's very gratifying to know your job is supporting the war fighter.”

Successfully preparing a pallet of supplies for an airborne supply drop requires the utmost attention from the Soldier rigging it.

“First you get an empty board and ties, along with honeycomb cardboard padding to help dissipate the weight of the cargo,” said Spc. Jameel Miller, a parachute rigger with the 623rd QM Co. “Then the cargo net is wrapped around the supplies, and from there, we tie up the load to encase it all. Finally, we put the parachute on and tie it up, and that's all you need.”

The riggers of the 623rd QM Co. know the importance of the mission they've been tasked and couldn't be happier about what they're doing for the Army and for Iraq.

“We're parachute riggers,” Hanrahan said. “This is our job.”



Pfc. Thomas Hutchinson, a parachute rigger from the 623rd Quartermaster Co., gathers the tops of the cargo net to attach it to the parachute on top of the load.

Civil affairs team makes difference in neighborhood

Story and photos by Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq — “As long as I’m helping the Iraqi people, I’m doing my job, whether I’m serving as a doctor or as a civil affairs officer,” said Maj. Kathy Champion of her involvement in a medical clinic at a school in the Hateen area of Baghdad July 5.

Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry; Company C, 199th Forward Support Battalion; and 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery, all of the 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division held the civil affairs mission, providing the clinic and distributing supplies at the school.

Champion, a physician from Olympia, Wash., commander of A Co., 448th Civil Affairs Battalion, is attached to 256th BCT. The doctor said this was the second Iraqi clinic she participated in. There were noticeable differences in the illnesses she treated during this deployment. She saw simpler cases in Hateen, such as respiratory infections, whereas at the previous clinic, she saw a few rare cases.

“I saw diseases I don’t commonly see, such as skin diseases,” she said.

Champion doesn’t mind the double duty, in fact, she’s grateful that she is able to provide service in the area of medicine.

Spc. Carl Abbott, from Springfield, Ill., with Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 3/156th Inf. Bn., keeps the flow of medicine rolling smoothly, which makes the entire process of screening patients that much faster.

“I keep the medication organized so that when doctors need something, I can give it to them quickly,” he said.

Abbott said the range of medicines available is fairly wide, including remedies for children.

“We have a lot of pediatric meds and antibiotics, and most medicines that can cure one-course ailments,” he said.

He said illnesses which must be monitored, such as cardiac diseases and diabetes, are not within the medics’ range of capabilities, but stressed they can cure the common discomforts.

Staff Sgt. Jessica Kelly, from Lafayette, La., assistant to the 256th BCT surgeon, reiterated the importance of an organized pharmaceutical area.

“Having an organized pharmacy is the key to having a good clinic,” she said.

This, paired with the interpreters, is what it takes for the mission to operate smoothly, she added. “The goal is to find out what’s wrong and then cure it, the faster, the better.”

Kelly also said a new tactic used at this particular clinic was preliminary assessments. Normally she examines patients, but this time she saw all patients before they saw the doctors, to decide if there was anything that could be done for them.

“Sometimes people will come to us and have a problem that we can’t fix. When that happens, we’ve just wasted their time, and our time, when we could have been seeing someone that was within our reach,” she said.

Kelly felt the new methods used today, as well as the civil affairs combination, made the clinic very successful.

The event was coordinated by leaders of A Co., 3/156th, and 1st Lt. Jeremy Falanga from Baton Rouge, La., executive officer for the company, said the collaboration of many elements, beginning with the Iraqi population, is what made the day a success.

“We set everything up through the local officials, and they spread the word to the community that we were going to provide medicine and health care today,” he said.

He added that another group of Soldiers gave the citizens something to go home with.

“We also had the 1/141st doing Kids for Kids, passing out school supplies, school bags, and toys,” Falanga said.



Sgt. David Champagne from Cecilia, La., a medic with Company C, 199th Forward Support Battalion, 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, teaches an Iraqi boy how to “give him five” at a medical clinic in the Hateen area of Baghdad July 5.

Kids for Kids is a program started in February by Soldiers from 1/141st FA. It began as a tasking from their higher command, which led to the development of an interactive Web site, www.childrenofbaghdad.com, asking for clothing, toiletries, and everyday necessities for Iraqi children. The site resulted in thousands of donations from the United States

method of shipping for both the donors and the Air Force, there is also another plus to the venture.

“The shipping will be free, so no one will have to worry about postage anymore,” he said.

