

The Marne Express

"Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork"

Volume 2, Issue 11

Serving the Soldiers of Task Force Baghdad

July 17, 2005

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Helping those in need

Spc. Ben Brody

Sgt. 1st Class Jerome Jackson, 448th Civil Affairs Battalion, gives bags of food to residents of Tawaittha, Iraq, during a humanitarian mission, June 29. Civil affairs Soldiers took advantage of the opportunity to meet young and old alike following a cordon and search mission.

Bringing aid to Tawaittha

Spc. Ben Brody
2nd BCT PAO

TAWAITHA, Iraq – In the shadow of al-Rasheed airfield, a community neglected by the former regime works to build a better life under the new Iraqi government.

Garbage lies strewn in Tawaittha's

streets and unexploded ordnance litters the barren fields.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, launched Operation Paradise City June 30, a cordon-and-search of many homes and fields in the area just south of Baghdad.

At the same time, Soldiers from 448th Civil Affairs Battalion, a U.S. Army

Reserve unit based at Fort Lewis, Wash., provided humanitarian assistance and medical aid to the area's residents.

"It makes a difference at the ground level," said Sgt. 1st Class J.R. Jetton, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1/9 FA, CA team member. "The guys

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Another night on the road: 1/13 Armor rolls out

Spc. Matthew Wester
3/1AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – Two tanks start up their turbine engines with a

piercing whine. Plumes of sand rise as their treads grind forward.

The tankers inside are going to work.



Spc. Matthew Wester

Sgt. 1st Class Izzy Barela, a tank commander for A Co., 1st Bn., 13th Armor, 3rd Bde., 1st AD, and a Monticello, Utah native scans for insurgent activity from the hatch of an M1A1 tank.

The armored crewmen of 1st Battalion, 13th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, are doing what they have trained to do from the start of their military careers – patrol a combat zone in their M1A1 Abrams tanks.

"Every night is ours," said Sgt. Jonathan Clarkson, an armored crewman for 1/13 Armor's B Company, and a gunner on the patrol's trailing tank.

Clarkson, of Dayton, Ohio, said his crew patrols for several hours at a time, but the night missions aren't as long as they used to be.

"We're out for pretty long missions," he said. "We were out for 72 hours one time."

The Abrams crews start

their long missions with pre-combat checks of their tanks and weapons systems.

"Prior to every mission, when we go out, the first thing on my mind, of course, is maintenance," sth who was in charge of the trailing tank. "We check the weapons, make sure the fire control systems are up, the radios are up. Checking everything else in the turret is what is on my mind."

Sgt. 1st Class Izzy Barela, of Monticello, Utah, is the commander of the lead tank from A Company. He expressed the Zen of tanking in very simple terms.

"If you take care of the

See NIGHT, page 19

m7 sends

Command Sgt. Major William M. Grant
TF Baghdad command sergeant major

I would like to say thanks for all the sweat, tears and dedication that you great Marne Dog-Faced Soldiers have selflessly given the mission.

This deployment began in December for a small contingent, followed by our major troop movement during the months of January and February.

When you look back at all the ground we have covered in the past six months, it's incredible.

We as a division have dealt with the tragedies of war.

We've experienced the heartaches resulting from the loss of our battle comrades and close friends who have made the ultimate sacrifice providing a better future for Iraq.

We all share the internal emotional struggles that accompany loss of lives.

I share with you today that all of our fallen heroes would tell us to push forward to accomplish our missions.

I say to you my fellow Marne Soldiers that we must indeed stay the course.

We are all professionals and members of a valuable team.

We are a dedicated team.

Dedicated to securing the future for not only generations of Americans, but also Iraqis and Afghans as well.

I pray that the next six months advance as rapid-

ly as the past six have.

Hang tough Soldiers. We will be home with our friends and families before we know it.

Until then, I ask that all Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division team continue to focus on their missions.

The team needs each and every one of you to always remember that every Soldier is a rifleman first.

I advise that we revisit the basics.

Revisit the mission-critical fundamentals of Soldiering that provide stability and sustainment to our state of discipline.

Dedicated competitors train hard while preparing for their events. The final analysis of the current race we are in will be defined differently depending upon which vantage point you take.

We have trained hard and we're currently in the execution phase of our mission.

Mind you, we are doing well.

I believe we all can finish strong.

Teammates, let's make the commitment to a strong finish, remaining unblemished from allegations of wrong doing.

I thank each and every one of you for all of your sacrifices.

Likewise, please take the time to extend a "thank you" to someone else, because it matters more than you realize.

We're all in this together, and together we will succeed.

"Rock of the Marne!"

Use the five C's to secure an IED site.

Confirm : the device

Clear : the area

Call : EOD

Cordon : the perimeter

Control : site access



0035

IEDs KILL

THE ARMY VALUES

Loyalty

Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. constitution, the Army, and other Soldiers. Be loyal to the nation and its heritage.

The Word on the Street

What has made the adjustment to Iraq easier for you?"

"I'm a three-peat (third rotation) in-country. So my comfort item is the feeling of making a difference by training the Iraqi people."



Sgt. Juan M. Maisonet
 MiTT team, 48th BCT
 Lawrenceville, Ga.

"The food! It's pretty good and the weather is so hot, so it's a motivation for us to eat good. Without a hot chow you get stuck with MREs."



Pfc. Melvin Cotto
 C Co., 1st Bn., 295th Inf.
 Caguas, Puerto Rico

"My DVD player. It helps take my mind off the daily grind here."



Sgt. Rachel J. Dryden
 HHC, 48th BCT
 Ft. Benning, Ga.

"My personal entertainment system, which is my computer. It's a wonderful creature comfort."



Maj. Gary M. Cole
 148th Support Bn.
 Ephriam, UT

"My air mattress. I get a much better sleep on it than the cot."



Spc. Jonathan T. Cole
 133rd Signal Bn.
 Chicago, Ill.

The Marne Express

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Doing all that we can do

Spc. David Leite
A Co. 1/184 Inf.

As we walk through the Al Dora market on one of our dismounted patrols, I reflect back on 3rd platoon closing in on a month here at the power plant. Not really, I'm mostly surveying my surroundings and handing out the occasional hard candy, thanks mom.

It's a bit easier to reflect upon our weary month here at the power plant from our air conditioned trailer that we in 4th squad have now dubbed home. It's amazing how home can become so many different things in such a short period of time.

Since our deployment, home has been both big and little tents, barracks

at all levels of repair and even small patches of land where we huddled together in the heat and cold. Currently, home is all these places to us.

We have camaraderie and whether it be a rock or a pillow we lay our heads upon, we have the kind thoughts of our families with us always. Thoughts we keep to ourselves, thoughts we share with our buddies. So we make what we have a home and carry on as we always do, repeatedly settling into this home or that, until we reach the ultimate home, the one filled with smiling faces when we return stateside.

OK, so back to the dismounted patrol.

Our daily experiences are a possible "barometer for success" in this country

or maybe just in our sector. We see the many faces of this city daily. The cradle of civilization it is said, yet, this country is in democratic infancy.

It's a society living its life the way of the 18th century, yet still immersed in the technology of cell phones, computers and automobiles.

We have stepped in to nurture this fledgling democracy.

The Iraqis are paying the precious toll for their freedom with the loss of Iraqi Police officers, Iraqi Soldiers and the lives of innocent residents.

It's a strain on the senses, but that's what we are submerged in on a daily basis ... upheaval and turmoil, side by side with hope.

A stroll through the Al Dora market is not quite like a trip to the local

supermarket back home, but a step back in time. We enjoy our leisurely patrol; ever cognizant of our surroundings.

We walk around handing out candy and sharing our smiles as freely as we may.

We are not universally loved or accepted, but we do well given the circumstances. We work at the hearts and minds of the willing and hope for converts along the way.

It will take time. And that is all that we can do - keep performing our good deeds and let time show our actions are honorable. Times are often hard, but I feel that it's all worth it.

Take a moment and look at the world we are building for our children.

Unsung heroes "BATTLE SQUADS"

Command Sgt. Major William M. Grant
TF Baghdad command sergeant major

Closing with and destroying the enemy is vitally crucial on today's battlefield.

The composition of the Army's fighting elements vary from organization to organization.

Today we are recognizing a group of assembled professionals who are currently out of their original lane of expertise. However, the greatest reality that this union of Warriors has demonstrated is the ability of Soldiers all across the Marne Division to step up to the plate of excellence.

Battle squads and personal security details consist of maintainers and sup-

port Warriors. I'm very impressed with the abilities of these Soldiers and the proficiency they exhibit every day. These successes cross gender lines and different areas of expertise.

Regardless of the job, whether driver, T.C., or gunner, these Soldiers are maximizing their potential.

They are like other combat patrols frequently traveling the major supply routes in and around Baghdad safeguarding leaders and ensuring that logistical and administrative payloads reach their destinations without incident.

The division's leadership salutes you and your efforts in support of mission and service to your country.

Thank you for being part of our great team!

"Rock of the Marne"



Photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Spc. Edward Andrews, a mechanic/driver for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, shrugs into his vest as they prepare to move out.



Photos by Spc. Michael Leslie (left) and Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper (above)

Pfc. Jason Roland (left), a driver for 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division Personal Security Detachment, checks the radio for instructions at a medical civilian assistance program site northwest of Baghdad July 4. Pfc. Steven Travis (above), a mechanic/gunner for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, loads a squad automatic weapon before leaving base.

1/15 Inf. Medics stay on cutting edge

Sgt. Matthew Acosta
22nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE McKENZIE, Iraq – Providing healthcare in a desert combat environment such as Iraq can be a daunting task.

With the amount of Coalition Forces Soldiers and contracted civilians here in theatre, maintaining a constant ready level of health is a critical tasking for individuals and medical professionals.

Besides caring for the daily sick call patients, the medics of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, treat patients suffering from the common cold to combat casualties.

“Most people associate medic units with giving IVs and checking pulses, but we run a Level 1 aid station which can handle anything from standard sick call procedures to minor surgery,” said Staff Sgt. James Elmer, non-commissioned officer in charge.

The 14-man unit hosts sick call twice a day, six days a week, and once on Sundays for on-post personnel. At times, even local civilians occasionally show up at the gate with their sick and injured.

“Of course we treat (American) Soldiers, but we also treat the Iraqi Army Soldiers and many civilians that work here on post,” Elmer said.

“There have been times when we would get a call from the front gate asking us if we can see and treat a sick or injured local.”

Elmer said they once treated an Iraqi child who had a large third degree burn along his entire arm from boiling water.

“It was a full thickness burn right through to the subcutaneous tissue,” he said.

Elmer is no stranger when it comes to combat injuries either.

He said it was only a few days ago when an Iraqi Army soldier came in with multiple gunshot wounds. One shot went through his entire torso and he had lost a lot of blood. Regardless, the medical facility was able to treat him and stabilize him well enough to survive the air-medical evacuation to the hospital at Logistic Supply Area Anaconda.

“We have the capability to treat many injuries here,” Elmer said. “We hold trauma classes as often as possible to keep the medics performing at their top level because there are always new ways of treatment being developed.”

Recently the Army has learned the importance of newer medical treatments over the old bandage routine it has taught for many years.

Elmer explained that the Army has started changing its medical doctrine to include some of the newer developments in medicine such as using the tourniquet as a primary source of bleeding control under the new Tactical Casualty Combat Band (TCCC) standards.

“Under the older doctrine a tourniquet was the last resort of blood loss control,” Elmer explained. “Now they are starting to teach medics to use it first and then to bandage the wound after the blood flow is stopped.”

Soldiers are becoming more educated regarding new



Sgt. Matthew Acosta

Staff Sgt. James Elmer, aid station NCOIC, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, Task Force Liberty, applies the new Hemcon bandage to Spc. Raymond Hall, medic, as part of a demonstration on using the bandage to treat a severed limb.

medical training and treatment standards.

“The new acronym is ABCD,” Elmer said. “That stands for airway, breathing, circulation and decision; as in transport decision regarding medical evacuation priority.”

There are new wound dressings like the Asherman dressing for sucking chest wounds, which has a one-way air valve to prevent air from entering the chest cavity, and the Hemcon dressing which adheres to the damaged tissue to stop heavy bleeding. It uses the body’s moisture to activate the biodegradable adhesive.

Elmer has recently trained his Soldiers on the use of the new Hemcon bandage and he praised its ability to help save the life of an Iraqi soldier.

Being a graduate of the Special Operations Combat Medic Course combined with the experience learned from time he spent working with a Special Operations Aviation unit and the 82nd Airborne Division, Elmer has seen many advanced medical techniques.

He shares his expertise by teaching these skills to his younger medics.

Elmer said that being a good medic is not only how far you can ruck (march) or how well you can shoot or

whether or not you finish your details, but that when you’re called upon to treat a casualty you will do the job you trained to do without fault.

“The only way you can do those things is by constantly training,” he added. “This past April we held a hands-on class where we taught the medics how to control major arterial bleeding, chest tube insertions, subcutaneous suturing, endotracheal intubations and venous cut-downs.”

Elmer said many of the newer trauma treatment techniques being taught come from the Special Operations community because those medics are on the cutting edge of medical technology and work hand-in-hand with the major trauma centers around the U.S.

“Now the Army is incorporating many of the teachings into advanced individual training of Soldiers in the medical field,” Elmer said.

Without warning, a casualty can arrive requiring immediate advanced life-saving procedures. By practicing cutting-edge advanced medical trauma care, the medics of Task Force Liberty are staying ahead of the game, making sure they are ready to provide critical healthcare at a moments’ notice.

48th BCT chemical platoon takes on new mission

Sgt. David Bill
48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – As morning broke June 18, Sgt. Jason Stanfield, of Perry, Ga., a gunner in the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 48th Brigade Combat team’s security platoon, prepared his humvee to roll out as part of the security element for the civil affairs officer, Lt. Col. Scott Carter, of Savannah, and other members of the CA project management team.

The Soldiers were conducting a site visit to the first reverse-osmosis water treatment plant to be constructed in Iraq.

The security platoon, assigned to the Civil Military Operations section, is composed of Soldiers from 48th BCT Chemical Platoon have trained to do a very different mission in Iraq than the one that many of them initially trained for.

The majority of the Soldiers in the security platoon were trained as chemical specialists to conduct missions relating to chemical weapons and decontamination of equipment and personnel.

“I’d rather do this (the security mission) than chemical in this heat,” said Spc. Ricky Taylor from Watkinsville, Ga., a gunner in the platoon.

