

# The Marne Express

Volume 2, Issue 2

"Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork"

March 13, 2005

In this week's  
*Marne  
Express*



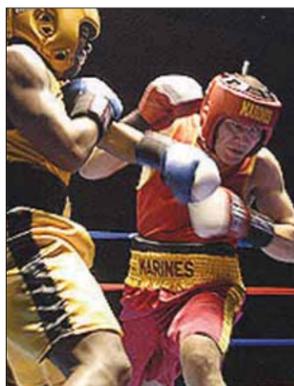
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## Taking charge ...

### 3rd Inf. Div. assumes TF Baghdad mission

**Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft**  
*Associate Editor*

BAGHDAD – The 3rd Infantry Division officially jumped back into action here as of Feb. 27, when a Transfer of Authority ceremony was held to take the reins of Task Force Baghdad command from Maj. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, 1st Cavalry Division "First Team" commander, and put them in the hands of Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., 3rd Inf. Div. commander, at the Sahet Alihtifalat Alkubra (Ceremonial Circle) parade grounds.

"Today marks the passing of the torch for advancing the freedom of the people of Baghdad," Chiarelli said. "The 1st Cav. drew upon the important lessons gained by those who preceded us and our sincere wish is that we have contributed wisely to the 3rd ID in their preparation for this mission."

The First Team has had elements in Iraq since September 2003, after 1st Armored Division returned home from Operation Iraqi Freedom 2. Now, after a year serving as TF Baghdad headquarters, 1st Cav. Soldiers are heading back to the U.S. for a well-deserved break.

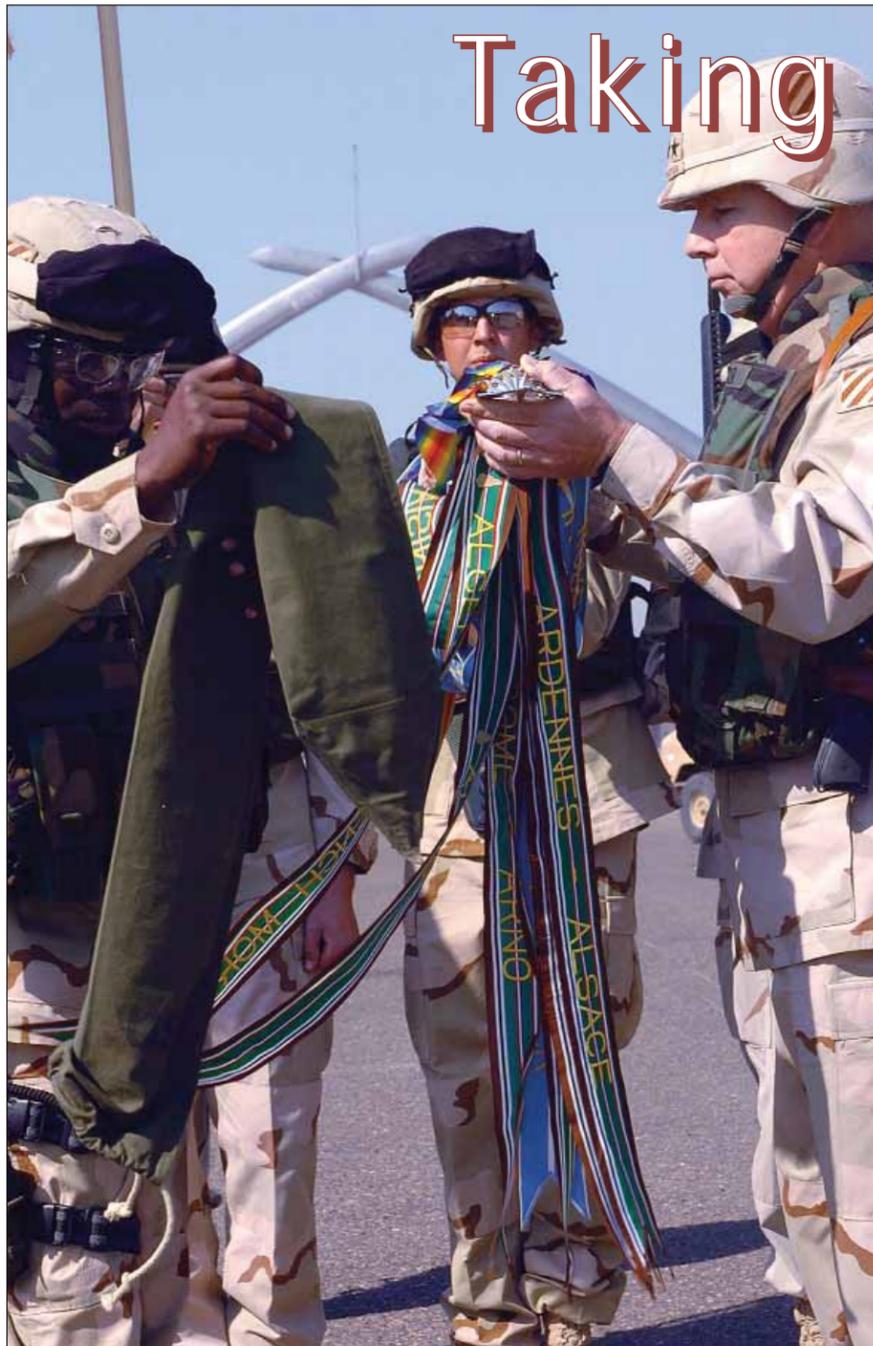
The transfer was orchestrated by Lt. Gen. John Vines, Multi-National Corps — Iraq commanding general.

"Today, we welcome Major General William Webster and Task Force Rock of the Marne back to Iraq," Vines said. "Twenty-two months ago your division spearheaded coalition forces attacks as it fought its way to Baghdad, leading to the toppling of Saddam Hussein and his imposed tyranny on the Iraqi people. Twenty-two months ago you stood on this very ground in victory."

Vines congratulated Chiarelli and 1st Cavalry for a job well done, referencing Iraq's Jan. 30 elections and other marks of progress.