The main concern for Soldiers performing missions within the community is security, first and foremost, so locals coming

into the school for health care concerns were searched prior to entering the building.

Sgt. Erin Reski, from Moorehead, Minn., a communications technician with Company B, 134th Signal Battalion, 256th BCT, volunteered to screen females for the mission.

“It’s been interesting. The women were very cooperative and seemed to understand why I had to do it,” she said.

Capt. Aaron Duplechin, from Moss Bluff, La., commander of A Co., 3/156th Inf. Bn., said missions like this one are what will turn the war on terrorism around.

“We do things like this, quite frankly, to get the message out, and a great thing today was that we had the Iraqi media here as well,” he said, of the Baghdad Press Club’s appearance at the clinic.

“They asked me why we don’t do things like this more often. I was able to tell them, ‘This is my sector and I’d love to do more of this, but we have to spend too much time focusing on security,’” he said.

He added, “The Intermediate Iraqi Government and Coalition Forces have a plan. The insurgents don’t. If we could eliminate the insurgents, we could do more of these things.”

Maj. Jason Yeates, from Lafayette, La., executive officer for 3/156th Inf. Bn., agreed, and said having the Kids for Kids Soldiers with them played a big role, because in the end, it is the children of Iraq who will determine the outcome.

“The 1/141st being out there really helped attract attention. Until they started handing out school supplies and toys, people were a little hesitant to come here,” he said.

“Over the long haul, it’s the kids who are going to make a difference,” Yeates added.



Sgt. Keith Bonnet, from Slidell, La., and Staff Sgt. Shaun Warren, from Kenner, La., with 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery, 256th Brigade Combat Team, set out boxes of school supplies, toys, and clothes collected as a result of their Web site.

over the past few months, and it will soon expand even more.

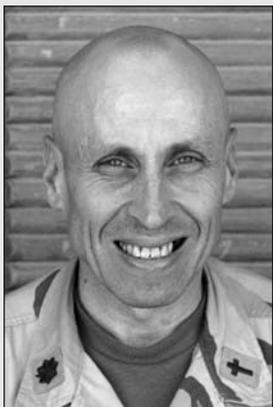
“The Web site is about to become a conglomeration of multiple websites that will be monitored through a group in Cincinnati,” said Sgt. Keith Bonnet from Slidell, La., co-creator of the site.

Several Web sites dedicated to the cause of helping Iraq rebuild itself will have items shipped to one location in Cincinnati. From there, they will be shipped to Iraq by the Air Force. Bonnet said besides being a more convenient

CHAPLAIN'S TALK

Guys only

Marriage. The most difficult job in the world. How to make it work ...



Chaplain Peterson

By Chaplain (Maj.) Doug Peterson
525th Military Intelligence Brigade

In my previous meeting with you in this space we began a discussion on why relatively few of us fully and deeply enjoy the marriage relationship. My encouragement was to use this deployment as an optimum time for introspection and personal growth toward making what we have even better.

Today's focus is specifically for men as we identify the greatest earthly asset that we have in our marriage relationship.

Three guys go out for a relaxing day of fishing. Out of the blue, they catch a mermaid. And this one, like most mermaids, doesn't want to stay caught. So she begs to be set free in return for granting each of them a wish.

Now one of the guys just doesn't believe it, and says:

"OK, if you can really grant wishes, then double my I.Q.!"

"OK," the mermaid says, "It's done." Suddenly, the guy starts reciting Shakespeare flawlessly and analyzing it with tremendous insight.

The second guy is so amazed he says to the mermaid:

"Here's my wish: Triple my IQ!"

The mermaid says, "OK. It's done." And the guy starts to spout off all the mathematical solutions to problems that have plagued scientists for centuries.

When it comes to the third guy, he is so enthralled with the changes in his friends, that he says to the mermaid, "My wish is that you would multiply my IQ by five times!"

The mermaid looks at him and asks, "Are you sure that's what you want? It'll change and expand your view of the entire world and universe.

The guy says, "Yes, I'm sure that's what I want. I want my I.Q. increased by five times."

So the mermaid sighed and said, "All right. If that's what you want. It's done!"

And he became a woman.

Guys, when it comes to relationship issues in our marriage, those sweet young ladies that we married – or that you will marry someday — are naturally much smarter than we are. Most of us men [and I include myself] come into marriage clueless about making it work.