“The guys were up for the mission,” Stanfield said. “They took to it well. They will be providing security for the project management team so they can do their job.”

“He (Carter) identified a need and found a solution” said the project management team leader for the CMO, Capt. Joe Lynch of Sugar Hill, Ga. “Lt. Col. Carter realized that his plan was to conduct patrols and travel throughout the brigade’s area of operations almost daily which required significant coord-

ination to get the security detail and proper number of convoy vehicles for each day’s activities. His proposal was to train the chemical platoon to be a convoy security force attached to the Civil Military Operations team.”

Once approved, the 16-member platoon went to work in January at Fort Stewart, Ga., developing a training plan to make the platoon successful.

“They were eager to learn and take part in this mission” Lynch said, adding, “Since this is not a combat mission, our footprint around the Iraqi populace must be as small as possible.”

That was evident during this first patrol as only 11 people and three vehicles were used, which included the members of the CA team and two other observers.

“These guys are alert to the idea of not causing any damage,” Lynch said.

“Today’s mission was to visit the water treatment plant’s construction site to see the progress that had been made.”

The nearly \$4.3 million project is being contracted through Iraqi companies. More than \$3.5 million of the projected funds have been allocated and much of the equipment is already headed for Iraq.

“This is Phase One of a project that will provide water to numerous villages who have not had a potable water supply previously,” Lynch said. “Once irrigation is available, then Iraqi farmers can go back to farming and producing.”

“Water is something we Americans take for granted,” Stanfield said. “A drop of water means something over here. It makes you feel good to be helpful. Working with the project management team can show the benefit of what the Army is giving back.”

DSB mourns fallen warrior, friend

Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick
DSB PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – More than 200 Division Support Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers filled Warrior Chapel to capacity as they gathered to memorialize a fellow comrade, Soldier, and friend June 20.

Spc. Anthony G. Jones was killed by an improvised explosive device June 14 while performing his duties as a transporter for 223rd Heavy Equipment Transport Platoon, 104th Transportation Company, 87th Corps Support Battalion.

“(Specialist) Jones was one of those people who, when you saw him, he always had a smile on

his face,” said Capt. Yolanda Bailey, commander of 104th Trans. Co. “He touched the hearts of many Soldiers in the ‘Road Dawg’ family.”

Family was a top priority for Jones, a Sumter, S.C., native.

“His biggest joy in life was his wife and kids,” said Spc. Michael Wisher, a fellow transporter and best friend who served with Jones for three years. “He had a great sense of pride and discipline, which made him a great Soldier. He was the type of person who would be there for you when you needed him most.”

“It was truly an honor to serve with Specialist Jones,” Bailey said. “I know that any one who knew him feels a sense of loss.”



Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick

A photograph and the two combat awards of Spc. Anthony G. Jones, 104th Transportation Company, 87th Corps Support Battalion, were displayed in memorial at Warrior Chapel June 20.

'Five Cs' simplify improvised explosive device fight

Staff Sgt. Mark St.Clair
MNC-I PAO

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – Five potentially life-saving words are being driven home to Coalition service members and civilians throughout the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater.

Confirm, clear, call, cordon, and control are the “Five Cs” that represent a simple set of guidelines that Coalition forces can and should use when encountering a suspected improvised explosive device.

“The reason we teach the Five Cs is because they make an easy to remember guide for (service members) to follow if they suspect or find an IED,” said Alex Szegedi, operations officer, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Task Force, Camp Victory.

Using methods like the Five Cs simplifies IED awareness and “helps in the decision-making process, helping it become second-nature. They’re also on the IED Smart Card,” said Lt. Col. Ted Martin, chief, JIEDDTF. The IED Smart Card is produced by the Victory-based IED Working Group.

The IED Working Group, led by British Maj. Gen. Mark Mans, MNC-I deputy commander, meets weekly.

Liaisons from major subordinate ground units, information operations delegates, ordnance-destruction contractors and others come together to discuss advances being made in the IED fight, changes in insurgent tactics and the most important issue: how to get valuable information down to where it matters — the troops on the ground.

“We’d never encountered anything like (IEDs) on the battlefield, and we’re not shy about going to people with expertise,” said Lt. Col. Ted Martin, chief, JIEDDTF. Some of the “people with expertise” have been Coalition soldiers in the British army, who have been dealing with IEDs in theaters like Northern Ireland for years. The British used a Four-C model to counter IEDs in the past, and Coalition forces in Iraq used that as a framework and adapted it to the present fight, said Martin.

Confirm

The first step when encountering a suspected IED is confirming its existence. If service members suspect an IED while performing 5- and 25-meter searches of their positions, they should act like it could detonate at any moment, even if the suspected IED

turns out to be a false alarm. Using as few people as possible, troops should begin looking for telltale signs of IEDs — like wires or pieces of ordnance sticking out of the ground. As Martin said, “There’s no place like Iraq when it comes to ammunition on the ground.” So what looks like an IED may be a piece of unexploded ordnance but it should be treated like an IED until it is determined that it’s not.

While searching, troops should try to stay as safe as possible, using anything available for protection. If a better view is needed while searching, soldiers should move as safely as possible while maintaining as much distance as they can from the suspected IED to continue searching. Rifle scopes, binoculars and even cameras can be used to search from a safer distance. It also may be helpful to ask local Iraqis for information, but troops should never ask them to search too. Personnel should never try to touch a suspected IED and should never try to do the job explosive ordnance disposal technicians are specially trained to do.

Clear

If an IED has been confirmed, the next step is to clear the area. The safe distance is determined by several factors: the tactical situation, avoiding being predictable and moving several hundred meters away from the IED. Everyone within the safe distance should be evacuated. If more room is needed, such as when the IED is vehicle-borne, soldiers should clear a wider area and constantly direct people out of the danger area. The only people going near the IED should be those who are there to diffuse it, such as EOD personnel. While clearing the area, soldiers should constantly be on the lookout for secondary IEDs. If any such devices are found, they should reposition to a safe area and report the find to the ranking service member on the scene. Soldiers should try not to set patterns while performing clearing procedures, so the enemy will not be able to learn from our tactics and techniques. By not setting patterns and monitoring non-Coalition personnel watching the situation, troops are better protected.

Call

While the area surrounding the IED is being cleared, a nine-line IED/UXO report should be called in. The report

is much like the nine-line report used for medically evacuating casualties, and includes the necessary information for the unit’s Tactical Operations Center (TOC) to assess the situation and prepare an appropriate response to clear the IED as the threat.

Cordon

After the area has been cleared and the IED has been called in, Soldiers should establish blocking positions around the area to prevent vehicle and foot traffic from approaching the IED; make sure the safe area is truly safe by checking for secondary IEDs; and make use of all available cover. The effected area’s entire perimeter should be secured and dominated by all available personnel, and any available obstacles should be used to block vehicle approach routes.

Troops should scan both near and far and look for an enemy who may be watching and waiting to detonate the IED. Insurgents often hide in locations where they can see the device and ascertain the right moment to detonate. Personnel should randomly check people leaving the area to deter attacks, again avoiding setting patterns. Establishing obstacles to control approaches to security positions is another tactic the JIEDDTF stresses, since insurgents may try to attack local security forces using a vehicle-borne IED.

Control

Since the distance of all personnel from the IED directly affects their safety, service members should control the site to prevent someone from straying dangerously close to the IED until it is cleared. The task force stresses that no one should leave the area until EOD gives the “all clear.” While controlling the site, make sure all the troops in the area know what to do if attacked with small arms or rocket-propelled grenades.

If troops are a part of a patrol or convoy that finds an IED, they should remember the Five Cs in order to deal with the situation as quickly and safely as possible. An IED that is found is still an IED attack, said the JIEDDTF. By finding the IED, it’s the enemy’s attack that has been disrupted.

“(The Five Cs) reinforce IED awareness and training. It’s a checklist that helps you think; it’s a common-sense thing ... to help people remember the proper steps when encountering an IED,” Szegedi said.



Courtesy Photo

When an improvised explosive device has been found and trained personnel have been called in to manage the situation, troops on the scene should cordon and control all access routes to the danger area.

125th FSB ensures battlefield success

Spc. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – For every combat arms Soldier on the ground, there are many Soldiers behind the scenes, making sure these troops are well supplied, healthy and their war-fighting equipment is working.

The 125th Forward Support Battalion provides that support for 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, and they also have taken on additional responsibilities to ensure the brigade can meet its goals during this deployment.

“Our mission is to support the brigade. It’s something I try to impart to everyone who comes into the battalion,” said Lt. Col. Jack Hinkley, commander of 125th FSB and a native of Turner, Maine. “Support covers a wide range of subjects. We have our normal maintenance, supply, medical functions, but this rotation we’re picking up a lot of transportation, and we’re picking up responsibility for the Brigade Detention Facility.”

“Just about anything the brigade needs that is support-related, they call us,” he said.

One of the main needs of any combat brigade is to have operational equipment ready for missions.

The battalion’s B Company



Dr. (Capt.) Robert G. Whicker, brigade dental surgeon for 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, performs restorative care on a patient at the “Cobra” troop medical clinic at Camp Taji.

makes sure that happens.

“We conduct direct support maintenance for the entire brigade,” said Capt. Craig B. Boston, B Company commander.

Boston, from Saco, Maine, said his company replaces major parts on vehicles, maintains and fixes weapons systems, repairs communications equipment, and recovers damaged vehicles outside the post.

“We have a bay shop which consists of six teams, and we have five teams with the supported units,” he said. “We have our normal mission, which is maintenance, but we also have our missions which are not doctrinal.”

The company provides Soldiers to staff the Brigade Detention Facility and the battalion’s Personal Security Detail.

“Maintenance is very important. This is a very harsh environment on the vehicles and equipment,” Boston said. “Being a mechanic is not a glamorous role, but the fact is, people couldn’t operate without us.”

Mechanics can’t repair equipment without the proper parts.

The 125th’s A Company is in charge of organizing those parts and getting them where they are needed.

“On a daily basis, we are providing different classes of supplies for the 3rd Brigade,” said Capt. James E. Gee, commander of A Co. and a native of Winona, Miss.

Gee said a large portion of the company’s job is to store, track and deliver Class IX supplies, which are repair parts for combat vehicles.

The company runs warehouses and a supply yard on post. It also recovers vehicles that have broken down or been damaged on the roads outside Camp Taji.

Keeping vehicles and equipment running is a major part of what the 125th does, but keeping 3rd Brigade Soldiers healthy is also part of its mission.

The battalion’s medical component, C Company, staffs the “Cobra” troop medical clinic on post, embeds medics with the brigade’s combat units, and provides various other medical services.

“We provide combat health support to the brigade. We are

‘Level Two’, the next level above a battalion aid station,” said Sgt. 1st Class Henry W. Chapman, a Columbus, Ohio, native and first sergeant for C Co.

Chapman said the company has been able to take over an existing site and turn it into a well-stocked, efficient treatment facility.

The clinic provides all the services of a battalion aid station plus a lab, dental, x-ray and trauma services, said Capt. Peter A. Ramos, commander of C Co. from Ft. Riley, Kan.

“The bulk of our mission has been sick call,” he said. “We have had some trauma. Thankfully, it hasn’t been much.”

“We treat any traumas that come through the door,” said Dr. (Maj.) Gregory Martin, a San Antonio, Texas, resident and clinic physician for C Co. “We try to stabilize the patient and put them on a helicopter for definitive care.”

The company is prepared to deal with medical emergencies outside the clinic as well, rushing to Soldiers who need medical treatment on or off Camp Taji.

“At all times, we maintain two ambulance crews, ready to roll on a moment’s notice,” Ramos said.

The company’s medical providers also care for the detainees at the Brigade Detention Facility.

“We see the detainees daily,” Martin said. “We provide very good care for the detainees.”

The 125th not only provides medics to treat detainees, but also provides Soldiers to guard them.

This isn’t a typical duty of a support battalion.

It is one of the extra tasks the battalion has taken on to support 3rd Brigade.

“What we’ve done to man the (Brigade Detention Facility) is pull people from throughout the battalion – cooks, mechanics, clerks. We’ve brought them all together, given them military police training and made them our staff out there,” Hinkley said.

“We’ve put them under our Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and it’s been working out really well,” he said.

Sgt. First Class Jonathan



Photos by Spc. Matthew Wester

Sgt. James A. Fowler, a track vehicle mechanic for B Company, 125th Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, from Waynesville Mo., repairs an electric light set at the B Co. maintenance facility.

Horsager, first sergeant for the battalion’s HHC, said the Soldiers have become a good team and young leaders have emerged in the platoon-sized element that runs the facility.

Another additional task performed by the battalion is staffing a personal security detachment.

The PSD accompanies the battalion commander on missions off post and escorts other troops who need extra security on operations outside the wire.

“Any time there is a brigade asset that doesn’t have a security element or doesn’t have enough vehicles to make up a convoy, we will augment them, take them where they need to go, and provide security for them,”

said 1st Lt. James McWherter, commander of the battalion’s personal security detail.

McWherter said his detail is made up of Soldiers from diverse military occupational fields, who have received new training and come together to work as an effective team.

The battalion as a whole is just as diverse.

Strong leadership is required to effectively manage a unit with such a variety of tasks and troops, and that leadership starts at the top with the battalion staff and commander.

“There are approximately 70 different military occupational specialties in the battalion,” Hinkley said. “No two platoons in my battalion are alike.”

No Soldier left behind

Sgt. Matthew Maupin

“I will not leave a fallen comrade”

These well known words from the Warrior Ethos ring true for Sgt. Matt Maupin.

Maupin is an Army Reserve Soldier from 724th Transportation Company who was captured April 9, 2004 during Operation Iraqi Freedom 2.

Sgt. Maupin – we are still looking for you and we will find you.

You have not been forgotten.



256th BCT picks best in the brigade

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PAO

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq – “How do you know when the soles of your boots are worn out?”

Before Spc. Jason Gregory, from Gretna, La., of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry, 256th Brigade Combat Team, was chosen as the Soldier of the Quarter, he faced this question from a panel of judges made up of senior non-commissioned officers from 256th BCT.

Gregory said of all the questions he studied for the Soldier of the Quarter board, this was not one he expected the NCOs would ask.

“But they asked it, and luckily I’d looked at it in the study guide just the night before,” he said.

The answer?
“When you can roll a pencil behind any corner of the sole,” Gregory said.