"Together, you and our Iraqi partners improved the way of life for the Iraqi people, conducting more than 800 civil engineering

**See TOA, page 10**



*Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft*

**Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Grant, 3rd Inf. Div. command sergeant major, and Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., division commander, uncased the Marne colors during the Transition of Authority ceremony in Baghdad Feb. 27.**

## Tuskers uniquely prepared to train 302nd Iraqi army

**Capt. Stephen L. Gifford**  
*Special to The Marne Express*

CAMP PROSPERITY, Iraq – "Elephants never forget," so it's fitting that many combat tested Soldiers and Marines of Task Force Tusker are experiencing *deja vu* while returning to Baghdad's International Zone.

Nearly half of the troops have encountered combat in some part of the world, while virtually all of the commanders and first sergeants of the 10 companies have done the same.

The battalion's nickname, the

"Tuskers," comes from their crest, an African elephant symbolizing the tanks of the battalion.

The 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment is a maneuver battalion of the 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

The renowned unit dates back to the 64th Tank Battalion, one of the first African-American units organized in World War II.

Battle-tested and desert savvy, Lt. Col. Robert Roth, the Tusker Task Force commander, gained experience leading combat forces in Iraq during Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He

was also an observer-controller at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., and an instructor at the Armor Officer Advanced Course at Fort Knox.

Command Sgt. Maj. Clarence Stanley served in Samarra, Iraq, less than a year ago.

The Tuskers fought several battles against Saddam Fedayeen and foreign fighters for control of the Al Sijood Palace, the 14th of July Bridge and the Iraqi Ministry buildings during the initial fighting in April 2003.

**See TUSKERS, page 10**

## Father pins Silver Star on son at infamous crossed sabers

**Sgt. John Queen**  
*3rd Bde. Public Affairs*

BAGHDAD – Staff Sgt. William Thomas Payne of the 1st Cavalry Division received the United States' third highest award for heroism in combat during a brief ceremony held at the Sahet Alihtifalat Alkubra (Ceremonial Circle) parade grounds in central Baghdad Feb. 27.

Although Maj. Gen. Pete Chiarelli, the divi-

sion's commander, was on hand to present the award, Payne took the unique opportunity to have the medal pinned on him by his father, Carl Payne, a Department of the Army employee working in Iraq.

"I could never be more proud," said the elder Payne, a retired Army tanker.

"As a parent, it's like a double-edged sword though," Payne said, speaking of his son's

actions. "I'm glad he was recognized for the duty that he did, but it is tough to know that your son risked his life in a situation like that."

Payne, from Mannford, Okla., and an infantryman assigned to A Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment, is credited with rescuing a group of Soldiers from a disabled Bradley fighting vehicle while under fire last

**See STAR, page 10**



*Sgt. John Queen*

**Staff Sgt. William Thomas Payne's father, Carl, and his division commander, Maj. Gen. Pete Chiarelli, were both present when Payne was awarded the Silver Star for rescuing Bradley crewmembers while under fire.**

# Marne Seven Sends

## 'Small stuff' can be a big deal

**Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Grant**  
3rd Inf. Div. Command Sergeant Major

I'm sure you've heard the saying "Don't sweat the small stuff." Sometimes, however, it's the "small stuff" which will make a large difference in whether we win or fall short of the mark. Here in the Baghdad Task Force theater of operations, we have a series of routine tasks that require focused attention. Some of them may appear insignificant, however I want you to do a little sweating over them now and throughout the rest of this deployment.

We need to remain consistent in our uniform requirements both within the confines of our Forward Operating Bases as well as "outside the wire." While conducting daily operations on the FOB during duty hours, your uniform posture is U1.

Outside of any FOB, the uniform posture is U4 and the weapon arming stance is "Red." That means helmet (Advanced Combat Helmet or Kevlar), ballistic eyewear, combat earplugs, and your Individual Body Armor with SAPI plates.

(By the way, I have a challenge for you: what does the acronym SAPI stand for? The first person to e-mail me at [william.grant@id3.army.mil](mailto:william.grant@id3.army.mil) with the correct answer will get a surprise.)

When driving or riding in a tactical vehicle anywhere, you must wear an ACH or Kevlar, and always wear a seatbelt. Do not exceed 55 miles per hour when on roadways outside the FOB.

No convoy will leave the FOB without first coordinating with the Rear Operations Center to gain situational awareness on the route you will travel. Leaders, we owe our Soldiers this level of detail.

Yes, you might already have maps, grid coordinates and intelligence briefs, but you should still check in with the ROC to ensure you have navigational redundancy and that you're not depending solely on Blue Force Tracker. You should also call in to notify them when you're leaving the FOB, when you arrive at your destination and before you leave to return to the FOB.

When traveling in convoys and participating in combat operations outside the FOB, we all need to keep our heads on the swivel, maintaining situational awareness of our surroundings. Turret gunners should be no higher than nametag

defilade. This will help decrease the enemy's ability to accurately engage our Soldiers and will mitigate the hazards of improvised explosive devices. Remembering this "small thing" could save your life and the life of your battle buddy.

We must continue to work together when clearing weapons—an action which has probably become routine for some of you. Never let your guard down when at the clearing barrel. Always drop your magazine first and have your battle buddy physically look in the chamber and ensure there is not a round there.

Leaders must continue to be involved in all aspects of their Soldiers' weapons-handling procedures, continuing to drill on the proper steps to clear the weapon and keep it on safe, quizzing their Soldiers on the definition of the different arming stances, and going over the rules of engagement. This will decrease the possibility of mishaps.

One last area where you need to sweat the small stuff (literally) is physical training. By maintaining a regular, rigorous PT program and proper conditioning—linked directly to the consumption of food and water—you will be taking care of one of our most valuable weapons in our arsenal: your body.

I'm beginning to see Soldiers succumb to dehydration. We must all get involved in monitoring our Soldiers to ensure they are drinking water and eating properly. Our excellent dining facilities have a wide variety of food in every nutritional category. You have every opportunity to properly fuel your body on any given day.

A physically fit Soldier is less likely to be affected by viruses, colds or other ailments which travel amongst large concentrations of Soldiers. Sleep, food, water and PT are the keys to maintaining our physical and mental toughness so we can go the distance of this deployment.

The Multi-National Coalition Forces-Iraq commander, Lt. Gen. George Casey, said it best when he mentioned that we should take the time daily to read, sleep, eat, and think.