How many of you have had the experience of your wife recalling a painful incident in vivid detail – something that you have totally forgotten? My wife has the uncanny ability to remember every unkind thing I have ever done, said, or even thought. And whenever there is a problem in the marriage relationship, who is always the one aware of it first? (Come on, guys, we've all been there. You get the silent glare treatment and you innocently ask, "What did I do wrong now?" And she replies, "Do I have to tell you?!?!")

You see, women are wired to be more naturally in touch with their feelings and emotions. And when it comes to sensitivity and insight into the dynamics of relationships, they beat us hands down.

Our wives are our greatest earthly asset in helping us through our relationally-challenged male blind spots. And we ignore them to our peril. Tap into their innate wisdom.

For example, ask her: "What specifically can I/we do to make what we have now even better?"

I guarantee you that she will not be at a loss for insight and recommendations.

Gentlemen, if we regularly seek our wives' input, and if we work together with her with the common goal of maximizing what we have, we may wonder what took us so long to really enjoy what marriage was designed to be.

And yes, even long distance!



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Maurice Hessel

Staff Sgt. Brian Czerniak (left) and his younger brother, Army Spc. Derek Czerniak, greet two locals during a recent patrol mission. Derek jumped at the opportunity to visit Ali Base and see his brother in action. Brian is a patrol leader with the 407th ESF Sqdn., deployed from Charleston Air Force Base, S.C. Derek is an AH-64D Apache Longbow crew chief with the 2nd Bn., 101st Aviation Regt., deployed from Fort Campbell, Ky.

Brothers reunite in Iraq

By Tech. Sgt. Melissa Phillips
407th Air Expeditionary Group
Public Affairs

ALI BASE, Iraq — When many Americans think about the Army, they envision gun-slinging Soldiers securing a tactical area.

When they think about the Air Force, many visualize pilots or mechanics preparing to launch an aircraft.

Two brothers deployed to Iraq, however, dispel those stereotypes.

Staff Sgt. Brian Czerniak, a patrol leader with the 407th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron here, helps secure and protect the 210 square miles surrounding the base's perimeter from unfriendly forces.

His youngest brother, Army Spc. Derek Czerniak, is an AH-64D Apache Longbow crew chief with the 2nd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment in Iraq.

In today's modern battlefield, the line between military functions often seems to blur.

"I maintain Apaches so the pilots can protect patrols who maintain security," Derek said.

The Czerniaks, natives of Maple City, Mich., deployed to Iraq in 2003 and narrowly missed crossing paths. This time, after several near misses, they reconnected for five days here.

Derek is on a one-year tour in Iraq from Fort Campbell, Ky., and because of the extended timeframe, Soldiers earn a 15-day leave and can choose their leave destination anywhere in the world.

Derek said he would have willingly given up his vacation to spend just a fraction of it with his older brother. As luck would have it, he did not have to make that sacrifice.

Both of the brothers' leaders were supportive of reuniting them; consequently, Derek can still claim his leave at a later date.

"He told me he would rather do this instead of going to Germany and living it up," said Brian, who is deployed from Charleston Air Force Base, S.C. "It wasn't a shock to me, because I know my brother, and he prefers life-enriching experiences, and it was a once-in-a-

lifetime experience."

Military service runs deep in their family lines. Their grandfather was in the Army Air Corps, and their father was in the Army. Their older brother separated after honorably serving in the Marine Corps, and their middle brother is currently serving in the Army.

The only puzzle that remains is to wait and see if their baby sister, still in high school, will enlist in a service of her choice. Both men balk at the idea and jokingly said they will try to discourage their sibling, but admit it is a tradition they strongly value.

The brothers put their family at the core of their off duty time, and try to reunite often. Other than the expected "I will always be bigger, better, stronger and faster than you" ribbing, both of them equally respect the other.

And for a few days far away from hills and valleys of their childhood home, both men had the unique opportunity to witness the other's service to the United States firsthand.

Instead of chilling out at the installation's many recreation centers, the Czerniaks suited up in full battle rattle — helmet and Interceptor Body Armor with their M-16s slung over their shoulder — to convoy out into the searing desert to enjoy their unusual definition of a vacation together.

"He didn't know we were going on a convoy until he got here," Brian said. "I wanted to joke with him that day and say, 'Gear up. We're going out there.'"