The panel for the Soldier and NCO of the Quarter Board consisted of 10 judges, made up of battalion command sergeants major and company first sergeants. Each board member asked two questions, covering a variety of topics – everything from uniform standards to knowledge of weapons and current events.

Gregory, who has previous active duty service to his credit, was selected by his platoon sergeant to appear before the battalion board, and from there, he advanced to the brigade level. His overall performance, and the way he conducted the day-to-day business of soldiering, are what struck his leadership to choose him for the honor.

The board considers more than the Soldier’s knowledge when making the selection, according to Gregory.

“You’re judged on your uniform appearance, whether you’re clean shaven, and on your haircut,” he said.

He also said Soldiers were being judged even before they stepped foot through the door.

“You’re judged on how you knock on the door and enter the room. When you present yourself, the panel knows you’re nervous, but you’re judged on how you handle that,” Gregory said.

Sgt. Gerard Conrad, from New Orleans, a team leader and Bradley Fighting Vehicle dismount with B Company, 2nd Bn., 156th Inf., who is attached to 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, was named the NCO of the Quarter.

When Conrad found out the battalion selected him as a representative at the brigade level, he had very little time to study for the board. Luckily,

as a law school student with a bachelor’s degree from Louisiana State University in creative writing, over the years he’s developed the ability to retain a lot of information in a short amount of time.

For three days he studied the 140-page study guide front to back. His first question, however, was not in the study guide. It was something the judge felt Conrad should know just from being a Soldier in Iraq.

“I was asked why the first body of government in Iraq was selected – which was to draft the constitution, not just merely make laws,” he said.

A bit different from the junior-enlisted Soldiers’ board questions, the judges asked NCOs about leadership principles in addition to basic Soldiering functions. Conrad, who was promoted to sergeant after only two years of service with the 256th, said there were some things he could not have known, considering his short time as an NCO.

“I had to do some studying, because this is stuff that comes with years of experience,” he said.

Ironically, he claimed fulfilling his leadership role helped him be more prepared for the board’s questions. In the past, he helped his own Soldiers study for the Soldier of the Quarter Board.

Conrad said in addition to the questions and the Soldiers’ appearance, the judging is largely based on military courtesy and customs. He joked that the questioning was held in a tent – a very small space – on purpose.

“When I walked in, I had to do facing movements and there were a bunch of poles, basically, in the way. I couldn’t just walk straight in and do a right face and walk to my chair. I had to do about six facing movements just to get to my seat,” Conrad said.

Once he made it around the maze of poles, saluted the board, and introduced himself and his unit, Conrad said he had to sit at attention, straight up with his hands on his knees, and answer his questions as formally and knowledgeably as possible.

Being chosen as the NCO of the Quarter is not only a credit to his military career, but to his civilian career, as well, Conrad said.

“I think this experience will reflect quite well on my civilian resume. I noticed, even with a bachelor’s degree, after I joined the (Louisiana Army National) Guard and was able to add military experience, I got a ton more responses from potential employers,” he said.

“Working in this kind of environment, companies are able to see that



Spc. Chris Foster
Spc. Jason Gregory, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry, 256th Brigade Combat Team, was selected as the brigade’s Soldier of the Quarter June 13.

you’re someone who can work well within an organization, especially at the NCO level,” said Conrad.

Having been a leader in the military, he has learned how to handle different types of people, which he thinks is very important and relates well to the job scale back home.

Conrad said he felt honored to be selected by his leadership to represent his unit at the brigade level.

“They saw something in me and trusted me to go before the brigade

board and do well,” he said.

Gregory shared his sentiments. “Going in, I felt pretty confident,” he said, “we were all good Soldiers. We wouldn’t have been there if we weren’t.”

By being chosen to participate in this event, Gregory said he read his leadership’s message loud and clear.

“This was a good thing, not only for the battalion, but it’s a big thing for me,” Gregory said. “It tells me that I’m doing a good job.”

Useful Arabic Phrases

English	Arabic	English	Arabic
The weather is hot	al joe har	Where is?	Wayn El?
What is that?	Hi shumu?	Come with me	ta Al ma ^l ai
Good Morning	Sabah ALKhair	How are you?	SHLo nek
Welcome	AHlen wa SAHlen	Good Night	Layla Saeeda

4th Brigade walks streets to keep Iraq safe

Pfc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD — Military patrols in Baghdad beg the metaphor of a policeman on his beat.

Patrols serve two important functions. One is to provide safety by mere presence. People naturally feel safer when the police are visible.

The other is to glean intelligence. Knowing where criminals work, their methods and how to better counteract the threat posed to the civilian population is all part of a cop's beat.

Soldiers assigned to 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, perform many of the same tasks as police officers, but the threats they face are more dangerous than pickpockets and burglars.

Even though his platoon has not been attacked while on a dismounted patrol through the neighborhoods, one noncommissioned officer holds his Soldiers' safety above everything else.

"As soon as you leave the gate, you are always locked and loaded and alert," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert

Sammons, a platoon sergeant assigned to A Company, 3/7 Inf. and a native of Roanoke, Va. "We're always scanning everything around us; watching the rooftops and the streets."

Sammons thought his unit's mission would involve more conflict but his relatively uneventful job has not come without a loss that has struck close to his heart.

"I lost two Soldiers on the 19th of April," Sammons said. "That was a reality check."

After that, his Soldiers' level of intensity was raised and he had to remind them to keep their emotions in check so as not to compromise the greater mission.

That mission involves defeating the insurgency and helping the Iraqi people understand that they need to rebuild their country with as little help from American forces as possible.

"A lot of (our mission) is intelligence gathering, but at the same time we are building relationships, too," Sammons said. "We treat them with respect and dignity. Everybody in our area is very compliant. The unit before us didn't get out and walk around the neighborhood as

much because we have more infantry capabilities and twice the amount of people they did."

Another way in which the battalion gathers intelligence is to listen to various sermons by the imams. Soldiers tape the sermons and have them translated to make sure the religious leaders are not preaching any anti-Coalition or anti-Iraqi messages, said Sgt. 1st Class Roy Dyer, a platoon sergeant assigned to D Co., 3/7 Inf.

Dyer, from Knoxville, Tenn., believes that if his Soldiers use the proper measures, and treat the Iraqi people with proper respect, it's not going to matter what the mosque leaders say.

For many Soldiers, interacting with the Iraqi people is one of the best parts of their job.

"It's rewarding being able to help these people," Sammons said. "I miss my kid, I tell him what I'm doing here, meeting all the people. You can make a big impact on the kids especially. The parents get a big kick out of it when their kids are happy."

Spc. Tony Benning, a combat medic assigned to A Co., 3/7 Inf., has seen a marked

difference in the way local people interact with the Soldiers while on patrol.

"The people are more friendly toward us (since we first began patrols)," Benning said. "They realize we are just doing our job and trying to help them."

For Benning and his fellow Soldiers, patrolling the neighborhoods is more satisfying than working continuously at the forward operating base.

"I enjoy going on these

patrols — it beats hanging out in the (camp) killing time," Benning said. "It's nice seeing all the little kids and interacting with them, but sometimes they get in the way of the mission and you have to be a little more stern with them."

For the Cottonbalers of 3/7 Inf., interacting with the children in their areas of operations is just one more way to make the future of Iraq more peaceful.



Pfc. Dan Balda
A Soldier from 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry provides security during a patrol in Baghdad June 9.

'Defenders of Baghdad': From training to mission ready

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD - The training started more than eight weeks ago for the "Defenders of Baghdad." In those eight weeks they learned new tactics and strategies so they can defend their country against any threat.

The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division's training culminated with an activation ceremony at Muthana Airfield June 29.

"This is an important day for the people of Iraq," said Maj. Gen.

William G. Webster Jr., Task Force Baghdad commander during the ceremony. "These men before you are all volunteers and have sworn to defend Baghdad."

"All of the TV stations are here so that the people can see the ceremony," said Iraqi Army Col. Mohamed Hashim Al-Musawy, Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Fouad Hani Faris' aide. "As our training goes on, the citizens, houses and the streets of Iraq will be safe. If the U.S. forces keep helping us in our training, we will control the Iraqi streets and we'll protect the citizens

from the explosions the terrorists make against the Iraqis."

The newest Iraqi Army brigade will be responsible for defending the Green Zone and surrounding areas in Baghdad.

"I think they will play a vital role in the freedom of Iraq and Baghdad. With these Soldiers, they will show the American and Iraqi people that they are up to the task and can handle the job," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Taylor, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment command sergeant major.

The brigade, made up of more than 2,500 Iraqi Soldiers, began training April 18 at Muthana Airfield. Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regt. worked with the fledgling Iraqi Soldiers.

"They have trained hard and worked hard to get where they are at today. The activation ceremony was a turning point for the brigade from training to actually doing patrols and securing the Green Zone," Taylor said.

Soldiers were trained on a variety of tasks that they will use on the streets of Baghdad, such as reflexive fire, basic marksmanship and clearing rooms.

"I feel proud that the Iraqi soldiers can defend the country of Iraq. I hope

God will make them brave and keep them safe," Mohamed said. "We have Soldiers that are very young, and we thought that they might fail, but because of the Americans that gave us good training ... they made it."

He added that the Iraqi Soldiers now feel proud to be a part of the Iraqi Army.

"In the past they were scared to be one of the Iraqi Army Soldiers so no one from the terrorists would kill

them, but now, there are many volunteers," Mohamed said.

He continued, "I learned from our training ... that they have high feeling (morale) about their training and they've proved it during the operations that they've had in

Dora and Haifa Street, Abu Dasheer and Karada.

Taylor said, "They may not be as good as American Soldiers today, but one day they will be just as good. They put their lives on the line every day, either at checkpoints or on patrols, and they are right beside us doing the same things we're doing."

Mohamed said that the Iraqi troops have been successful in these areas because of the U.S. Soldiers training and they will continue to get better.

He added, "I hope the same unit will train the next brigade so the new soldiers will receive the highest level of training."

"I feel proud that the Iraqi Soldiers can defend the country of Iraq. God will make them brave and keep them safe."

Col. Mohamed Hashim Al-Musawy
5th brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division



Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
BAGHDAD - Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Fouad Hani Faris and Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., Task Force Baghdad commander, raise the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division flag during an activation ceremony June 29 at Muthana Airfield.

92nd Engineers work to "get it done"

Spc. Jennifer Fitts
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Muffled bangs echoed through the building while a high-pitched whine rose above Soldiers calling out for a hand here, or a bit of extra help there. Rather than a building being taken down by a rocket or some other explosive charge, the bangs and shouts signaled a building's construction, rather than destruction.

Carpenters, electricians and pipe fitters from 1st Platoon, A Company, 92nd Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), worked from the inside out to complete a building for the incoming 448th Civil Affairs Battalion.

The building, started by Soldiers from 411th Engineer Brigade, a U.S. Army Reserve unit from New York, was originally designed to serve as a military police station.

After the concrete foundation pad was poured, construction was taken over by C Company, 107th Engineer Battalion, of the Michigan Army National Guard. Soldiers from C Co. completed the outer shell of the structure, including the outer walls, the roofing trusses and the metal roof. The MP unit never arrived in theater, so the interior of the building was never finished.

"Our deadline is July 15," said Staff Sgt. Angelica M. Erinna, from Brooklyn, N.Y., "And we'll make it with no problems."

Erinna said meeting deadlines, and setting a high standard, is nothing new for 1st Platoon.

"People say 'Oh, you're Alpha Co., you can do it,'" said Erinna, "You've done it before."

With that attitude, 1st Platoon embodies the Corps of Engineers motto "Essayons", meaning "Let us try."

"Everyone keeps the 1st Platoon machine going," said platoon leader 1st Lt. Corey L. Burns. "Our cohesion makes us one of the best platoons in the battalion."

The 1st Platoon "machine" is made of up dedicated Corps of Engineers Soldiers, working long days. Cross-training and civilian experience helps round out the platoon's skills and capabilities.

Spc. James F. Parker, a carpenter from Tahlequah, Okla., is one of the workhorses of the platoon. Parker owned a masonry company before joining the Army, and his experience contributes to the success of the mission.

"This guy, he's a hard worker," Erinna said.

During the recent construction of a brigade-sized South East Asia hut, Erinna credits Parker with helping complete 45% of the project, including framing, plywood sheathing on the exterior walls, and the metal roofing.

"I know how things should go, so I'm more efficient," Parker said.

"My family's always done it (construction) for as long as I can remember," he said, "but I always wanted to join the Army, to give it a shot."

During this, his third overall deployment, his second to Iraq, Parker admits that being in the Army has had its ups and downs, but that the benefits have been good for his family.

Financial benefits aren't the only reasons Soldiers from 1st Platoon enjoy their construction jobs.

For Erinna, the best part of the job is teaching Soldiers. "It (this job) instills in Soldiers that they can do anything if they put their minds to it," she said, "They pick up skills that will help them."

"The cross-training is the best part," said Pfc. Bryan K. Sherrad, from Cincinnati, Ohio. "Those skills will help me out in the future."

Sherrad, cross trained on electrical installation during the construction of the new civil affairs building, supplementing his skills as a carpenter.

"My civilian experience helps teach less experienced Soldiers," said Pfc. Anibao D. Santiago, a former journeyman carpenter from Philadelphia, Pa.

A pipe-fitter on his third deployment, Sgt. Lavar L. Dorsey, from Washington D.C., helped install some of the indoor plumbing as well as cross-training on other skills such as carpentry and electrical work.

Although he got to do a lot of plumbing on previous deployments, the sheer number of outdoor latrines and bathroom trailers makes installation of true indoor plumbing rare on Camp Liberty.

Burns, of Lawton, Okla. gives all the credit of the platoon's mission success to his non commissioned officers and Soldiers.

"It's easy (to exceed the standard) when you've got good NCOs," said Burns, "And my NCOs are experts in their

crafts."

Visiting Camp Liberty on June 27 to present Sgt. Nicholas T. Mekosh of C Company, 92nd ECB(H) with a Purple Heart, Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, commanding general of the Corps of Engineers said that the dedication and hard work shown by the Soldiers of 1st platoon is nothing less than what he has come to expect from the Engineer Corps and the Black Diamonds, as 92nd ECB(H) is known.

"Everything I see here is typical of our regiment," Strock said. "No matter what job we have to do, even if it's not in our job description, we find a way to get it done," he said.

Burns echoed Strock's praise.