Victory is not always won with giant strides, but in small steps. I ask all Soldiers and leaders to remember the seemingly insignificant things which together add up to combat readiness and effectiveness.

Rock of the Marne!  
Standing on the Rock!

## Unsung heroes



Photos by Pfc. Ricardo Branch

Sgt. Jeffrey Endly, 3rd Infantry Division Band, goes through the access book for a badge for Pvt. Frank MacGregor, Headquarters and Headquarters Operation Company, Special Troops Battalion, at the front desk of the division headquarters building March 4.

### Marne Seven would like to add ...

Thank you to anyone performing security or access control duties. You are performing a very critical duty. Your ability to prevent the unauthorized access to this headquarters of a would-be criminal who would impede this mission's progress is paramount. I send a shout out to the best band and color guard the Army has to offer for their service to our country, the division, the people of Iraq and most of all themselves. Continue to "support and defend."



Spc. Shaun Vanderlinde, 3rd Inf. Div. Color Guard, inspects the bag of Pfc. Eric Stack, Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion, at an access control point outside the division's main headquarters.

## The Marne Express

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# The Word on the Street

What's the most interesting part of your mission here?



"Interacting with the different people coming through the gate."

Staff Sgt. Risman Jenkins  
HHC, 256 Bde.  
Opelousas, La.



"The fact that we get to help the local population and be part of history."

Spc. Joseph J. Zamora  
HHD, 503 MP Bn.  
Swansboro, N.C.



"The diversity in dealing with public health issues."

Sgt. First Class Cindy M. Rood  
210 FSB, 10 Mtn. Div.  
Watertown, N.Y.



"Meeting all the Soldiers coming in for treatment."

Pvt. Aaron J. Allen  
546 ASMC, 44 MED  
Vevay, Ind.



"Coming into contact with hostile fire."

Pfc. Kevin J. Floyd  
C Co., 270 AD  
South Elgin, Ill.

# Iraqi Police graduates hit the streets

**Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.**  
1st Bde.

TIKRIT, Iraq – Every day, all across Iraq, coalition forces are partnering with Iraqi nationals to help rebuild their country.

Part of this rebuilding process involves training security forces such as Iraqi Police officers and Iraqi army soldiers.

The newest class of Iraqi Police officers trained by the International Police Association graduated in Tikrit February 17.

Both Coalition and Iraqi army forces are involved in the training of the new recruits.

Despite cultural differences, American instructors at the police academy feel the Iraqi recruits are easily taught the skills they need to know as police-men.

“In the time I’ve been working with them, they are picking everything up very well,” said instructor Sgt. Pedro Cruz.

“Even though there is obviously a language barrier, we seem to meet each other

halfway. Most of them are very eager to learn.”

Police recruits learned different skills preparing them to do their jobs once they hit the streets of their prospective cities.

“The men are taught how to check people and cars for contraband,” said Ahmed Ata Habun, an instructor at the academy. “They are also taught how to use their weapons. They really like it because they are now going to be in charge of their own security.”

The most important part of the training is how well the recruits absorb the skills they need to be safe while doing their

jobs. “We try to give them as much training as we can so they can survive once they get out on patrol,” said Staff Sgt. Carl Antoine.

He commented that the recruits showed excellent signs of progress while learning their new jobs.

“Just based on how they were when they got out on the weapons range, we saw a lot of progress,” Antoine said. “When they first shot their weapons, they were all over the place. In the end they actually qualified with their weapons.”

Once the men hit the streets, however, the main key to their survival will be the quality of their leadership.

“At first the leadership trainees were timid, but we got them to take charge and look at the bigger picture so they could more easily lead their men,” Antoine said.

“What the leadership of the police needs to do is build their men up so they feel good about who they are and what they are doing,” said Lt. Col. Mark Wald, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment commander. “I am very optimistic and hopeful that everything will be okay, and they will do their jobs well.”



## Newest Iraqi army brigade activated March 2

**Sgt. Andrew A. Miller**  
100th MPAD

BAGHDAD – The 41st Brigade of the Iraqi army was activated Wednesday during a ceremony at an Iraqi army training facility here.

More than 200 Iraqi soldiers, who make up the headquarters element of the brigade, participated in the ceremony.

Members of the brigade have trained since November with U.S. Soldiers from the 98th, 1st Cavalry and 3rd Infantry divisions.

This month, the headquarters of the 41st Bde. will conduct a command post exercise, an evaluation that leaders from both forces will use to determine the overall readiness of the unit.

If the unit is successful, it could be assigned to a sector of Baghdad in as few as six months, said Lt. Col. Ed Tennent, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team.

When ready, the 41st Bde. will assume responsibility of an area east of the Tigris River that includes Sadr City.

The responsibility of that sector currently belongs to the 3rd Inf. Div.’s 2nd Brigade.

While the brigade’s readiness to operate independently is still being evaluated, the courage of its soldiers goes unquestioned.

They have been threatened, run off the road, and ambushed while commuting to the training facility, he said, but they continue to show up.

“A lot of them want to do something with their country and they have a lot of passion for that,” said Capt. Victor Ingram, an embedded trainer from the CMATT.

Soldiers of the brigade have set aside long-held differences to become a team, said Tennent.

Many were a part of the former Iraqi army and are now working with the U.S. Army they once fought against.

Command Sgt. Maj. Abad al-Razaq, the 41st Bde. command sergeant major, fought against U.S. forces during Desert Storm.

“I must change my country for the best,” said al-Razaq, “I want to give



**Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., 3rd Infantry Division commanding general, listens as Maj. Gen. Mudhir Al Mawlla, Iraqi army 6th Division deputy commander, discusses the 41st Bde.’s significance during a ceremony honoring its activation March 2.**

it a better future. Not just me, I need help. Whose help? My friend, the American Army.”

Up to this point, trainers have focused on administration, logistics and noncommissioned officer and officer

leadership, according to Ingram.

Future training will include combat-oriented exercises.

Currently, only the headquarters element is assigned to the newly-activated brigade.

Tennent said no less than five battalions, however, are to be assigned between June and July.

Some of those soldiers are already operating alongside coalition forces in combat operations.



Chaplain (Capt.) Steven Hommel, 3/15 Inf. Regt., offers a pair of sneakers and a coloring book to a student at Marakah al-Taf elementary school in Sadr City, Iraq. Soldiers distributed about 250 pairs of shoes at the school in northeastern Baghdad as a part of Operation Happy Feet Feb. 28.