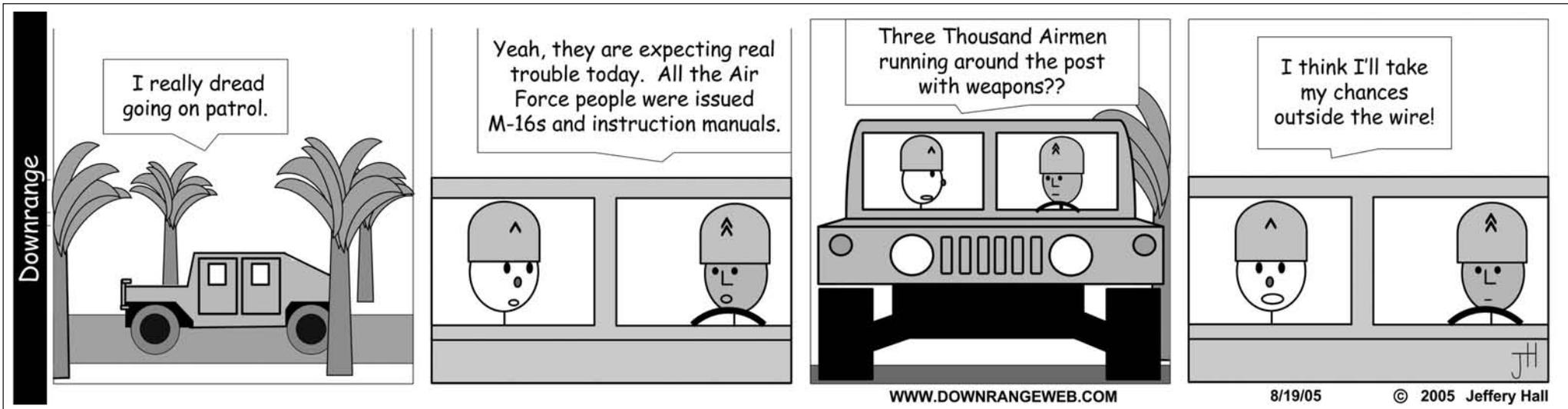
Brian had visited his brother's installation on security missions aboard cargo aircraft delivering supplies to Derek's post twice before their reunion. Previously, he had barely enough time to peek in the direction of his brother's work center.

"He was so close," said Derek, who was not notified in enough time to meet the plane. "He could see the end of the runway, and I was only less than a quarter of a mile away."

This time Brian had the honor of escorting his younger brother back himself and safely seeing him to his post.

"We have a mutual respect, curiosity and interest in what the other does," said Brian, who noted they also now have a clearer understanding what the other brings to the fight.

Scimitar Slapstick



Service members are encouraged to submit stories, photographs and art to the Scimitar. E-mail your submissions to scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil

Soldiers' board brings training to life

Story and photos by Pfc. Laura M. Bigenho
42nd Military Police Brigade Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, BAGHDAD, Iraq – “Three Soldiers in a Humvee have been wounded in an IED attack. You have 20 minutes to evacuate the casualties, evaluate the risk assessment, identify and treat all life threatening injuries, package them for transport and transmit a proper nine-line MEDEVAC,” declared Sgt. Desi Gurule, a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 42nd Military Police Brigade.

To Soldiers in the midst of a battle, those words could mean the difference between life and death. But for a group of eight Soldiers competing in a Soldier of the quarter board, they meant added pressure to accomplish the task at hand, determined to be the best out of their peers.

Designed to challenge Soldiers' skills and test their Army knowledge, the board comprised three test categories: physical fitness, hands-on events and total Soldier conceptual knowledge. Soldiers were given a general idea on what they might encounter at the board; however, they did not receive specific details.

“They knew what areas to study for the board questions, they knew there would be a physical event, and they knew there would be a hands-on event,” said Command Sgt. Maj.



Spc. Stephen Henderson, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 793rd Military Police Battalion, wraps a bandage around Spc. Pedro Maldonado's arm during a combat lifesaving test. The test was one of four major events in the Soldier of the Quarter board.

Brian Wiles, head planner and director for the board.

The competition kicked off at sunrise with a physical fitness test that was anything but typical. Soldiers had to walk one and a half miles, perform leg lifts and do inclined sit-ups while holding 5-pound weights. Following the PT test, Soldiers were evaluated on two hands-on events: combat lifesaving and preventative maintenance correction services.