"With a hammer and a nail, we can build a whole new nation," said Burns, "Thank God for the Corps of Engineers."

"It's easy (to exceed the standard) when you've got good NCOs. My NCOs are experts in their craft."

1st Lt. Corey L. Burns
1st Plt., A Co., 92nd Engineers



Photos by Spc. Jennifer Fitts
Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, commanding general of the Army Corps of Engineers, presents Sgt. Nicholas T. Mekosh with a Purple Heart for wounds received in combat. The Centralia, Pa. native is with C. Co., 365th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy). 365th ECB(H) is attached to 92nd ECB(H) for this deployment. Sgt. Mekosh is on his second consecutive tour in Iraq.



1st Lt. Corey L. Burns, 92nd Eng. Bn., explains parts of the wiring blueprints for the building his platoon is finishing.

Uphold the Warrior Ethos. Obey all regulations and general orders. Serve with honor.
"Rock of the Marne!"

DCU meets ACU

108th Calvary learns from experienced Soldiers

Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – Pulling back the entrance to the tent, the first impression would lead you to think it was a social mixer. There was a casual mixing of Soldiers in both traditional desert combat uniforms and the new green Army combat uniform. There were different groups involved in various discussions.

Invitations were extended informally for the standing-room-only event.

Soldiers of Troop E, 108th Calvary, 48th Brigade Combat Team, needed to shake hands with their counterparts, as the “right-seat-ride” transition began for the troops from Griffin, Ga.

The casual atmosphere was deceiving.

Soldiers of 1st Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, have been in Iraq for one year. They have worked the streets in central Iraq and “know the drill.”

Listening to Soldiers talk about fire fights and aggressive driving maneuvers, it’s as if two friends were talking about a recent sports play-off. Their animated faces and hand gestures lend to the “play-by-play” in detailing their various missions.

But Troop E, 108th Cav. knows taking over the responsibilities of this group is serious business.

“We invited them to come over because we are drawing their equipment and their responsibility,” said 2nd Lieutenant Joshua D. Lasley, 4th Plt. Leader for 108th Cav. “It’s part of the transition.”

Casual in appearance, the meeting was well structured.

Outside the living area that has become a temporary area of operation, the two platoons began with a discussion about vehicles; what breaks down easily in the heat, items you may need to handle repairs on the fly, and the challenges while driving on the streets outside “the wire.”

Discussions about search-and-seizure tactics were

moved inside where the seasoned 10th Mtn. Div. Soldiers emphasized the need to learn from experience. They had no regrets about how and what they had learned the past year.

Sgt. Andy Smith, a 108th Cav. team leader asked about standard operating procedures. His B Co., 2/14th counterpart admitted that their SOP had changed “50 million times.” Laughter erupted from the group as Smith asked, as seriously as he could muster, “Can we have version 50 million and one?”

The most sobering discussion came when 1st Plt. medic Spc. Peter C. Facundo talked candidly about his exposure to various combat situations – the successes and those that were not.

“Everyone is a sponge for information,” Lasley said. “This is a much better exchange of information opportunity for all involved. We get real-world experience to couple with SOPs. There is no better teacher than experience.”

Postal team keeps Soldiers connected together

Spc. Ben Brody
2nd BCT PAO

CAMP RUSTAMIYAH, Iraq – Soldiers in Iraq have several options when it comes to staying in touch with friends and family back home: phones, e-mail, instant messaging and “snail mail.”

But Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division agree – letters and care packages from home are what they look forward to the most.

At Camp Rustimiyah, troops from 26th Forward Support Battalion and 729th Adjutant General Company (Postal) work every day to ensure mail is delivered to 2nd BCT as quickly as possible.

“Mail comes in from major hubs in New York, Miami, Chicago and Dallas to the Joint Military Mail Terminal–Iraq, then it gets pushed down to us,” said Sgt. Jose Estrada, 729th AG Co. mail operations noncommissioned officer in charge. “We sort all the mail and make sure it gets on its

way to the right place.”

Many factors affect whether the postal team gets mail from JMMT-1, but when the mail comes, it generally arrives in the middle of the night. The next morning, the postal team pulls large bins full of packages from a shipping container and gets to work sorting them by battalion.

Estrada, from El Paso, Texas, said changing the way the shipping containers are stacked has cut down on damaged mail considerably.

“The hardest thing is when we get mail with bad addresses or missorted mail,” said Spc. Charity Noles, 729th AG Co. postal clerk. “We make every attempt to locate the addressee, which is a time-consuming process. If all else fails, we’ll send the mail back.”

Noles, from San Diego, Calif., and others from the postal company regularly travel to Camp Loyalty, Camp Hope and Butler Range to weigh and affix postage to outgoing packages.

When the 729th AG Co. finishes sorting mail, Soldiers from 26th FSB

convoy to 2nd BCT’s camps, carrying 20-foot-long milvans full of mail.

“Our mail handlers all have to go

through a week-long class on the proper procedures,” said Sgt. 1st Class Rhuell Pringle, A Company, 26th FSB truckmaster. “The most important things they learn are accountability and responsibility. Soldiers love their mail and you can’t disappoint them.”

As any 2nd BCT Soldier knows, the mail doesn’t come every day. Soldiers from 729th AG Co., 26th FSB, and the unit mail clerks said the blame falls incorrectly on them.

“All kinds of things disrupt the mail – routes go black, trucks break down,

planes don’t fly. When that happens, we don’t get any mail to sort and push out,” Noles said. “We find out about it

when the mail truck doesn’t show up.”

Estrada said the amount of mail that comes in is steady and manageable, but he anticipates more at the end of the year.

“The amount of mail that comes in now looks like a lot, but it’s within

reason,” Estrada said. “The amount that comes in over the holidays is just unbelievable.”

Estrada and his team arrived in Iraq about the same time as 2nd BCT and will continue to provide them with reliable mail service throughout their deployment.

“The amount of mail that comes in now looks like a lot, but it’s within reason. The amount that comes in over the holidays is just unbelievable.”

Sgt. Jose Estrada
729th AG



Photos by Spc. Ben Brody
(above) Spc. Lucio Ayala, 729th AG Co. (Postal), brings in new mail at the Camp Rustimiyah Post Office, June 7.

(right) Spc. Charity Noles, Spc. Christine Bergstrom and Pfc. Mariana Magana, all of 729th AG Co. (Postal), sort packages at the Camp Rustimiyah Post Office, June 7.



Baghdad residents take out the trash

Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Along with human waste and other sewage, solid waste has inundated Baghdad's streets for decades, contributing to sewer backups, disease, and a tainted water supply.

With the establishment of all-Iraqi

contracted neighborhood dumpsters, trash collection and removal teams, and trash transfer points, the practice of littering the streets is slowly starting to change.

"We are working with the Iraqi communities to train them on proper trash removal plans," said Lt. Col. Jamie Gayton, commander of 2nd

Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

Trash removal was the focal point of essential service support for 1st Cavalry Division when they arrived in Baghdad in 2003, and has continued to be a priority for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team since early this year, Gayton said.

"Any time you step into a big problem, you've got to roll up your sleeves and get to work," he said. "The trash needs to be picked up, and this also means employment opportunities for neighborhood residents."

The process for cleaning the streets has required 2nd BCT engineers and their predecessors, along with Technical Advisory Teams from Baghdad University, to evaluate sector by sector, mahalla by mahalla, to determine what needs to be done and where.

The United States Agency for International Development subgroup in Iraq and the Office of Transition Initiatives provide surface cleaning grants for the sectors. The grants cover a 60- to 90-day one-time cleaning of a sector.

In conjunction with this, long-term privatized contracts have been established. The contracts include trash removal from centralized neighborhood locations two times per week, as well as transport to a trash transfer point and, eventually, the landfill.

Trash transfer points are located

throughout the five districts of East Baghdad: Sadr City, 9 Nissan, Adhamiyah, Rusafa and Zafaraniya.

On average, each Iraqi produces nearly one pound of trash per day. Multiply that by the 3 million-plus that live in the 2nd BCT sector, and the need for surface cleaning is apparent, said 1st Lt. Morgan Smith, 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, solid waste project manager.

"When trash is disposed of properly, streets are clean, sewers are clear, and water (stays clean)," Smith said.

Currently, there are 96 surface cleaning projects ongoing in the 2nd BCT area of operations, employing 6,800 Iraqis. During the second week of June, 946,000 pounds of trash were collected in east Baghdad – 418,000 pounds more than collected six weeks prior.

The reason for the spike in collected trash, Smith explained, was "a Macro Collection Plan, conceived by technical advisory teams, (which) was put into effect and advertised throughout Sadr City and 9 Nissan."

More efficient management at the transfer stations has also improved the process, she added.

Gayton said this is yet another sign that things are improving in Baghdad. "We're absolutely making progress," he said. "The main roads outside and cutting through Sadr City, for example, are very clean."



Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich

City workers keep the streets of Sadr City clean, thanks to the introduction of neighborhood dumpsters, trash collection and removal teams, and trash transfer points.

U.S. vets bring goodwill, good health to farm animals

Spc. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – "Iraqis know agriculture. This is the fertile crescent, where it all started," said Maj. Robert Scott, a veterinarian from the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion. "Right now, they just need a little bit of help."

Soldiers from the 443rd CA Bn.; 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion; and 1st Battalion, 13th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, provided help for farmers northwest of Baghdad during a veterinary aid mission June 14.

"We're establishing a community relationship," said Capt David M. Sturtz, a team leader for B Company, 403rd CA Bn. "We're letting the Iraqi farmers know the coalition is here to help."

The Soldiers focused on vaccinating water buffalo, cows and sheep against common diseases and parasites.

"We treated for worms and liver flukes," Scott said. "We're doing some good things and using some very good medications."

Scott said liver flukes can cause hydatid cysts and are a serious public health threat to local livestock and to Iraqi citizens because they can be transmitted to humans.

The animals were also given medication to prevent intestinal worms.

Scott teamed up with a veterinarian who works for the Iraqi government to treat the animals.

They worked side-by-side to inoculate as many animals as they could.

"It helps in the initial meeting with the people to have an Iraqi veterinarian working with us," Sturtz said. "They work as a conduit between us and the community."

Sturtz said the Iraqi agriculture ministries are taking a more active role in helping Iraqi

farmers, and having a government veterinarian along to help with the mission is part of that program.

"There are some very good people in the agricultural ministries," Scott said. "They are working hard to find out how many animals there are, what kind of diseases they have, and what they need to do to help."

During the mission, Soldiers concentrated on vaccinating animals in one small village and several farms adjacent to the village.

They made contact with individual families and consulted with them about the health of their livestock. The families were receptive to the Soldiers, as they had been during previous missions to the area.

"Every time we had been to that village, we had been welcomed," Sturtz said.

Sturtz said the village was small, and didn't contain a large amount of livestock, but word will spread to other areas about the help the U.S. and Iraqi veterinarians provided.

"Even though we saw a limited area, the impact will be sizeable," he said.

Near day's end, Soldiers kept spreading that positive impact although their mission was complete.

While returning to Camp Taji, they were delayed when the smoldering wreckage of a previously detonated car bomb blocked their route.

While waiting for the site to be cleared, the troops took advantage of the opportunity and visited a nearby farm, vaccinating several cows and sheep.

Sturtz believes these missions build a good foundation for future community-building activities.

"We can go into these communities and do more," he said.



Spc. Matthew Wester

Maj. Robert Scott, a public health team chief for 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, carefully approaches a water buffalo before vaccinating it against hydatid cysts during a veterinary mission northwest of Baghdad June 14.

Bomb-hunting Buffalo roams Iraq



Sgt. David Bill
48th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – A new and unique piece of equipment is being used by the Soldiers of Company C, 648th Engineering Battalion, 48th Brigade Combat Team. It empowers Soldiers to provide safer driving conditions for Iraqi civilians and Coalition Forces alike.

The “Buffalo” is a vehicle that allows the Soldiers of Co. C to investigate possible improvised explosive devices along the streets of Baghdad without having to leave its protection.

The 23-ton, wheeled Mine Protected and Clearance Vehicle provides visibility and mobility to the unit responsible for clearing roads of deadly IEDs.

“The Buffalo will enhance traffic ability along main supply routes, save lives and reduce the threat from IEDs,” said Maj. John Davis, operations officer for the 648th.

More than 30 Soldiers from Co. C, based in Waycross and Douglas, Ga., recently completed the “Buffalo Academy,” an 82-hour course on the operation, maintenance and capabilities of the Buffalo, which included both classroom instruction and a driving course.

“There is some equipment in theater that is in specific locations and which is new to us,” said Lt. Col. John Davis, 648th commander.

The Buffalo has been in use in Iraq for the past

two years, but the equipment is new to the 648th.

Soldiers of Co. C have been working continuously, using the Buffalo on multiple shifts. Each shift moves along selected routes to keep them clear of explosives so convoy vehicles and civilian traffic can move throughout the sector freely.

“Safety is a large factor and is the purpose for this vehicle and its design,” said 1st Lt. Elijah Simpson, from Perry, Ga., platoon leader for 2nd platoon. “It’s the safest vehicle out there.”

The task required of these Soldiers is a dangerous one as they move along roads at slow speeds, scanning for objects that may be harmful devices and checking debris, boxes—anything that may look out of place or suspicious.

The danger also comes from possible attacks as conveying Soldiers roll through towns with their eyes trained along the roads, so the security force that is with the Buffalo is always on the lookout for possible attacks from terrorists.

“It (the Buffalo) saved lives on our first mission, said Spc. Franklin Miles, from Waycross, a 21-year-old Buffalo driver. “On our first mission, an IED went off and it blew out three tires and the radiator had a hole in it, but nobody inside was hurt.”

As he prepared for the day’s mission, Miles said, “We (Co. C.) have already been trained how to sweep for IEDs, but now we have the equipment to do the job.”

“The Buffalo will enhance traffic ability along main supply routes, save lives and reduce the threat from IEDs.”

Maj. John Davis
C Co., 648th Eng. Bn.

Sgt. David Bill
Extendable arm on the Buffalo looks like a pitch fork ready to “interrogate” suspected explosive devices.

Iraqi Soldiers train for close quarter combat



Photos by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

(left) A Soldier from the newly-formed 5th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division runs forward after determining eminent danger is lurking just meters ahead during a training simulation June 28. The IA Soldiers went through close quarter maneuvers classes at Camp Justice under the guidance of U.S. Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

(above) 4th Iraqi Army, 1st Battalion Soldiers performing a four man stack during Close Quarter Combat training held on Camp Hawk. 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team is responsible for conducting all training requirements for the 4th Iraqi Army, 1st Battalion.



Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth Evans, B Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), 3rd Aviation Brigade, reflects on the lives of Chief Warrant Officers Keith R. Mariotti and Steven E. Shephard during his memorial service speech July 1.



Maj. Robert Petit, HHC 3-3 ARB, grips the ID tags of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Keith R. Mariotti. The lives of Apache pilots Mariotti and Chief Warrant Officer Steven E. Shephard were remembered during a memorial ceremony at Camp Taji Warrior Chapel.

Aviation Soldiers pay respects to fallen friends

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
Avn. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers filled the seats and crowded into the back of Warrior Chapel to remember the lives of two aviation brigade pilots during a memorial ceremony July 1.

The chapel was crowded with Soldiers paying their last respects to Chief Warrant Officers Keith Mariotti and Steven Shephard, both of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), 3rd Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

The pilots died when their Apache Helicopter crashed north of Baghdad June 27.

In remarks given during the memorial, Lt. Col. Morgan Lamb, 3-3 ARB commander, expressed the indelible mark left by the two pilots.

“Soldiers such as Keith and Steven, who wear our nation’s uniform so proudly, have

become our very credentials around the world representing all Americans everywhere we deploy,” Lamb said. “For all who knew them and had the honor of working with them, we all know they made a difference. As we bid our final farewells, we will always carry with us the fondest of memories and will lay down tonight knowing that we are better people for knowing them both.”

Many of those in attendance remembered Mariotti and Shephard for more than their flying skills. Chief Warrant Officer Kenneth Evans, B Co., 3-3 ARB, remembered the aviators as great friends as well as Soldiers.

“We lost two great warriors, aviators, and most importantly friends,” Evans said. “Both are true patriots who paid the ultimate price to preserve freedom and make the world a better place. Both

succeeded in their mission ... improving the lives of everyone they touched.”

One Soldier in particular, Spc. Dereck Dinkins, B Co., 3-3 ARB, wanted those assembled to know what a kind and gentle individual Shephard was.

Dinkins also spoke about how he felt lucky to have a chance to get to know Shephard’s wife, Meleah.

“Mr. Shephard and his wife had adopted a single Soldier to take care of over here and send care packages and cards to. That Soldier was me, and it gave me the opportunity to get to know a great person,” said Dinkins.

The effect that these Soldiers had upon all of those present was evident by the number of Soldiers who remained after the ceremony concluded to offer their final respects, or to sit in silence and remember the lives of the two pilots.



Command Sgt. Maj. David Stone, 3rd Battalion 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Recon), renders honors in remembrance of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Keith R. Mariotti and Chief Warrant Officer Steven E. Shephard.

FACT: Many Soldiers are seriously injured or killed in vehicle roll-over accidents because they failed to practice their vehicle roll-over drills. Leaders should not assume Soldiers are trained in roll-over drill procedures.

Practice your drills and STAY ALIVE!

256th BCT Soldier survives sniper attack

Spc. Chris Foster
256th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Being able to react to and maintain control of a situation in a combat environment can be a difficult task for Soldiers. They must be able to quickly react and assess a situation in order to ensure their survival and the safety of those around them.

“Stay alert, stay alive” is the reminder that is driven into the minds of Soldiers since the first day of basic training and it echoes throughout their military careers.

This axiom was driven home for at least one Soldier on June 2.

Pfc. Stephen Tschiderer, a native of Mendon, N.Y., and a medic with E Troop, 101st “Saber” Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was shot in the chest by an enemy sniper during a routine patrol in west Baghdad.

While Tschiderer was relaying information to the truck commander of his M114 humvee, an enemy sniper team prepared to engage him from inside of a cushioned silver van being used as a mobile sniper’s nest. This nest was lined with numerous bed mattresses to muffle the sound of a Dragonoff sniper rifle fired through a hole just big enough for the shooter to engage his target of choice.

Tschiderer was knocked to the ground from the sudden impact of the sniper’s bullet. The bullet only seemed to faze him, and with his adrenaline pumping, he sprang right back up in order to take cover and locate the enemy’s position.

The sniper was unsuccessful in his mission, due to the stopping force of Tschiderer’s daily wardrobe; the protective body armor which saved his life.

“I knew I was hit, but I was uncertain of the damage or location from the hit,” Tschiderer said. “The only thing that was going through my mind was to take cover and locate the sniper’s position.”

“The shot came from my 12 o’clock position from a silver van parked across an intersection about 75 meters from my location,” he said.

After Tschiderer alerted his fellow Soldiers of the enemy location, they pursued the terrorists.

Due to his heroic actions and quick decisions, Tschiderer located the enemy while he took cover and alerted the rest of his team on patrol. As the Saber team engaged and disabled the sniper’s position, two terrorists fled on foot, leaving a blood trail that came from the wounds of the enemy sniper.

A cordon and search was immediately set up and Tschiderer assisted his team in the search of the two terrorists. The driver of the silver vehicle was detained by a team from B Co. 3/156th Inf. Bn. while Tschiderer and a team from B Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, continued to follow the blood trail which led them to a yard where the wounded sniper lay in pain.

After Tschiderer secured the sniper with a pair of handcuffs, he gave medical aid to the wounded terrorist – the same one who’d tried to take his life.



Spc. Chris Foster
Pfc. Stephen Tschiderer, E Troop, 101st Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry, 256th Brigade Combat Team was shot in the chest by an enemy sniper during a routine patrol in west Baghdad.

To the unknown Soldier

By Azad Abdullah

Beyond borders

Beyond bottomless seas

You came

Without knowing me

You came

In your hands you held light

In your eyes you held rain

In your heart, love

Oh you noble knight

How did you hear our women’s weeping?

Who told you about our grief?

Was it a wild wind from our mountains?

Or a cry from our marshes in the south?

Who whispered our pain to you?

Which waves did you ride?

How can we thank you?

What priceless wealth can we offer?

How can we reward a holy blood?

In you we saw Jesus Christ

You give your life so others can live

Grieve no more you noble knight

Rest peacefully in our hearts

Live in our songs

All our melodies will hold your name

How can we thank you?

What work is so vast

To show our love to you

Come noble Soldier

Let us bow to the God of Love

Hospital opening in Owja furthers Iraqi progress

Spc. James Green
1st BCT PAO

OWJA, Iraq – Coalition Forces in Iraq are trying to do more than just establish a new government and make the streets safe from insurgents. They are also trying to help the people with basic necessities such as healthcare.

Soldiers with 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, have worked with Iraqi health officials in Owja, Salah Ad Din province to open a hospital for the general public. This hospital will provide all the basic healthcare of a regular hospital to include gynecology, x-rays, and general practice.

The hospital served Saddam Hussein’s family and friends, but has been closed for several years. There were a lot of things the hospital needed before it was ready for the public. Platoon leader 1st Lt. Ashley Garry, C Company 2/7 Inf. platoon, worked with the Owja Hospital Committee and the Salah Ad Din Department of Health to get what they needed in order to open the doors.

“We took on some parts of the hospital, some projects, and they took on a few, and we kind of met in the middle,” Garry said. “We helped them get doctors and nurses hired. We got beds delivered, helped them fix their air conditioning and their air filters.”

Dr. Hassan Zain Albein with the Ministry of Health in the Salah Ad Din province worked with the 2/7 Inf. battalion commander Lt. Col. Todd Wood to make the project happen.

“It was a hospital that had been inactive over the last three years,” Wood said. “He identified the need of additional hospital coverage here in the Salah Ad Din province. He and his staff figured out a way to refurbish a hospital, how to hire a new staff, and within three months the hospital opens up and serves about 10,000 people in this area alone.”

The hospital is open, but there are still challenges ahead that face Owja hospital and the Iraqi medical community.

“One of the shortages that they have around here is both female nurses and female doctors,” Wood said. “Basically, because the old regime stopped the training programs in the schools, which produced the large numbers of nurses and female doctors. Dr. Hassan is concentrating hard on the educational aspect of med-

ical coverage here in this area.”

Hassan wants to take full advantage of the freedom the Coalition Forces gave him and his people when they were liberated from Saddam’s rule.

“American people are giving us a lot of help,” Hassan said. “Some of this help is by sending their children, sons and daughters, and some of them gave their lives to give us freedom. So when they are trying their best for us. Why shouldn’t we try to help ourselves also?”

The hospital has 40 beds, and the medical coverage is free for the Iraqi people. The doors may be open, but Soldiers with 2/7 Inf. plan to stay with the hospital project to make it better.

“Even though we opened today, there are still some things we need to work on,” Garry said. “We’ll keep making it better. We’ll keep opening up more services for the people of Owja all the way down to north of Samarra. This hospital is going to be open for everybody.”

“Even though we opened today, there are still some things we need to work on. We’ll keep making it better.”

1st Lt. Ashley Garry
C Co., 2/7 Inf.

Task Force Baghdad delivers tons of food to Khadamiyah

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCTPAO

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq – 256th Brigade Combat Team Civil Affairs and the 199th Forward Support Battalion collaborated to distribute 15 tons of food, two tons of school supplies, and more than 2,000 Beanie Babies to lower-income residents of the Khadamiyah area in Baghdad June 25.

The items were gifts from the Association of Korean Americans and Operation Iraqi Children. The local Government Information Center connected Task Force Baghdad Soldiers with various charity organizations to help distribute the supplies to citizens of Khadamiyah and Sadr City.



The store room in Khadamiyah is over crowded with a stockpile of emergency food goods provided by the Civil Affairs, 256th Brigade Combat Team.

Maj. Adam Shilling from Denham Springs, La., 256th BCT civil affairs officer, said the food packs are designed for emergency situations and he wanted to make sure the less-fortunate citizens in the district were taken care of in case one should arise.

“Each pack weighs five tons and includes rice, beans, spaghetti, cooking oil, noodles, and canned goods,” he said.

Shilling said it took about a week to coordinate the project, and that Soldiers from A Company, 199th FSB picked up the supplies, took them out to the site, and escorted the convoy for the operation.

1st Sgt. Gilbert Matthews, senior enlisted non-commissioned officer for A Co. 199th FSB, from Breaux Bridge, La., said his Soldiers were very excited about the mission and it all ran smoothly.

“Everything went well. It was a large task, but we made it happen,” he said.

The 199th is no stranger to missions of this type.

As a support battalion, it is their job to ensure Soldiers in other camps who fall under the 256th BCT receive the necessary supplies to keep daily operations functional.

“We’re always bringing the basic necessities, such as water, food, and basically anything that needs to be hauled to other sites,” said Matthews.

Staff Sgt. Michael Gaudet, from Lafayette, La., an NCO for the 256th BCT civil affairs team, said the reaction of a female manager of the GIC stood out among all other delivery encounters of the day.

“When she saw all of the food, she could barely talk. She kept saying, ‘My heart, my heart!’” he said.

Once she saw the school supplies and how the Soldiers were helping the children in the area, she could not contain herself.

“We brought her outside and showed her all of the school supplies, and she actually cried,” said Gaudet.



Photos by Sgt. Thomas Benoit
Staff Sgt. Michael Gaudet, from Lafayette, La., and Maj. Adam Shilling from Denham Springs, La., Civil Affairs 256th Brigade Combat Team, unload more than two tons of school supplies donated by the Association of Korean Americans and Operation Iraqi Children to citizens of Khadamiyah and Sadr City.

Always ready



Sgt. Victor Soto

Spc. Sean Hefler, a cannoner specialist with 3rd Battalion, 117th Field Artillery Regiment (Forward), receives instructions from 1st Sgt. William A. Payne while manning a guard tower at Camp Taji. Hefler, a Daleville, Ala., native, and his Alabama Army National Guard unit are attached to Division Support Brigade for convoy escort and force protection. Payne, the first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, who calls Huntington, W. Va., home, periodically checks on the training and well-being of the Soldiers who keep the camp secure.

Engineers clear chicken farm of UXOs

Sgt. Daniel W. Bailey
22nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE O'RYAN, BALAD, Iraq – Task Force Liberty Soldiers cleared a cache of more than 2,500 57mm and larger rounds of unexploded ordnance near Balad, Iraq, May 10-14.

Eight combat engineers from 3rd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, stationed at Forward Operating Base Brassfield-Mora, were assigned to assist Task Force 1-128 in finding and destroying the UXOs from fields at the Tarmiyah Poultry Farm, one of countless caches that litter the Iraqi countryside.

“Our overall mission was to come out collect up and destroy as many UXOs as we could find,” said Staff Sgt. Dennis Kradel, C Company, 3/69. “I’d say we’ve been fairly successful.”

The UXOs in the fields which surround the farm were supposedly left behind by the former Iraqi army.

“Rumor has it, (the fields) used to be an air defense and artillery site back in Saddam’s days and they just buried all their stuff when

they left,” said Clarkville, Tenn. native Capt. Paul Shannon, commander, Troop K, 3rd Battalion, 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment.

The engineers collected the UXOs using mine detectors, shovels and an M-9 Armored Combat Earth Mover, then moved them to a centralized location for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment to destroy with controlled detonations, explained Sgt. Kevin Hanson, C Co., 3/69.

“We’ve got to get rid of them because of the Anti-Iraqi Forces,” said Hanson, a native of Maryville, Tenn. “If they can find this stuff they’ll use it (as improvised explosive devices) on the roadsides. They can use the 57mm rounds as improvised grenades, so we’re basically stopping that from happening.”

Shannon and his troops will continue patrolling the area, cutting off access to any additional UXOs.

“Primarily, it’s more for taking it out of insurgents’ hands than it is anything else,” Shannon said. “But it’s also a safety concern for the populace to clean up all these UXOs around Iraq.”



Photos by Sgt. Daniel W. Bailey

Senior Airman Mark Maschka, 184th Ordnance Battalion lays down C4 explosives on top of 57mm rounds in order to destroy a cache of unexploded ordnance while Staff Sgt. Evan Knight, 184th Ordnance Battalion, looks on. More than 2,000 rounds of 57mm and larger munitions have been found and destroyed in adjacent fields at the farm since May 10.



A cache consisting of a few hundred rounds of unexploded ordnance is destroyed in a controlled blast near Balad, Iraq May 13. The UXOs were discovered buried in adjacent fields at the Tarmiyah Poultry Farm.