Photos by Spc. Ben Brody



1st Sgt. Donald Rangel, B Co., 3/15 Inf., shows his Soldiers where to put bags of tennis shoes for the students at the school.

## "Can Do" Soldiers give shoes to youth

Spc. Ben Brody  
2nd Bde.

SADR CITY, Iraq – Operation Happy Feet brought hundreds of smiles to the children of Sadr City as Soldiers of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry distributed sneakers at Marakah al-Taf elementary school Feb. 28.

The children weren't the only ones smiling. Working in conjunction with Civil Affairs, the infantrymen purchased 500 pairs of shoes from a local vendor to give out at the northeastern Baghdad school, according to Capt. Timothy Terese, B Co. Commander.

"We go around to lots of schools in the area, basically every day, to make sure they have the proper equipment to function," said 1st Lt. Jason Rocks, B Co. fire support officer and effects coordinator. "Blackboards, pencils, paper ... we check that they are able to function on a day-to-day basis."

Rocks, of Puyallup, Wash., said the missions help foster support for coalition forces in an area once considered firmly under insurgent control.

"Right now, (Operation Happy Feet) is immediate gratification," Rocks said. "Everything we do helps them and their families realize that the Iraqi government and coalition forces care about the Iraqi people."

In addition to B Co. infantry troops, a squad of Iraqi army soldiers helped provide security and translations during the visit.

The elementary school is coeducational, meaning girls have their classes in the morning

while boys have studies during the afternoon. "We're trying to get the kids of Sadr City some new shoes, and hand out copies of Baghdad Kids," said Spc. Brandon Wise, of Team 1033, 307th Psychological Operations Company, a Missouri Army Reserve unit. "It's a fun magazine for kids. It's got stuff about dinosaurs, outer space, the Olympics – things kids like. It's got some important safety and hygiene messages too, like 'remember to brush your teeth' and 'don't point toy guns at Soldiers.'"

Wise, of Greenville, Ill., and Staff Sgt. Travis C. Butler, also of the 307th, handed out bags of school supplies, coloring books and issues of Baghdad Kids.

"It's really important for us to make a good impression on these kids before they grow up," Butler, of St. Clair, Mo., said. "The kids are the future of Iraq, and fostering a better relationship now will make for better relationships later."

The morning's classes of girls lined up for their foot measurements, receiving white tennis shoes. The girls quietly giggled as Soldiers passed the shoes forward to Chaplain (Capt.) Steven Hommel, of 3/15 Inf., who handed them out to each of the children. Several Soldiers remarked at how well-behaved the girls were.

"The American school kids back in the states don't realize how lucky they are," said 1st Sgt. Donald Rangel, B Co., First Sergeant. "We passed out these shoes just so the kids here can get from home to school without hurting themselves."

"It makes me feel good to do this for the kids," the San Antonio native continued. "I've got six kids of my own, three of them in elementary school."

The Soldiers distributed nearly half of the 500 pairs to the girls, and plan to give the remaining shoes to the boys later in the week.

"This is one of many missions we have, providing aid to Sadr City residents," Terese said. "We come out here every day. We're also working right now to get a functional sewage system installed in the neighborhood, which will make for a much safer neighborhood for these kids to grow up in."



Soldiers from B Co., 3/15 Inf., hand out hard candy to kids in Sadr City, Iraq, Feb 28.



Chaplain (Capt.) Steven Hommel hands a pair of sneakers and a coloring book to a student.

# Tribal leaders see progress, discuss issues

**Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.**  
1st Bde.

Sheik tribal leaders from Salah ad Din province in Iraq assembled in Tikrit to discuss pressing matters and to announce the names of elected governing council members Feb. 21.

"The sheiks' council of the Salah ad Din province is an advisory council to the governor and the provincial council of Salah ad Din," said Maj. Christopher M. Diccio, Civil Affairs Officer and Iraqi Security Force liaison for 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

"They are non-official leaders of their communities. They play a very important role in maintaining stability. The council meets twice a month to discuss issues from across the province."

Sheik Naji al Jubara, the spokesman for the meeting, opened the discussion with praise for democracy and the success of the elections. He also wanted to explain to the sheiks why the elections and cooperation with coalition forces were important.

"If you travel to any other place in Iraq, conditions are not as safe as they are in our province," said Jubara, who is the leader of the largest tribe in Salah ad Din province, the Al Juboori tribe. "The reason the security is so good in our province is because of the cooperation with the coalition. Many people did not vote because they

were frightened of attacks by insurgents. We will work with the coalition to improve this situation. We have to build a new Iraq. Iraq's future will depend on the success of these elections."

Names for the Salah ad Din province governing council were released by the Iraqi National Assembly in Baghdad. The new council will be the cornerstone for change and improvement in their province.

"The sheiks who were chosen to be our leaders will be responsible for changing the Iraqi constitution and electing a new president," Jubara said. "We have to have good leadership to be successful in creating a peaceful Iraq."

The sheiks agreed with Jubara's statements, but had issues concerning their own security and how they would accomplish the changes needed to rebuild and renew their country.

"I need more bodyguards if I am to be responsible for my people," said Sheik Mohammed al Juboori, sheik of the Shirkat area of Salah ad Din province. "I currently have 70 bodyguards to protect me and my staff, but some of them haven't been paid in over a month. Since the coalition is not responsible for these funds, I need to know where and when we will obtain the wages for the existing bodyguards I have and the ones I will need in the future."

Jubara informed the committee the funds for such urgent requests will be provided by the new Iraqi government in Baghdad. The new constitution would decide how much each group would get to support their needs.

Another issue that troubled Juboori went back to the sectarian way of thinking between the tribes. He complained that when he had spoken to Kurdish leaders in Kirkuk, they said since the town had once been a part of Kurdistan it should belong only to the Kurds. Juboori said he disagreed with the leaders, and Kirkuk should belong to all Iraqi people.

"I hope the new constitution will resolve many of the sectarian issues between the Kurds, Turks and Arabs," Jubara said. "We need to show that Iraq is for all Iraqi people. Iraq is unified, and we need to forget the separatist ways of thinking. I am not working for myself, but for all the sheiks and people of our province."