Finally, after a long day spent outside in sweltering heat, candidates had a chance to freshen up and cool down inside the brigade's palace. Inside the conference room, a team of senior enlisted noncommissioned officers awaited them. Individually, Soldiers were called into the room, where NCOs tested their general Army knowledge by asking questions.

Spc. Erin Cooper, gunner and military police for HHC, prepared for the board by training herself to be better at physical fitness she studied for basic Army knowledge, with a concentration on weapons. To her surprise, very little was asked about weapons. The part she prepared most for ended up being the most difficult.

Spc. Erin Cooper, gunner and military police for HHC, prepared for the board by training herself to be better at physical fitness she studied for basic Army knowledge, with a concentration on weapons. To her surprise, very little was asked about weapons. The part she prepared most for ended up being the most difficult.

“I thought the PT was the hardest part,” Cooper said. “It was completely different from our normal PT test ... especially the walking part. Everybody expected we'd have to run.”

Spc. Thomas Davis, driver for 170th MP Co., struggled during parts of the CLS portion. He experienced the same trouble that several of his comrades encountered. For him, the most difficult task was being able to open the litter of collapsible stretchers.

“I had to [simulate calling] a MEDEVAC for assistance. I couldn't get the thing opened,” Davis said. “I've never had to use one until now, so this ended up being a good training experience.”

Overall, the Soldier of the quarter board was a great experience by the Soldiers and judges. In addition to giving Soldiers some well-deserved bragging rights, the board served as a learning tool.

“It helped the Soldiers realize their deficiencies, as well as



Spc. Erin Cooper, HHC, 42nd Military Police Brigade, helps Spc. Nathan Buck out of a Humvee during the combat lifesaving test.

the stuff they weren't so good at,” Gurule said. “They did very well considering the circumstances they were under. It's very hard to show up prepared for something totally different than what's expected of you at the time.”

“To see them put forth the effort to compete and conduct their duties out here makes me proud to serve with them. They are truly America's finest, and I am proud of all of them,” Wiles added.

ER

from Page 9

As a National Guard unit, the 1159th Medical Company comprises Soldiers who are full-time, civilian medical professionals.

“In the 1159th, we're lucky, because out of our 15 medics, seven are paramedics, and all of them have critical care experience,” Miller said. “Three are emergency medical technician intermediates. They all work for fire departments or ambulance services.”

The unit's UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters are equipped with medical equipment like oxygen, monitors and a defibrillator.

“The equipment you see in the back of our Black Hawks is the same equipment used by critical care transport teams on the highways of America,” Miller said.

To do the job, Miller said, takes flexibility. “The medical treatment portion of our mis-

sion happens as the event unfolds,” he said. “You need to be able to change gears quickly.”

Though they call it “groundhog day” because the same things happen every day, calls vary, Hitch said.

“You know it's going to be something different, until you get out to the site,” Hitch said, “then adrenaline just takes over.”

Getting to and from the site, called the “point of injury,” is the job of the pilot and pilot in command, who also navigates and works the radio. Miller stressed however, that the entire crew calls out hazards like suspicious vehicles, rising terrain, or changes in the road structure — a sign of a possible improvised explosive device.

“It's a lot of stress,” Miller said. “Not only are you dealing with a trauma patient, you're working in a hazardous environment. The insurgents don't care about the Red Cross on the aircraft. We're just another target to them.”

McColligan was part of the medical teams

targeted while evacuating IED victims in February. The flight crews treated and evacuated their patients while under direct fire and secondary IED attacks. While on the ground, McColligan said it took a couple of seconds for him to realize they were firing at him.

“When I was 30 yards away from the aircraft, the third IED went off about 50 feet from it,” McColligan said. “The adrenaline didn't hit me until I got in the aircraft, and I saw how bad off the Soldier was. I started counting my fingers and toes and checking for wounds.” He “used about every dressing in my bag” on the wounded Soldier, McColligan added.

As an emergency medical technician volunteer back home, McColligan said he worked about 30 hours a month.

“I went from sprained ankles and chipped teeth to people who were getting ready to die,” McColligan said. “It was a big change.”

Before coming to Iraq, McColligan said one of the worst things he had seen was a car

accident. The trauma he's witnessed here, he said, “is the worst I've ever seen.”

“I think I've seen every type of trauma here, with the exception of drowning,” McColligan said. “You have to take everything in stride and be very flexible.”