Quartermasters keep supplies rolling through Iraq

Capt. Jeremy Smith
226th QM Co.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The 226th Quartermaster Company continues to prove that it lives up to its motto, “Always on the Move!”

As part of the 87th Corps Support Battalion, 226th QM is responsible for operating the 3rd Infantry Division’s Division Distribution Center, Division Class I/IV Yard, and a consolidated Supply Support Activity. Additionally, 226th QM distributes JP-8 fuel to forward operating bases in the Division’s area.

“The Soldiers of the 226th QM do outstanding work every day,” said 1st Sgt. Ernest R. Lee, the company’s first sergeant from Hinesville, Ga. “No other company has such a diverse mission.”

Lee said their daily duties include delivering fuel, keeping all equipment up and running, and processing parts for customers as well as receiving shipments.

Assisting the 226th members are Soldiers from 94th Maintenance Company, 104th Transportation Company, and 632nd Maintenance Company.

“This is truly a team effort,” said Capt. Curt Hinton, DDC officer-in-charge

from Peoria, Ill. “We operate day and night and put together a team that takes care of business. We have trucks delivering supplies at all hours and we upload trucks for customers here and to the other FOBs.”

Conducting aerial re-supply missions was a rarity during Operation Iraqi Freedom 2. However, air missions have increased during Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

“The air missions usually work out great,” said 1st Lt. Lowell Harris, from Providence, R.I. Harris, the officer in charge of the air missions, said his Soldiers build and weigh up to 12 Air Force pallets for air movement.

“We can get three pallets on a CH-47 Chinook during a flight,” Harris said. “Sending them by air means fewer trucks. With all the supplies being sent throughout the division each day, we like to do whatever we can to lessen the number of trucks placed in harm’s way.”

Lafayette, Ala. native, Sgt. Kevin Joiner, retrograde yard noncommissioned officer-in-charge, said he and his Soldiers load pallets onto trucks at night and forklift them to the airfield.

While the aerial re-supply mission is an important part of the DDC’s mission, the Soldiers have many other daily tasks.

“Every day, we upload military and



Sgt. 1st. Class Ken Walker

Staff Sgt. Angela Lockett, 104th Transportation Company, 87th Combat Support Brigade, assistant convoy commander, gives a route briefing to Soldiers prior to departure. Before Soldiers can leave in their Heavy Equipment Transports and other military vehicles, they conduct pre-combat checks and lay out their military gear for inspection.

contracted trucks for their missions to FOBs all over Baghdad,” Hinton said. “We don’t just push supplies – we down-

load whatever the trucks backhaul. Most everything the division uses will come through here first.”

U.S. Coast Guard shares HAZMAT expertise

Spc. Maria Mengrone
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – In an effort to alleviate the shortage of hazardous material experts and ease individual units' redeployment processes at U.S. entrance ports, the 3rd Infantry Division has enlisted the help of the U.S. Coast Guard's Redeployment Assistance and Inspection Detachment team to provide critical training to Soldiers.

The RAID team provides redeployment support to designated unit movement officers by training them on safety handling procedures and cargo transport of hazardous materials by vessels.

"We need to know what is stored in shipping carts because we want the move to be as efficient and as effective as possible, allowing timely movement and fewer frustrations at the ports," said Chief Petty Officer Gary J. Pirking, RAID team officer-in-charge.

Divisions or brigades submit requests for redeployment support and a Mobile Training Team is formed consisting of the U.S. Coast Guard's RAID team and U.S. Army Soldiers who specialize in training unit movement officers. These HAZMAT professionals teach proper documentation methods and how to point out structural defects on shipping containers to decrease the number of procedural and inspection obstacles faced at the ports during redeployment.

"The Army really doesn't have enough personnel to do the (hazardous materials) portion of our training," said Chief Warrant Officer Ken M. Roberts, officer-in-charge, Mobile Training Team. "We are very fortunate to have the Coast Guard be part of our mission and our Mobile Training Team. It would be very difficult to do without them."

Members of the RAID team travel to forward



Photos by Spc. Maria Mengrone

Benicia, Calif. native Chief Petty Officer Gary J. Pirking, of the U.S. Coast Guard's Redeployment Assistance and Inspection Detachment team, teaches a class for unit movement officers on how to detect defects on typical military shipping containers.

operating bases all over Iraq and Kuwait offering their extensive knowledge on the importance of hazardous materials communications, packaging and safety regulation compliance.

Pirking said certain types of HAZMAT materials are not allowed to travel in the same shipping containers with others. "We ensure that the code of federal regulations is followed and that is why we provide the training," he said.

"We inspect the cargo when it comes into the U.S. port," said Chief Petty Officer James E. Elsenburg, a HAZMAT specialist from the RAID Team. "Sometimes the cargo is not moving because the paperwork isn't (correct) or maybe it hasn't been inspected. We are trying to avoid the port being a choke point, so that is why we travel to Iraq and bring the training to the units."

Although the sight of Coast Guard personnel might be unusual at any forward operating base, the RAID team and the Soldiers of the Mobile Training Team understand the importance of their presence. "We can't do without each other," said Sgt. 1st Class Shelita V. Taylor, non-commissioned officer in charge, Mobile Training Team. "It goes hand in

hand, we need them, they need us. It really is one team."

The RAID team is comprised primarily of U.S. Coast Guard volunteer reservists serving an eight- to nine-month deployment. Also, most of the RAID team members work with their civilian counterparts at various ports, so their firsthand knowledge is a vital asset to redeploying Soldiers.

Capt. Mary Beth Thompson, assistant logistics officer, Aviation Brigade, 3rd Inf. Div., said having the Coast Guard inspectors teach the class was key to the success of the course. "They were able to teach us from their experiences (back home) and provide important lessons learned as we prepare to redeploy."

Despite their own sacrifices, RAID team members said they feel fortunate being able to train Soldiers. "We do our best to try to ease the move for Soldiers by providing them the training needed to lessen frustrations," Elsenburg said.

"We couldn't do our part without the Army," Pirking said. "We are really humbled by the troops. I wish we could do more to help the troops get home with fewer headaches."

"We do our best to try and ease the move for Soldiers by providing them the training needed to lessen frustrations."

Chief Petty Officer James E. Elsenburg
U.S. Coast Guard



(from left to right) Chief Warrant Officer Ken M. Roberts, Sgt. 1st Class Shelita V. Thomas, Chief Petty Officer Gary J. Pirking, and Chief Petty Officer James E. Elsenburg provide HAZMAT training to the troops.

256th Essential Services Team brings improvements to Ghazaliyah

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PAO

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq – Task Force Baghdad engineers traveled through the Ghazaliyah district June 26 to check the status of current and future projects.

One of the stops was at the Kharkh Reservoir.

Capt. Jesy Yeates, who heads the essential services team of the 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, met with managers of the facility and discussed plans for improvements.

He and his team were

accompanied by one of their Iraqi contractors "to make sure everything was good," Yeates said.

The project, which the team hopes will begin in a month, will cost \$1.7 million.

Yeates said it is money well spent.

"We're going to install some new pumps, some new motors, and redo the entire chlorination system," he said.

The improvements will cause the pumps to release the flow of water from the Kharkh Reservoir to the rest of Baghdad.

"The water that comes up to the North Kharkh

Reservoir is chlorinated, but by the time it makes its long trip, it gets re-chlorinated, based on measurements the system takes automatically," Yeates said.

The chlorinated water is pumped into other reservoirs, and there it will be pumped out, rather than re-chlorinated.

The reservoirs are important for Baghdad residents, in case something should happen to their main water source. An explosion recently affected the central line, but because of the reservoirs, there was a backup supply inside the city.



Spc. Erin Robicheaux

2nd Lt. Robert Arcement, 1088th Engineer Bn., from New Iberia, La., documents his observations at a sewage pump during project evaluations.

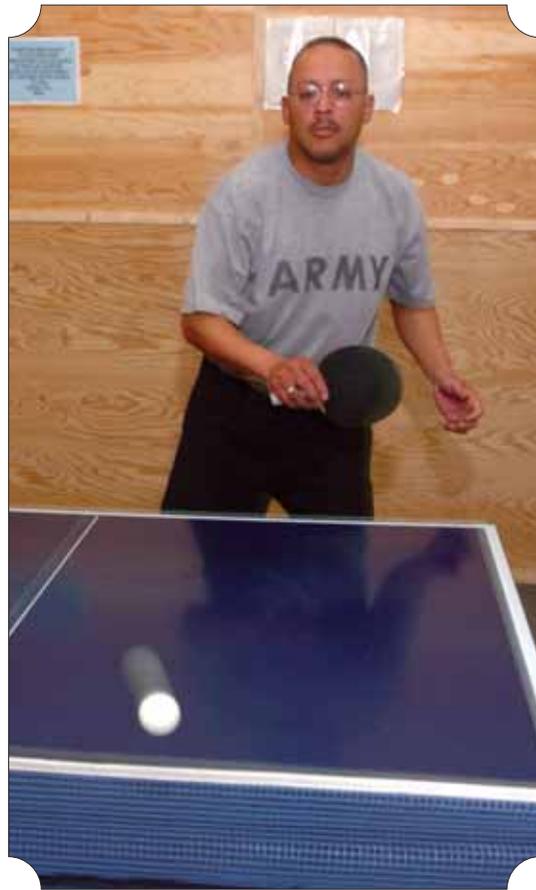


3rd Infantry Division G3, operations officer, Col. Charles Honoré of Baton Rouge, La., fires an RPG-7 at a former Republican Guard tank at Butler Range June 10. *Spc. Patrick Heney*



Soldiers from B Co., 1088th Engineer Battalion, 256th Brigade Combat Team, honed their infantry skills in west Baghdad June 27. The 36th Engineer Group and elements of the 256th BCT, and the 1088th Eng. Bn., participated in a mission rehearsal exercise to ensure they are prepared in case of an attack. *Staff Sgt. Jorge Rodriguez*

Spc. Matthew Wester
 1st Lt. John Weissenborn, A Co., 4/3 Brigade Troops Battalion, executive officer reenlists Sgt. Justin Hutchinson at forward operation base Prosperity June 1. Hutchinson, also assigned to A Co., serves as the Joint Network Node team chief.



Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker
 Sgt. 1st Class Jose Urbaz, 87th Combat Support Battalion, enjoys a challenging game of ping-pong at Camp Taji.



Staff Sgt. Sean Stout, 448th Civil Affairs Battalion medic, examines a man with an arm injury during a humanitarian assistance mission in Tawaiha, Iraq, June 29.

Photos by Spc. Ben Brody

AID, continued from page 1

come in early and bust in, looking for weapons — then we set up and it makes them realize that we're here to help and keep them safe."

Jetton, of Moore, Okla., helped hand out Beanie Babies, bags of food, water bottles and other treats to the young and elderly alike.

"The beanie babies are a big hit," Jetton said. "The kids love days like this."

Medics from 1/9 FA and 448th CA Bn. provided medical treatment to residents during the mission.

Staff Sgt. Sean Stout, a 448th medic, bandaged a few cuts and scrapes on children's feet while the rest of his team tossed water bottles to the eager crowd.

A man who said he broke his leg a year ago approached Stout on crutches, complaining that his leg was not healing properly.

"This guy broke his leg, and due to a lack of medical care in the area, it was never set properly," said Stout, of Pascagoula, Miss. "I gave him some range-of-motion exercises to do, and explained to him that if he doesn't do them, he's going to be crippled for life."

Sgt. Blandon Green, HHB, 1/9 FA medic, said the most common medical complaints he receives are of asthma, foot injuries and infections.

"The air is full of dust and other particulate matter, so we always see asthma sufferers around here," said Green, of Xenia, Ohio. "A lot of people don't have shoes and they cut their feet on all the scrap metal lying around."

"Bottled water goes a long way toward keeping people here healthy, especially babies," Green added.

Green told the residents he would return later in the day with additional medical supplies.

"I'm going to bring back some inhalers for the people with asthma," Green said. "We sometimes bring shoes for people here ... doing this kind of



One of the anti-aircraft munitions found in south Baghdad June 29. The munitions do not pose a risk to aircraft since they are fired from large, unwieldy cannons, but they could be used in roadside bombs according to an explosive ordnance disposal technician.

thing makes a family smile."

On their way out, the Soldiers received information from residents that explosive munitions had been dumped at a nearby junkyard.

Soldiers found heaps of rusted weapons parts, including a large anti-aircraft gun and ballistic missile engine parts. None of the equipment was in serviceable condition.

Across the street, Capt. James Hock, 1/9 FA project manager, found approximately 20 live high-explosive rounds for an anti-aircraft gun. He brought the munitions to explosive ordnance disposal Soldiers at Camp Loyalty.

"The anti-aircraft rounds probably wouldn't do a terrorist much good, but it's still important to get them off the street," Hock said. "We don't want kids playing catch with high explosives."



Sgt. 1st Class Izzy Barela, a tank commander for A Company, 1st Battalion, 13th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, and a Monticello, Utah native, hands out toys to local children from his M1A1 tank. Barela and his tank crew were patrolling a road near Taji, Iraq.

Spc. Matthew Wester

NIGHT, continued from page 1

tank, the tank takes care of you," he said.

As the tank patrol rolled out of the gate, the crews inside were buzzing with activity.

In the lead tank, the driver listened to instructions from the tank commander while the gunner scanned the road through his sights, looking for anything suspicious. The tank commander processed it all so he could give instructions to his crew.

The crews have a definite focus when they roll out on their missions.

"Our mission here is to ensure our zone of the main supply route stays clear," said 1st Sgt. Wayne A. Blunden, A Co. first sergeant and a native of Laconia, N.H.

He said thousands of vehicles pass through the zone his tank crews help secure.

Barela said his two main objectives during a patrol are protecting Coalition Forces' convoys and finding improvised explosive devices.

Barela and his crew have found numerous IEDs in the time they've been patrolling the streets of Iraq.

"After the first twenty, I stopped counting," he said. "We just keep finding them. That's what we get paid to do."

He understands how important it is to find roadside bombs.

"Any time you can take an IED off the streets, it has a big impact," Barela said. "That's another convoy that can go by with no one getting injured."

"We tend to find (IEDs) before they get a chance go off," Blunden said.

It takes a keen eye and a personal familiarity with the terrain to find IEDs, especially while on the move.

Both tank crews have enough experience in the area to know what should be on the road and what shouldn't.

"After the first four or five missions out, we get the road memorized," Maness said.