Insurgency and security were thoroughly discussed during the meeting. Insurgents who struck in the province claimed they were involved in jihad, or cleansing the land of non Muslim people. Jubara disagreed.

"You have to understand, the people who destroy the works of Iraqis, the oil and other resources are not doing it for jihad. These are acts of terrorism," Jubara said. "I



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Salah ad Din province governor Hamed Hmood Shakti signs documents for sheiks who attended a council meeting in Tikrit Feb. 21.

think these people come from other countries to ruin the progress we are trying to make. Only through unification of all our people will we be able to defeat terrorism and live in peace in Iraq."

## Taji medical station manned by skilled professionals

**Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick**  
DSB

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The immense responsibility for Soldiers' overall health – and even their lives during times of crisis – passed quietly from the skillful hands of one dedicated

team of health professionals to another.

Medical personnel from the 3rd Infantry Division assumed control of the troop medical clinic here from their 1st Cavalry Division counterparts Feb. 12.

"The 27th Main Medical Support

Battalion Medical Platoon has provided Levell combat medical care for coalition forces in Taji, Iraq, continuously for the past 365 days," said Lt. Col. Scott McLean, battalion surgeon for the 27th, in his remarks to the combined units. "Over the past nine months we have struggled to improve our situation by renovating this building."

McLean said the clinic is named for a fallen comrade, Spc. Beau Beaulieu, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 27th MMSB. Beaulieu, the only member of the unit killed in action, died from wounds sustained during a rocket attack May 24, 2004.

"It's the beginning of a new era," said McLean.

He said his unit was very pleased that the 3rd Infantry Division's 550th Area Support Medical Company had arrived and would continue the improvements at the clinic.

"They've done a phenomenal job to bring this clinic and this base into the forefront of medical care," said Maj. Tzvi Robbins, 550th ASMC clinic officer in charge.

1st Sgt. Thomas Wrighton, Jr., the 550th ASMC first sergeant, said his Soldiers are ready to build on the 1st Cavalry's hard work.

"We are going to provide world class medical care," Wrighton said.

His unit is prepared to support dental, optometry and laboratory services along with routine sick call and mental health counseling. Trauma care is also available 24 hours a day.

Trauma is the specialty of Sgt. Matthew J. Carver, a health care specialist from North Wilkesboro, N.C., and a member of the company's evacuation platoon.

Carver, who started his Army career as a combat medic, said his team will work on or off the installation helping those requiring emergency care.

"We could be attached to convoy support," Carver said.

He said his unit had prepared for that contingency by training in convoy live-fire exercises before coming to Iraq.

Carver began preparing himself for his mission well before his deployment. To switch from combat medic to his current position, he completed three additional certifications.

"To become a health care specialist, I had to complete Hospital Trauma Life Support, Airway Infusion Medication and Shock, and Emergency Medical Technician courses," Carver said.

He said the EMT training portion was taught by the Army but was the same course that is taught in the civilian sector.

But Carver's not thinking of civilian life any time soon.

"I love everything the army stands for," Carver said.

Spc. Ryan L. Hodges, a mental health specialist with the 550th ASMC, is also enjoying her Army experience.

"I wanted to go to airborne school and hopefully get deployed," said Hodges, a relative newcomer to the Army with less than two years in service. "I got one off the list."

Being a Soldier isn't just about travel and adventure for Hodges. She has a sincere desire to help others.

Hodges, who spent a year in Korea before joining the 550th, said that while growing up in Columbus, Ga., near Fort Benning, she'd heard stories of stress related challenges facing service members in the Army.

"I didn't want to be a medic and deal with blood, so this was another way to help Soldiers," Hodges said.

She said the environment here in Iraq creates higher stress levels for fellow Soldiers than during her tour in Korea and that she feels she'll have more opportunities to help.

"I get self gratification out of helping everybody else," Hodges said.

Motivated to help others and to get their mission underway, 550th personnel are busily settling into their new facility.

"These Soldiers are highly motivated, dedicated and highly proficient in their warrior tasks and drills," Wrighton said. "They are ready to execute at a moment's notice."



Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick

Sgt. Matthew Carver, a 550th ASMC health care specialist, adjusts his medical bag at Camp Taji in preparation for a mission. The Taji clinic is located at Castle Gate.

# Modern technology improves logistics on battlefield

**Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick**

DSB

CAMP VIRGINIA, Kuwait – It was the third day of a long, hard-fought battle and Gen. Robert E. Lee, the commander of The Army of Northern Virginia, was about to strike where he believed the Federal forces to be most vulnerable.

He was sending Brig. Gen. George Pickett's troops into the middle of the Union line just outside the small town of Gettysburg, Pa. and he needed all his canons to fire non-stop during the attack.

Lee did not realize his supply of artillery ammunition had not kept up with his fast moving army.

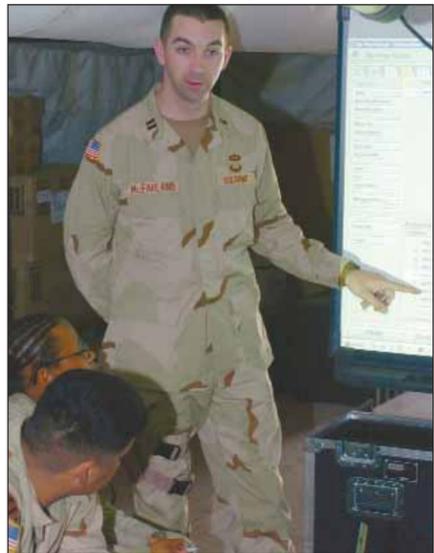
The challenge of tracking munitions, supplies and troops plagued military leaders of the American Civil War.

Today's high technology provides 21st century commanders logistical and battlefield advantages unimaginable in the 1860s.