Dealing with battlefield trauma can be traumatic for the crews, Miller said, and they sometimes look fatigued or mentally drained. Crews are routinely ordered to undergo combat stress control — after going through what unit members refer to as “bad calls.”

“Sometimes you're so focused, you don't realize you're under that amount of stress,” Miller said. “It takes someone from the outside to look at you, and talk to you.”

“Everyone's there for each other,” Watkins said.

“The medevac flight crew is a very tight group,” Miller said. “We take this medical duty very seriously, and our patients become part of our tight group. When one of them dies, a piece of us dies with them.”

U.S. unit operates in new area, partners with Estonian troops

Story and photos by
Spc. Matthew Wester
1st Armored Division
Public Affairs Office

TAJI, Iraq – An Estonian Soldier raises his rifle to provide cover for an American scout who is searching a house.

Their uniforms, weapons, and even languages are different, but their goals here are the same: find illegal weapons, munitions and disrupt terrorist activity.

Task Force Baghdad elements of 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division teamed up with Soldiers from an Estonian Army platoon to conduct a cordon and search an area northwest of Baghdad.

Soldiers started the search before dawn and the raid stretched into the sweltering afternoon hours.

The operation was part of a transition for 2/70 Bn., which moved to a new area of operation northwest of Baghdad recently.

“We were just assigned to the area of operations here, so [the operation] gained us familiarization within the area,” said Maj. Tony D. Forbes Jr., executive officer for the battalion. “It allowed the Soldiers to get their boots on the ground.”

Forbes said the operation was the first time his battalion mobilized a large force of Soldiers to cordon and search in their new area, and it was valuable because the Soldiers got to know the terrain and interact with the residents.

“Basically, we just get out in the area and do what we can to learn,” said Capt. Anton W. Kemps, commander of 2/70’s Scout Platoon. “We do all sorts of patrols out there to get our leaders and our squads oriented to how the land works.”

Kemps said unit assignments to different zones are very fluid, and his battalion has done its best to adapt to the places where they have been assigned during this tour.

The search was also a chance for local citizens to see Coalition Forces actively engaged in protecting their neighborhood and rooting out terrorists.

“By doing an operation there, you get closer to the people, you let them know you are going after the bad guys, and hopefully you catch some of those bad guys,” Kemps said.

Kemps’ platoon moved from building to building, searching every room, every cabinet and even a chicken coop.

Estonian Soldiers were part of the effort, and although they have been in Iraq a short time during this tour, their history with 2/70 Bn. goes back to the liberation of Iraq in 2003.

“They came to us for a portion of Operation Iraqi Freedom,” Kemps said. “The Estonians requested to come with the battalion just because of the impression we left on each other while working together during OIF I.”

“The Estonians are not new to us. We’re honored to have them working with us again.” Forbes said.

Forbes said the search operation was an opportunity



Capt. Anton W. Kemps, 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, 3rd Infantry Division, checks on the status of his platoon during a cordon and search mission June 27.

for the leadership of the platoon-sized Estonian element to mesh with his battalion’s leadership.

“We integrated the Estonians into the search, so that we could see how they did things and they could see how we did things,” Kemps said.

The partnership was fruitful.

“Our finds were significant from the intelligence perspective,” Forbes said. “We found some weapons that weren’t authorized, and we did have several detainees.”

Forbes said the intelligence gathered from the detainees has already proven to be valuable. The raid was the first of many operations the battalion and Estonian troops will plan and execute in their new sector.

“We’re doing our best and we’re learning,” Kemps said. “I think we’re doing pretty well.”



An Estonian Soldier covers a squad of scouts, from 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, 3rd Infantry Division, during a cordon and search mission northwest of Baghdad June 27.

Coalition Corner

... highlighting countries
serving with MNF-Iraq



Bulgaria

local name: *Balgarija*

The Republic of Bulgaria is located in southeastern Europe, bordering the Black Sea, Turkey, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Greece and Romania. Size-wise, it is slightly larger than Tennessee. Almost 7.5 million people live here and use the Lev as their currency. Bulgaria is a member of NATO and is a candidate country for membership in the European Union.