"We can pick up on things that look out of place."

It takes teamwork for a tank crew to work together effectively.

The crew in the trailing tank has been together since November, thus having the opportunity to hone their skills together at the National Training Center in Ft. Irwin, Calif. prior to deploying to Iraq.

For Maness, it wasn't just the tank crew that was very familiar to him, but the Abrams tank itself.

When he arrived in Iraq, he was assigned the same tank he had manned while serving a one-year tour in South Korea.

During the patrol, the lead tank took up a position to observe the road and a crowd of local children swarmed around it.

The crewmembers, always prepared for combat, were also prepared for the chance to connect with the community too.

A few of the Soldiers grabbed a box of stuffed animals and soccer balls and took turns handing the treats out to the kids while the other troops continued scanning the road.

Soon afterward, the tanks pulled out and continued patrolling down the highway.

The tank crews were busy once again. They are trained to operate their M1A1 Abrams tanks on the battlefield, and it's the exact job they prefer to do above all others.

"The majority of missions are on humvees, so this is an opportunity to be on our tanks," Maness said. "When I'm on the road and I've got the wind in my face, it makes me remember what I came in (the Army) for. Being on a humvee is fun, its quick, but being on a tank, you know that power is there," he said. "There is no feeling like it in the world."

"The majority of missions are on humvees. When I'm on the road and I got the wind in my face, it makes me remember what I came in (the Army) for."

Staff Sgt. Kurt A. Maness
B Co., 1st Bn., 13th Armor

History of the Marne helmet patch

Maj. Richard Bartoszuk
1BCT PAO

The practice of wearing a unit emblem on the combat helmet goes back to World War I. While living in the trenches, Soldiers engaged in numerous activities to express their pride and creativity, and also to relieve boredom

between battles. Some of the more artistic of these endeavors became known as "trench art." Artistic inclinations led Soldiers to paint their unit's emblem on their helmets.

Between WW I and World War II, some unknown Army leader decided that it would be a good idea for troops to paint their division emblem on their

helmets. Many units did so during WWII.

After that, the practice is the only division that has

slowly declined.

The Third Infantry Division

worn its patch continuously on the helmet since the end of WWII.



Courtesy Photos
Original helmets from World War I (left) and World War II (above) are displayed at the Fort Stewart Museum. The helmets are examples of "trench art" practiced by 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers.

Negligent Discharges: *It could happen to you*

Negligent weapon discharges have increased at an alarming rate. These negligent discharges are both preventable and unacceptable.

Commanders and leaders will enforce the standards for weapons safety, clearing procedures, and the use of clearing barrels. Unloading a weapon is simply one step in the process of clearing the weapon.

At no time should a weapon be unloaded and not cleared.

A significant number of accidents resulting in injuries and loss of life have been associated with negligent discharges during weapons cleaning or subsequent functional tests of the weapon with ammunition present.

Leaders at all levels should not consider these activities low risk when ammunition is present.

Safe Weapons Handling Procedures

A 3-step process:

- SOLDIER DISCIPLINE
- MUZZLE ORIENTATION
- PROPER CLEARING PROCEDURES

Safe Practices

- 1) Safe muzzle orientation is critical to weapons safety.
- 2) Always keep your weapon pointed in a safe direction.
- 3) At no time should any part of the human body be in the likely path of a bullet.
- 4) Muzzle orientation will be enforced at all times, not just when the weapon is considered loaded. It is critical that Soldiers learn muzzle orientation as a life skill that becomes second nature and a personal responsibility.

Also

Weapons will be kept on SAFE at all times when not engaging a target or when enemy contact is not

imminent.

Fingers will be kept off of the trigger until firing the weapon is intended.

Numerous negligent discharges have resulted from Soldiers being bumped while the weapon safety selector was placed on FIRE while their finger was on the trigger.

Commanders/ leaders will ensure that controls are in place to prevent Soldiers from mishandling weapons in living and sleeping areas.

Leaders will supervise weapons clearing at all times, whether ammunition is present or not.

Leaders will remain involved to ensure ammunition has not inadvertently been left in the weapon or placed in the weapon in a manner that can result in a negligent discharge.

Leader enforcement of muzzle orientation is particularly important in these weapons handling activities.

When a clearing barrel is required by local installation SOPs, follow the requirements as outlined.

Commanders at all levels will ensure a weapons safety program is in place.

Leaders or vehicle commanders will ensure weapon systems mounted for any reason are clear prior to installing or removing weapons from the mount.

M16 and M4 RIFLES

- 1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (clearing container if available).
- 2.) Remove the magazine from the weapon.
- 3.) Place weapon selector lever on SAFE.
- 4.) Lock bolt to rear (ensure weapon is on SAFE).
- 5.) Inspect the receiver and chamber to ensure no ammunition is present.
- 6.) With NO ammunition in chamber or receiver, allow the bolt to go forward

7.) Aim weapon into clearing container, rotate selector lever to SEMI, and squeeze the trigger.

8.) Charge weapon once.

9.) Place selector lever on SAFE.

M9 (9MM) SEMIAUTOMATIC PISTOL

1.) Orient weapon in a safe direction (clearing container, if available).

2.) Place decocking/safety on SAFE.

3.) Depress the magazine release button and remove the magazine.

4.) Grasp the slide narrations and fully retract the slide to remove the chambered cartridge.

5.) Lock the slide to the rear, using the slide stop, and visually inspect chamber to ensure it is empty.

6.) Release the slide stop to allow the slide to return fully to the forward position.

7.) Place weapon on FIRE.

8.) Squeeze the trigger.

9.) Place weapon on SAFE.

**PREVENT NEGLIGENT DISCHARGES;
IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!!**



Courtesy Photo
A single negligent discharge can cause multiple wounds. When this Soldier's pistol discharged, the bullet traveled lengthwise down his leg.

Marne Medical Mentor ... a prescription for good health from your Docs in the Rock

What Soldiers need to know on the battlefield

Treat a Conscious Casualty

Treat an Unconscious Casualty

- Can the casualty tell you where it hurts?
- uncover all suspected wounds, male and female.
- Look and feel for bleeding.
- If a limb is spurting blood immediately apply a tourniquet.
- If bleeding is present but not spurting, apply direct pressure, elevate, apply trauma dressing.
- If bleeding is not controlled by the trauma dressing, apply a tourniquet.
- Once bleeding is controlled, remove IBA and look for further injuries.
- Treat all wounds
- Splint all suspected fractures.
- Treat for shock; loosen clothing, keep warm and dry, elevate legs.
- Reassure the casualty.
- Initiate MEDEVAC/CASEVAC

- Look, listen and feel for breathing.
- If the casualty is not breathing, reposition the head and insert Nasal Pharyngeal Airway.
- Look and feel for bleeding.
- If a limb is spurting blood immediately apply a tourniquet.
- If bleeding is present but not spurting, apply direct pressure, elevate, apply trauma dressing.
- If bleeding is not controlled by a trauma dressing, apply a tourniquet.
- Once bleeding is controlled, remove IBA and look for further injuries.
- Treat all wounds.
- Splint all suspected fractures.
- Treat for shock; loosen clothing, keep warm and dry, elevate legs.
- Initiate MEDEVAC/CASEVAC

Avoidable vehicle rollovers cause deaths, injuries

Throughout the Army, vehicle rollovers continue to occur at a high rate here in Iraq.

Numerous Soldiers have died in M1114 Up-Armored humvees during the past few months.

Of 30 M114 accidents, 19 have involved rollovers. Being ejected from the vehicle and suffering head trauma are leading causes of death or serious injury.

Ninety-seven percent of the Soldiers wearing seat-belts in an accident during Operation Iraqi Freedom received only minor to no injuries.

Additional reasons why our Soldiers are dying in rollovers are: Driving too fast or failing to slow down for unsafe conditions, failure to stay alert, inexperienced/unqualified for the vehicle, operating the vehicle in a reckless manner, and failure to take appropriate/required safety precautions.

We have all heard the safety precautions before, but they must be repeated until everyone follows them.

There is no excuse to die needlessly in an avoidable vehicle crash.

Practicing the following precautions will help save your life.

1. All occupants must wear seat belts
2. Slow down
3. Stay alert to your surroundings
4. Wear Kevlar or ACH helmets
5. Dismount, use ground guides in dangerous or unfamiliar areas



An M1114 up-armored humvee sits in the motorpool following a vehicle rollover accident earlier this year. Courtesy Photo

6. Rehearse and execute roll-over drills as part of your PCIs
7. Vehicles can be tripped by suddenly striking soft soil.
5. Pay attention to tire condition and air pressure during PMCS. Worn or improperly inflated tires increase risk of roll-overs.
6. Don't overload the vehicle. The M1114 payload is 2,300 pounds, including all weapons, protection kits, spare tires, winch, cargo and personnel.
7. Keep center of gravity low by loading heavier items low within the vehicle.
8. Secure the load. Shifting loads are hazardous both inside and outside the vehicle.
9. Towing a trailer increases the risk of roll-overs, especially on curves.

Roll-over preventive measures:

1. Slow down. Speeding on sharp curves increases centrifugal forces, increasing chances for a roll-over.
2. Avoid panic-don't jerk the steering wheel.
3. Use proper maneuvering. If you drive off the road, reduce speed, ease vehicle back onto roadway at a safe speed.
4. Use caution on roads with soft or no shoulders.

Fluid Replacement Pictorial Guide Work Level and Heat Category Information

Work levels are broken down into 3 categories:

- Easy work: walking outside on hard surface, minor maintenance, stationary under cover in full gear.
- Moderate work- local national escort, walking on uneven/sandy surface, moderate maintenance tasks.
- Hard work: combat operations, manual labor tasks (ie sandbag filling and stacking), heavy maintenance tasks.

Water Intake Cautions:

- Hourly water intake should not exceed 1 ½ quarts per hour.
- Daily fluid intake should not exceed 12 quarts.

DESERT JUSTICE

Divorce or separation requires pre-planning

Capt. Uma Nagaraj
OSJA

Deployment is a time of stress that can sometimes lead to the break up of marriages. We often get questions as to what can be done while we are deployed.

Unfortunately, there is not a lot you can accomplish procedurally while deployed, but you can take this opportunity to fully analyze your situation, become educated and prepare for the legal wrangling once you return.

Following are five areas of concern you should take into consideration:

First, you need to decide whether you really want to end your marriage. This decision can be quite difficult, especially when the marriage has been a lengthy one or when children are involved. Take time to think about your relationship and whether it is simply the stress of being away that has caused the rift or if there is something deeper. This might be a good time to see your chaplain or combat stress team.

Second, you will want to take steps to protect yourself financially. Cancel any credit cards and close any bank accounts to which your spouse may have access.

If the account is a joint one, financial institutions may not close it without your spouse's permission.

This DOES NOT mean you can abandon your spouse financially.

You are required by AR 608-99 to support your family members. A visit to your legal assistance office can help you find out how much you are required to pay.

One suggestion is to designate an allotment for direct deposit into a bank account to which your spouse has access. At this time, you may also want to update your Servicemember's Group Life Insurance and your last will and testament.

If you have given your spouse a power of attorney, you will want to get a revocation from our office. You must send this revocation to your spouse and to any other place that the power of attorney documentation was given to. You also need to think ahead and consider other places where the POA has the potential to be used.

Third, it is unlikely you'll be able to file for a divorce while you are here. Most states require the person who files the divorce to make at least one personal appearance in court. Most courts do not allow an attorney to appear on the person's behalf.

As an alternative, your spouse can file for divorce and send you the paperwork to review. If you receive paperwork, you can bring it to the legal assistance office where an attorney can review it for you. If you agree to all the terms, you can return the paperwork and obtain a divorce.

Fourth, you MAY be able to obtain a separation agreement while you are deployed. A separation agreement is a legal contract between spouses. It is often used as the basis for a divorce. Separation agreements only work when both parties agree to the terms. Separation agreements have the most value in cases where the parties have no children or large amounts of property or debt to divide.

In cases where children are involved or there are a lot of property issues to settle, separation agreements are of limited value. A separation agreement DOES NOT allow you to date and will not prevent you from having to pay child support.

Furthermore, in states that require you to be separated for a certain period of time, separation is usually defined as living apart and is not necessarily dictated by the separation agreement. In any case, you will have to sit down with an attorney to discuss your case and determine whether a separation agreement is an appropriate solution.

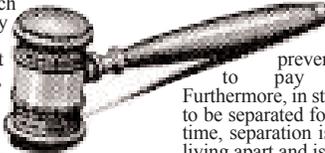
Fifth, annulments are rarely an option. People often think that if they've only been married for a short time, they can get an annulment. Annulments are only granted in rare cases and based on certain grounds like fraud or duress.

Ending a marriage is never an easy process emotionally or legally.

Since you are limited in what can be done while deployed, you should use this time to prepare yourself financially and emotionally.

In the end, you may decide you want to stay married.

If you have any questions about divorce or separation agreements, please visit your legal assistance office.



Chaplain's Corner

Enemies of peace (of Mind)

Chaplain (Maj.) Sandy McLean
36th Eng. Group

Have you ever seen bag ladies on the streets of, say New York City or Los Angeles?

One of the things you notice about them is that they tend to wear everything they have, at the same time.

They may have on one, two, or three pairs of socks; a couple of pairs of gloves; two or three coats and two or three hats. Everything they have, they carry with them.

We are blessed not to be in their situation, but we still do the same thing at times. We carry with us the excess weight of remorse and regret.

Instead of letting some things go; instead of walking away from some things; instead of letting some things resolve themselves, we hold on to them and in fact carry them for all to see and hear in how we behave and speak.

Regret may be defined as negative emotions experienced when people realize or imagine that the present situation would have been better, had they acted differently, or had a particular situation turned out differently for them. Regrets are mostly negative because no one feels bad when good things happen to them. No one regrets getting paid. You don't regret it when you or your friends miss

getting hurt by a narrow margin. You don't regret it when someone tells you, God loves you.

Regrets are past events, emphasis on the word "past."

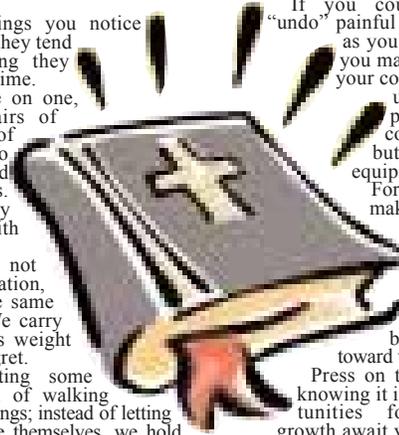
If you could, you would "undo" painful past events. Just as you "undo" a mistake you make when sitting at your computers. But life, unlike some computers, does not come with "undo" buttons as standard equipment.