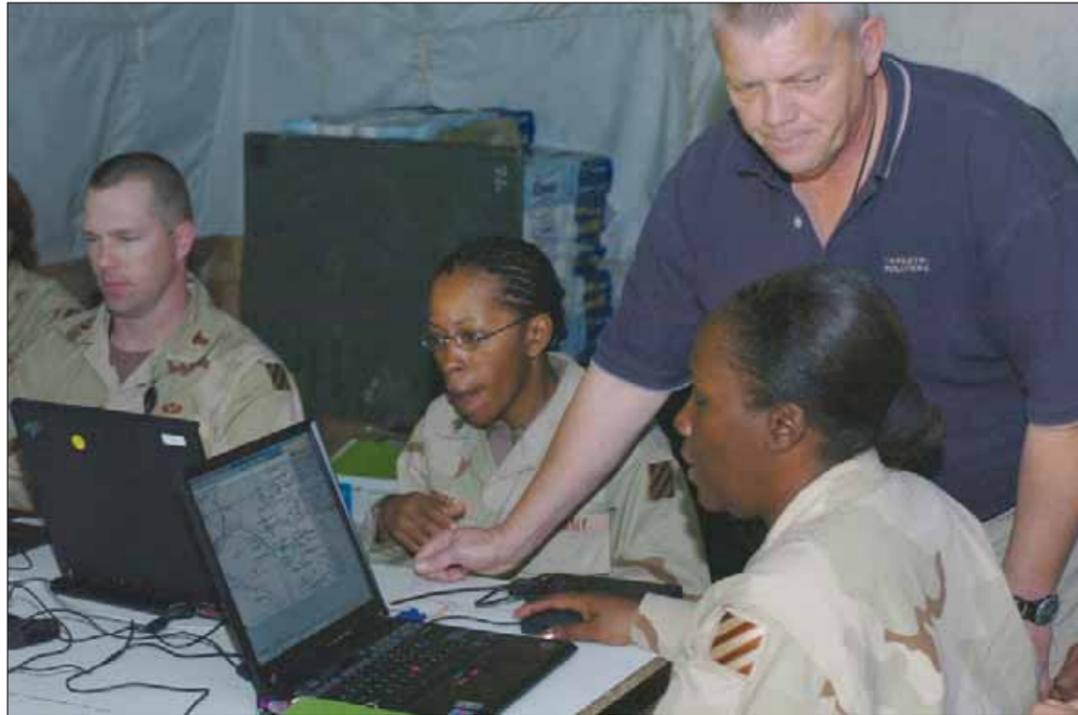
"The Battle Command Sustainment Support System is the Army's new maneuver sustainment command and control system," said Capt. Scott McFarland, a member of the Training and Doctrine Command Systems Management Office, Fort McPherson.

McFarland, who was here Jan. 28 to train Soldiers from the Division Support Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, said the BCS3 is the latest structure for keeping track of logistics.

The BCS3 brings all the data for supplies, transportation and combat forces into one easy system to help commanders in making critical decisions, McFarland said.



**Capt. Scott McFarland, a member of the Training and Doctrine Command Systems Management Office, shows the Soldiers from the DSB, 3rd Inf. Div., the ins and outs of the new tracking system.**



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick

**Danny Hite, field representative for Tapestry Solutions, instructs Sgt. 1st Class Patricia K. Cunningham, a DSB logistics sergeant on the proper ways to operate the new logistical tracking system, during the BCS3 class at Camp Virginia, Kuwait Jan. 28.**

"BCS3 provides a near real time, continuous graphical representation of the current situation within the area of operation and displays it on a single portable laptop" said Danny Hite, a Tapestry Solutions field service engineer with 3rd Inf. Div. "The user has the ability to tailor the detail and scale of the display to show only those specific logistical requirements they require."

Sgt. Darlene Smith, automated logistics sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, DSB, was here for the training and was quite impressed.

"BCS3 is the wave of the Army's future," Smith said. "As an operator, I'm able to monitor convoy movement from the time they depart until they arrive at their destinations."

The BCS3 helps the unit track supplies through installed worldwide maps. The system also updates the maps constantly, Smith said.

"Units have set-up operational views within BCS3's mapping capabilities to track all of their unit's internal deployment shipments," McFarland said.

McFarland said the system uses satellite map files so the units can actually see the port where their equipment is staged.

The system is precise and allows the

commanders to see only their equipment.

Smith said tracking the troops and supplies by satellite isn't the only benefit of the technology since she is now able to communicate with the convoys through text messaging.

"Unit support operations officers are setting up operational views within BCS3 that show only their unit's organic vehicles and track their movement on one laptop screen," McFarland said. "BCS3 allows the 3rd ID to view all their supply support activity locations within the area of operation."

McFarland said the system allows supply officers visibility of all their on-hand assets on one single laptop screen.

This view allows the logisticians to immediately see the current location of their shipments and containers, McFarland explained.

BCS3 has the ability to track several movement tracking systems and then display all those associated vehicles on the map screen.

Spc. Sudie A. Crawford, a missile technician and operations specialist with HHC, DSB, said the new tracking system is extremely helpful.

"We can follow all our convoys," Crawford said. "If we are running

low on supplies, we know when we can expect more."

Hite, whose company co-developed the system, said that the BCS3 allows commanders to make timely, well informed decisions while "supporting today's fight and tomorrow's follow-on actions."

McFarland said that launching the system as soon as it was ready was in synch with Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Peter Schoomaker's support of the Spiral Development plan.

This plan allows fielding of equipment before the technology becomes outdated.

Under the spiral development approach, a fielded technology is routinely assessed, evaluated, upgraded and re-inserted, according to an article by Tim Kennedy, a founding partner of Strategic Policy, Arlington, Va.

"The 3rd ID was first to field the BCS3 and deploy into theater with the system," McFarland said. "Units immediately began use of the system upon arrival into Kuwait."

McFarland said the 3rd Inf. Div. is also using BCS3 to track their onward movements into Iraq.

With the help of BCS3, military commanders of the 21st century can avoid getting caught few rounds short of victory.

## Soldiers, don't lose cool as triple digit-weather approaches

**Spc. Jennifer Fitts**

100th MPAD

Some lucky Marne Soldiers enjoy a necessary luxury that comes with particular versions of up-armored vehicles – precious air-conditioners.

Easily taken for granted, the ACs that troops rely on to keep them cool during patrols and convoys need frequent maintenance to keep them running properly.

Temperatures in the Iraqi desert will soar well into the triple digits during the hottest

days of summer and the heat build-up in up-armored vehicles will push those temperatures even higher, causing AC units to be used at their maximum capacity.