Bulgaria is rich in historical and modern edifices. In the capital city, Sofia, one will find the Sveta Nedelya Cathedral and the 14th century St. Petka Samardjiiska standing tall in the southern part of downtown, with the National Museum of History just minutes away. On the eastern part of downtown is the Alexander Nevski Church, a neo-Byzantine memorial to the 200,000 Russian Soldiers who died fighting for Bulgaria’s independence. On the southern end of the city lies Mt. Vitosha, a rounded mountain that is a popular ski resort in the winter. South of Sofia are the Rila Mountains, which are not only popular ski spots, but also adorned by hikers who can climb Musala Peak, the highest mountain in the Balkan Peninsula, or journey across the mountains to the famous Rila Monastery. The city of Nesebar was originally founded by the Greeks around 510 B.C. and was once valued by Byzantium as a trading town. This city once boasted over 40 churches built during the 5th and 6th centuries; however, most of them are now in ruins.

Bulgaria has exquisite traditional foods to satisfy almost anyone’s palate. This country is said to be most famous for its delicious yogurt, some considering it the best in the world. Other typical Bulgarian dishes include the summer favorite tarator, a cold soup made with cucumbers; banitsa, a flaky cheese pastry filled with ingredients such as spinach, leek or onion; and shopska salad, a colorful medley of cucumbers, tomatoes and white cheese. Meat lovers need not fret, for their taste buds can be satisfied with entrees such as kebabche, ground pork patties spiced to taste, and kyufta, ground pork patties also with an abundance of a perfect blend of spices.

Bulgaria — yet another piece of the Multi-National Force - Iraq puzzle, dedicated to rebuilding Iraq.

References: www.cia.gov, www.lonelyplanet.com, www.nato.int, <http://europa.eu.int>, www.iern.org.au, www.mybulgaria.info.

Coalition Corner is compiled by Sgt. Misha King, assistant editor, scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil.



R&R in Qatar:

A refreshing break from a combat zone troops jump at the chance to enjoy

Service members on a "Desert Safari" tour during their R&R at Camp As Saliyah, Qatar, stretch their legs from four-wheeling in the desert and take a running jump from the peak of a wind-blown sand dune.



Experiencing a camel on a Qatar beach, 1st Lt. Susan Goff, 155th Brigade Combat Team military intelligence officer based at Forward Operating Base Kalsu in Iraq, enjoys her first-ever camel ride.

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Brett B. McMillan
Scimitar Editor

INTERNATIONAL ZONE, BAGHDAD, Iraq — A half-day desert safari, \$18; a dinner cruise, \$17; dinner at the poolside Chili's restaurant, \$10; a four-day rest and recuperation pass to Camp As Saliyah, Qatar — priceless.

This small country of roughly 800,000 people situated along the coast of the Persian Gulf, southwest of Kuwait gives U.S. troops a reprieve from their daily stresses of a combat zone to help boost morale and carry them through their deployment.

"A year is a long time. ... This was a nice getaway," remarked Sgt. Maj. Ralph Wright, while enjoying a "Desert Safari" his few days in Qatar this month. Perhaps the best part of the R&R was "just getting away — getting out of Iraq and being able to take it easy for a few days."

Not able to get away for two weeks of R&R leave during his deployment, the operations sergeant major with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 105th Military Police Battalion, North Carolina National Guard unit from Asheville, based at Camp Bucca, said, "It's been a lot of fun. I got to get off base one night and see sites and have dessert and coffee."

Since October 2003, service members deployed in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom have been receiving the opportunity to enjoy the getaway — as

mission will allow.

Working at the Camp As Saliyah R&R service desk, Sgt. Gerald Bjork, of the 79th Army National Guard from Sacramento, Calif., said the R&R mission is to accommodate the service members and to make sure they have a good time while they're here and enjoy themselves. "There are no formations — we do everything we can for them to make it like a four-day holiday."

The R&R program's daily venues, such as a water sports package with various power boating sports, jet skiing, and swimming in the ocean, the desert safari, dinner cruises and trips to the massive city plaza mall in Doha, the capital, provide a variety of activities for service members to enjoy outside the base.

The base itself offers a relaxing atmosphere where service members are able to put aside their fatigues and body armor within an hour of their arrival, not to be worn again until the time of their departure.

After dismounting a camel on a Qatar beach, 1st Lt. Susan Goff, 155th Brigade Combat Team



A Richland Springs, Texas, native, Spc. Richard Sliger, HHC, 43rd ASG, from Fort Carson, Colo., gives sandboarding a try down a dune in the Qatar desert.



Service members enjoy four-wheeling in the desert where extreme heat meets extreme driving by an expert. The driver pushes the SUV to the limits giving his customers the ultimate thrill of their R&R in Qatar.