Fortunately, God makes provision for the mistakes you make. He does not hold them against you. In fact, in His word He urges you to "forget what lies behind, and press on toward what lies ahead."

Press on toward the future, knowing it is there that opportunities for change and growth await you.

But you can't adequately forget the mistakes of the past, until you properly forgive the mistakes of the past. And, as you know, God makes allowances for plenty of forgiveness. In fact, when asked if we should forgive someone as many as "seven" times, he replies, "seventy seven" times, or as many times as is needed.

Forgive others and yourself as many times as you need to, to achieve that state to which we all aspire - peace (of Mind).



In Memory of ...

2nd Lt. Matthew Coutu, 42 MP Bde.

Spc. Rafael A. Caprillo, 1/64 Armor

Staff Sgt. Scottie L. Bright, 3/3 ACR

Cpl. Lyle J. Cambridge, 3/3 ACR

Chief Warrant Officer Keith R. Mariotti, 3/3 Avn.

Chief Warrant Officer Steven E. Shephard, 3/3 Avn.



Religious Service and Prayer Schedule for Camp Liberty

Division Chapel

Mon. - Fri.
12 p.m. Catholic

Saturday
10 a.m. Seventh Day Adventist

Sunday
9 a.m. Contemporary Protestant
10:30 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
1 p.m. Lutheran
3 p.m. Gospel Protestant
5 p.m. Church of Christ (noninstrumental)
8 p.m. Collective Protestant

Engineer Chapel

Wednesday
7 p.m. Bible Study

Friday
9 p.m. Prayer & Praise

Saturday
10 a.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief

Sunday
8:45 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
10 a.m. Traditional Protestant
12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Latter Day Saints
7 p.m. Traditional Protestant

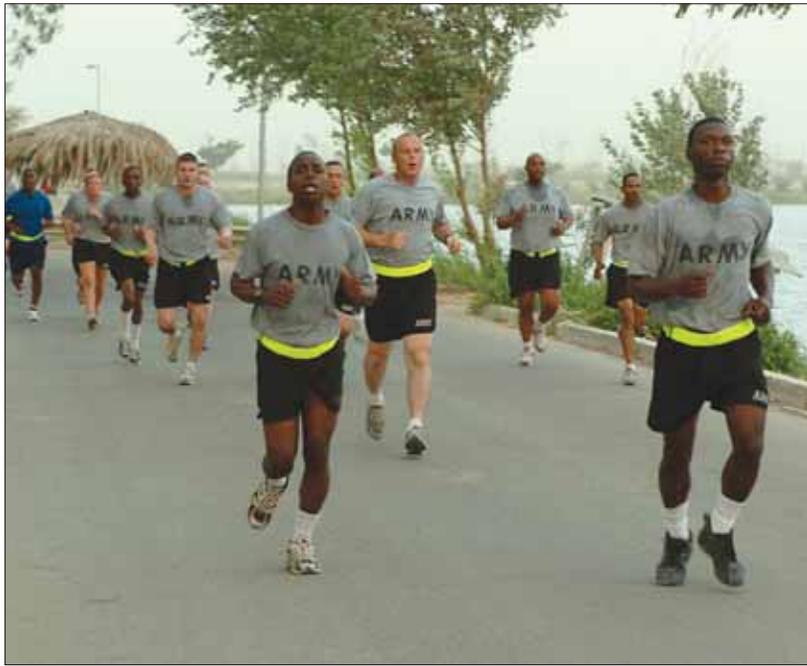
Tiger Chapel

Wednesday
7:30 p.m. Wicca Circle - briefing tent

Wed & Sat
10:30 a.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief

Saturday
7 p.m. Catholic Mass

Sunday
9 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
10:30 a.m. Contemporary Mass
1 p.m. Gospel Protestant
3 p.m. Traditional Protestant
7 p.m. Non Denominational Christian
9:30 p.m. Evening Christian Service



Photos by Sgt. Andrew Miller (above), Spc. Brian Henretta (right)

(above) Competitors in the "Great Independence Day Amazing Race" battle the lakeside breeze on their way to the finish line. An estimated 201 runners participated in the early morning race.

(right) Task Force Baghdad Soldiers battled the heat and one another in a challenging game of sand court volleyball at the 3rd Inf. Div. MWR facility at Camp Liberty.



Patriotic fun

Spc. Brian Henretta
100th MPAD

3rd Infantry Division Soldiers and others from the Camp Liberty/Camp Victory complex celebrated their Fourth of July weekend with a variety of events sponsored by Camp Liberty Morale Welfare and Recreation.

Hard charging teams battled it out under the hoops during a 5-on-5 basketball tournament July 2-3. Winning the prize was the undefeated team, "The Heat" from Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company. This is the team's fourth basketball championship.

Independence Day began with a 5-kilometer "Great Independence Day Amazing Race" around "Z" lake. The overall winners were Marine Corps Capt. Joseph Galvin (17:43) of Task Force 134 and Master Sgt. Silvia Marchan (22:00) of Special Troops Battalion.

Top finishers in each of the age and gender categories received Burger King gift certificates, 120-minute phone cards and a certificate of achievement signed by the division commander, Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr.

Each of the 201 participants receive phone cards.

After the race, Scorpion MWR sponsored a scavenger hunt, "The Amazing Race" in which three teams competed while solving clues to find camp personnel and collect their signatures and fingerprints. Sgt. Cornelius J. Goodwin and Sgt. Bryant D. Devron, both of 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, won the competition.

That evening, at the Rock of the Marne Sports Oasis patio, the 3rd Inf. Div. Band treated hundreds of patrons to a rock 'n' roll, rhythm and blues, and country music concert during dinner hours.

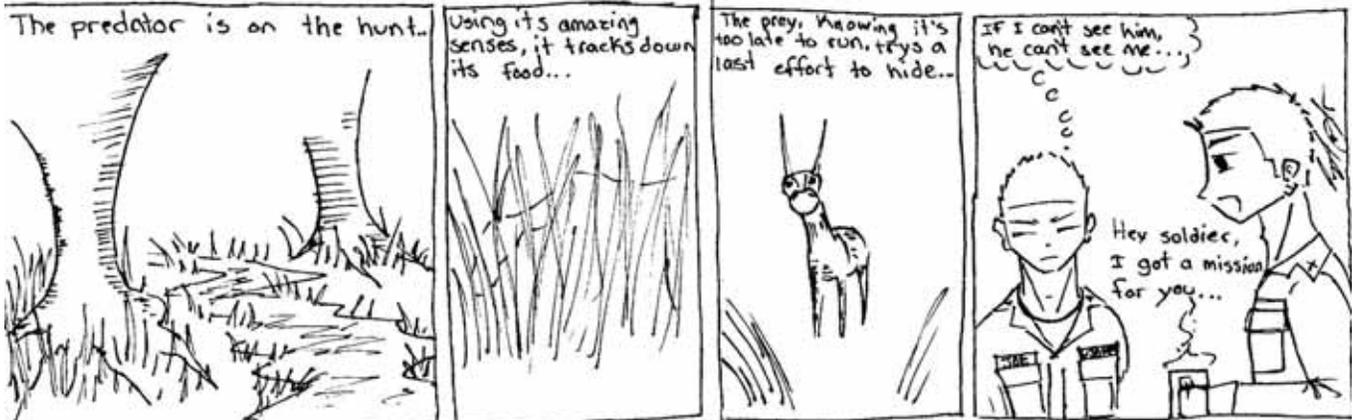
Other MWR sponsored activities included chess, billiards, dominoes and volleyball.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Benner (above), Spc. Brian Henretta (left)

(above) A few members of the championship basketball team, "The Heat." (left to right) Staff Sgt. Earl Francis, Staff Sgt. Byron Johnson, Capt. Dominique Butler, and Staff Sgt. Torland Edwards. (left) Maj. David A. Hatar, a Cincinnati, Ohio, native, and the G1 personnel officer with HHSC, 3rd Infantry Div., prepares to make his move in a chess match against Henri Zrelk, a civilian Arabic linguist with 3rd Infantry Division, from New York City.

Cartoon Corner



Have something you'd like to contribute to the bi-weekly comic strip? Contact ricardo.branch@id3.army.mil.

SHOOTING FROM THE THUMBS: THE GAMER'S REVIEW

'God of War:' Say hello to the anti-hero

Spc. Ricardo Branch
3rd Inf. Div. PAO

Ever play a videogame and wished that it was more like a Mythological battle of epic proportions? No?!? Well humor me a bit for this one okay?

This game, "God of War" revolves around Kratos, an anti-hero whose brief fall into madness you're trying to avenge.

Unlike the wise-cracking Dante of "Devil May Cry" fame, this quite Spartan warrior is a one man army on a personal vendetta, or as some might think, crazed suicide mission to fight a god.

Set in ancient Greece, this seemingly unstoppable warrior is on the verge of suicide, when images flash in his mind from a few weeks back that recall his quest to kill the one responsible for his

family's murder.

Now to the plot, so you've obviously figured out that you're Kratos, this one guy who's got this crazy thought of killing "Ares," a.k.a. the god of war - hence the title!

At the start of the quest, things seem rather easy.

With weapons like the "Blades of Chaos," which have a ridiculously far range, or the "Blade of Artemis" beating your enemies seems almost like a breeze rather than a chore for Kratos.

Along the way, all the gods from Aphrodite, to the main god Zeus, aid the character with a multitude of magical abilities necessary to progress further and make your travel through Greece that much easier.

That doesn't last however.

Towards the middle of the game the action spikes

up as do the size and number of opponents for the angry warrior to do battle against.

Then when you reach the summit of a particular mountain, not one, not two, but five gigantic warriors stand in the way to reach Pandora's Temple.

The clash with titans on the mountaintop was a bit difficult due to the small area to combat in.

This brings me to the enemies. The foes, my goodness, are really, really diverse in this game.

Hordes of Minotaur, Hydras, Harpies, Cyclopes, and Gorgons (Medusa's ilk) stand together in the way of Kratos and the bitter revenge he's wanted for 10 years to finish.

The Spartan takes on all comers in all sizes, and with a silent demeanor and a swipe of his blades gets stronger with each kill to bring himself closer

to ending his bitter torment.

Add the fact, he doesn't care about any helpless humans he meets along the way. Which doesn't matter, they all end up dead by monster massacres, crushing construction, or by Kratos own insensitivity throughout this game.

I have to say though that I like the dark persona of Kratos. He's a breath of fresh air from all the "always do the right thing" heroes in many of today's games.

Whatever the case, all the hype about this game is justified.

The more you play, the harder it is to stop. This is action-adventure near its pinnacle, the game that was promised and finally delivered. "God of War" is a great game with a great main character in a great stylized setting. What more can be said of it?

F	Cool monsters:	★★★★
I	Intriguing storyline:	★★★★
N		
A		★★★★
L	Gladiator carnage:	★★★★
G	Graphics:	★★★
R		
A	<i>The Bottom Line</i>	
D		A-
E		



In the Movies



Mr. & Mrs. Smith a guilty pleasure

Spc. Ricardo Branch
3rd Inf. Div. PAO

"Eye candy!" Yup, that comes to mind when I think about a movie starring Angelina Jolie. The same is probably true for the ladies out there when they watch a movie starring Brad Pitt.

Although seeing this movie, I'm curious if those trashy tabloid rumors that Jolie and Pitt hooked up together while filming this movie are true?

Before I go too far off topic though my take on "Mr and Mrs. Smith" was that it was a pretty good movie despite what many critics say.

At the start of the movie both Pitt and Jolie are a married couple of spies (John and Jane Smith) whose marriage life hasn't been to great lately.

To make matters worse, the two nearly kill each other around the middle of the movie when they both are unknowingly after the same target.

Thus begins the plot of husband versus wife in a no-holds bar spy battle.

I'd rather not spoil the rest of the movie but tell you more of how I felt about seeing this hit.

Both Pitt and Jolie attempt to add a wit and flair in a modern day movie that provides the viewer with the question of "how much do you

really know about your spouse?"

Like numerous recent hits, Hollywood is bringing in tried and true methods to keep movie goers in theaters, or in our case, Soldiers glued to the front of their televisions.

This latest creation, "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," a husband and wife leading alternate lifestyles behind their spouse's back is very reminiscent of a similar film "True Lies."

In that movie Arnold was hiding his spy lifestyle from Jamie Lee Curtis (his wife) much in the same way Pitt and Jolie were from each other.

I will say though that Mr. and Mrs. Smith was more enjoyable to watch than "True Lies."

The leads have good chemistry together, which is evident in most of the scenes of this movie.

From Mr. Smith's constant trouble of his wife slightly outthinking him and coming to grips with how much he loves her, to the butt-kicking John and Jane Smith deliver to each in an awesome fight in their own house, this movie is packed with stellar moments to keep even the die hard movie fan entertained.

Throughout this movie I even found myself caught between the two leads (I couldn't decide who I wanted to see win in their situation) and ultimately had my fingers crossed hoping that they'd forgive one another in the end and line happily ever after.

Did you know?

A little trivia about Mr. & Mrs. Smith

1) When John and Jane are questioning their former target near the end of the film, look carefully at the guy's shirt.

Which logo to another Brad Pitt film is on the front of the target's shirt?

2) A subtle clue that Brad Pitt is a secret agent/spy: He drinks vodka martinis with two olives-shaken, not stirred.

Which other famous secret agent/spy drank vodka martinis with two olives - shaken, not stirred?

3) Brad Pitt pulled out of starring in "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" when his female co-star also pulled out. Pitt later re-joined when Angelina Jolie was cast.

Who was the original female co-star for this movie?

4) Brad Pitt had to leave in the middle of shooting the movie for three months.

What did he do for those three months?

Answers: (1) Fight Club, (2) James Bond, (3) Nicole Kidman, (4) reprise aprvli-
ous role in the Oceans Eleven sequel, Oceans Twelve

FINAL GRADE

B +

Plot ★★★★★

Action ★★★★★

Special Effects ★★★★★

Want to submit a movie or book review? Contact Spc. Branch at ricardo.branch@id3.army.mil