Dust and the extreme conditions here can make even the most durable AC unit run hot, or worse, not at all. Regular operator maintenance checks can help keep them working when Soldiers need them most.

Adding routine checks of ACs before missions is a quick and easy way to make sure that Marne Soldiers ride

in relative comfort this summer.

The following maintenance tips are suggested by Red Dot representatives:

- Most important is daily cleaning of the air recirculation filter, located on the front of the unit. It easily becomes clogged with dust, reducing the circulated air. The filter is designed to be tapped clean, or if needed, rinsed with water.
- Never run the AC without the filter, or dust will plug up the condenser, requiring the unit to be taken apart and cleaned before it will work correctly

again.

- Check the belts on the AC compressor, located on the vehicle engine. The belts should be tensioned correctly, with little play or looseness. They should be flexible, shiny and without cracks.
- Inspect for leaks and dents around the coolant tubes. If there is moisture or a steady drip, notify your maintenance shop.
- Monitor the temperature of the suction and discharge lines. The discharge line should be warm or hot to the touch. The suction line should

be cool to the touch.

- Clean the condenser fins of dirt and bugs every four to six weeks. Straighten any bent fins.
- The ACs should be operated briefly during the colder months too, making sure there are no leaks in the units' seals. The expelled air should be colder than the air inside the vehicle.
- Become familiar with how the AC sounds when it's working correctly. Any odd noises or changes in air temperature will be an indicator of problems.

## No Soldier left behind

### Spc. Matthew Maupin

*"I will not leave a fallen comrade"*

These well known words from the Warrior Ethos ring true for Spc. Matt Maupin. Maupin is an Army Reserve Soldier from the 724th Transportation Company who was captured April 9, 2002 during Operation Iraqi Freedom 1.

Spc. Maupin – we are still looking for you and we will find you. You have not been forgotten.



# Raiders receive authority at Dagger

**Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.**  
1st Bde.

TIKRIT, Iraq – Coalition authority over the Salah ad Din province changed hands from 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division to the Raiders of 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base Dagger Feb. 14.

Incoming Soldiers of 1st Bde. have been at Dagger for more than two weeks, where they are familiarizing themselves with their new responsibilities for the next year.

Col. Randal A. Dragon, the outgoing commander of the 2nd Bde., expressed pride referencing having worked with the Raiders. He had confidence they would do an excellent job after 2nd Bde. departed.

“As we transition, I want to tell you all it has been a true honor to work with the Legendary Raider Brigade Combat Team,” Dragon said. “These Soldiers are well led, well trained and well prepared to execute this mission. With their continued effort ... we remain partnered

with our Iraqi brothers and we all will someday soon declare victory.”

Col. Mark McKnight, the incoming commander, greeted the leaders of Salah ad Din province and reassured them of the 1st Bde.’s intentions during the Soldiers’ stay in Iraq.

“What will not change is the level of commitment by the Soldiers of this BCT,” McKnight said. “The Soldiers represented by this formation will continue to fight alongside the Iraqi Security Forces and the provincial leaders in defeating terrorists who threaten the future of a free Iraq.”

McKnight also thanked the Iraqi forces for their efforts and sacrifices in working towards a shared and ultimate goal.

“On behalf of the Soldiers of this BCT, I salute the bravery and courage of the Iraqi Security Forces, the provincial and city leaders and the good citizens of Salah ad Din province who defy terrorists every day,” McKnight said. “These great people fight for the future of this nation and the future of their families

**“We will devote ourselves during this time to helping and partnering with the Iraqi people for a better future.”**

**Col. Randal A Dragon**  
Former 2nd Bde. commander

and their children. Freedom will always come at a cost. In the long history of Iraq, we will only be here for a very short time. We will devote ourselves during this time to helping and partnering with the Iraqi people for a better future.”

While this TOA was specifically for 1st Bde. and 2nd Bde. Headquarters, individual battalions under both brigades held separate TOAs.

•Task Force 2nd Battalion, 108th

Infantry Regiment was replaced by Task Force 1st Battalion, 128th Armor Regiment Dec. 26, 2004.

•Task Force 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment was replaced by Task Force 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor Regiment on Jan 3.

•Task Force 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment was replaced by Task Force 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment on Feb. 12.

•The 9th Engineer Battalion was replaced by 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment/Brigade Troops Battalion on Feb. 12.

•Task Force 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment was replaced by Task Force 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment on Feb. 13.

•Task Force 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment will be replaced by Task Force 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment on Feb. 16.

•The 299th Forward Support Battalion was replaced by the 3rd Forward Support Battalion on 18 February.

## 3/7 Cav. Soldiers help Iraqi forces get ready

**Spc. Ben Brody**  
2nd Bde.

CAMP VOLUNTEER, Iraq – As the new Iraqi government continues to develop, the fledgling Iraqi army is beginning to hold its own and take increasing responsibility for securing the country, with the support of U.S. troops.

Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, 3rd Infantry Division, are training Iraqi army soldiers of the 305th Battalion on basic military knowledge ranging from individual Soldier skills to effective leadership practices.

The soldiers of the 305th are

stationed at Camp Volunteer, in Baghdad, and are responsible for securing the peace in two mid-sized sectors of the city.

“We’re focusing on basic combat and patrolling skills for junior Iraqi soldiers, and helping develop (noncommissioned officers) and junior officers into good leaders,” said Capt. James Turner, A Troop, 3/7 Cav., commander. “Iraqi soldiers are like any other Soldiers – they do very well under good leadership.”

Previous coalition units taught these IA troops how to first function as a platoon, then as a company. U.S. Soldiers from 3/7 Cav. followed by

instructing 305th members how to react as a battalion.

“I don’t foresee any major obstacles, beyond the normal hiccups when you integrate two different units,” Turner said. “The best thing at this stage is watching the Iraqi soldiers really internalize the training and the mindset that they are fighting for the good of their country.”

Language barriers slow down the training, but 3/7 has interpreters and some of the Iraqi soldiers speak very good English. One such individual is 1st Lt. Yarub al-Taweed, 305th security platoon leader.

“Our unit has come a long

way over the past year and our responsibilities have increased accordingly,” al-Taweed said. “When we formed the unit, we didn’t have vehicles or armor, and now we’ve got (body) armor with plates, trucks and heavy weapons. We’ve had a lot of success on patrols because of our training, but mostly because we know the areas, we know the people and we speak the language.”

He said the success of the recent elections has raised public opinion of the IA considerably.

“Different people have different views of us, but before the elections, we were not very popular with Iraqis,” al-Taweed said. “The elections gave us a chance to prove that we can protect people and that we want a secure Iraq. Now we are enjoying some more support. What they will think tomorrow, I don’t know.”

The young officer said he hopes to eventually see the cities secured by police and the Iraqi army defending the country’s long, porous border.

“People can see we are working hard,” he said. “If you are good and fair to the people, they will be good and fair to you.”

As a small assembly of IA soldiers prepared to leave Camp Volunteer for a security patrol, Staff Sgt. Mark Scott, of A Troop, helped them check their weapons and vehicles.

Scott, along with the soldiers’ platoon sergeant, inspected their pickup trucks’ fluid levels and overall condition. They made sure the IA drivers knew how to perform preventive maintenance checks and services to standard.

“Your mission is a patrol, but before you can accomplish that, your mission is to make sure everyone is ready,” Smith told their NCO through an interpreter.

“Make your soldiers do the right thing and eventually they’ll do it on their own,” he said.

Scott, a sniper section NCO, taught IA leaders how to utilize army rank structure to their advantage.

“What we saw was the officers trying to micromanage everything down to the individual soldiers,” Scott said. “I told them, ‘let your first sergeant manage the company’s soldiers, let a platoon sergeant handle his platoon, let the squad leaders take care of their squads.’ Now the commander sets company policy, and the first sergeant enforces it, which works much better.”

Scott said that he has noticed several promising leaders in the 305th who take great pride in what they’ve accomplished and that it comes from believing in what they are doing to help their country.

“I’ve got a first sergeant who goes by the nickname ‘Wolf,’ who keeps his troops in line like no other. You can just tell by looking at him – he’s the man.”

Scott and others from 3/7 will continue their training with the 305th throughout the year, further refining the IA battalion’s capabilities.

Hopeful for the future of Iraq, al-Taweed said he thinks the terrorists he fights will gradually disappear as people find jobs and can enjoy their freedoms.



Spc. Ben Brody

Staff Sgt. Mark Scott, 3/7 Cav., inspects an Iraqi Army soldier's rifle with the soldier's platoon sergeant. The IA soldiers lined up for pre-combat checks before heading out on a security patrol.

## Useful Arabic Phrases

English	Arabic	English	Arabic
Where is/are ... ?	feyn ... ?	Please	min faD-lak/-lik (fem.)
What's this/that?	'eyh ... ?	Thank you	shuk-ran
How much?	kam? bi kam?	I don't understand	mish feh-him/fah-ma
How many?	kam?	What's this/that?	'eyh da?

## Process of elimination ...

## Part I: The Capture Process

Spc. Erin Robicheaux  
256th Bde.

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq - A long running joke in the United States Army is that the term "military intelligence" is a major oxymoron.

However, the process of capturing insurgents, gathering information, and sending them through the legal system lays that claim to rest.

The overall spectrum is not a small one, and it takes many elements and very different pieces to come to the one common goal of getting the bad guys off of the streets.

The personnel involved have various points of view, but in the end their goal is one in the same.

It all starts with targeting.

Col. Ronnie D. Johnson, Deputy Brigade Commander for the 256th Brigade oversees the targeting process and coordinates the seizure development, known as "cordon and search."

He says that the two main elements are combat operations and the intelligence that is gathered on the target.

"We round up as much information as we can from as many sources as we can," he said. "Information can come from informants, people just coming up to us in the streets, or it can come from our commanding division, or other high-

resources."

The information is given to intelligence analysts who decipher it and determine who the target will be. All

angles of the person's affiliations are considered and if he is deemed as a potential asset, the decision is made to take the case higher.

The analysts then present the information to Johnson, and if he agrees with the content, he will, in turn, present it to the brigade commander for the final approval. Once it is decided that this is a target that the military needs to pursue, the project is then turned over to one of the task forces.

The process starts all over again, only this time, at the battalion level.

Staff Sgt. Chris Hebert from

Lafayette, La, is the Military Intelligence non-commissioned officer for 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, and says that no matter how much planning goes into an operation, it's the patrols on the ground that makes or breaks the outcome.

"We rely heavily on the patrols to bring back most of the information that we need to make the arrest," he said. "That's simply because they're out there and they're the ones that have the connections in the neighborhood to make it happen."

During the process of gathering the information, Hebert says that patrol leaders and their Soldiers are usually the best way to extract it.

"Many times a patrol leader will know the specific house and even have relationships with people in the area," he said.

Before the task force can go after the target, the personnel must make sure that they have enough information to identify that the target is, without a doubt, their man of the hour.

To achieve this a team, or patrol, is given the task to gather more information. The size of the team is dependent on the mission and varies depending on the size of the area that needs to be covered.

The information gathered may be different each time, as well. After the

final piece is collected, the intelligence team, in collaboration with the battalion and company commanders, put together the actual cordon and search.

When the patrol executes the operation and makes the arrest, Hebert says that it's crucial that they gather the evidence needed to

keep the insurgent in custody.

"Evidence collection and photographs are a big deal to the Iraqi government," he said. "They will take a photo of the weapon with the owner next to it above scientific evidence any day of the week."

Pictures, along with sworn statements from the pertinent parties involved in the cordon and search, are the key to good evidence collection. Everything goes into a packet to build a case against the target.

Johnson says that the success rate of the 256th is steady.

**"About 60 percent of the targets we execute, we get the person, and just capturing the suspect in and of itself is a victory."**

Col. Ronnie D. Johnson  
256th Deputy Bde. commander



Courtesy photo

Since arriving in Baghdad, Soldiers of the 256th Bde. have secured many weapons caches due to well planned and executed cordon and search missions.

"About 60 percent of the targets that we go after, we get the person," he said. "Just capturing the suspect in and of itself is a victory."

What is particularly significant and impressive, though, is the number of detainees who remain in custody and are further processed into Abu Ghraib Prison.

Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr., commander of the 256th Bde., praises his Soldiers and gives credit where it's due.

"This is a direct result of the quality of the packets put together by the capturing units," he said. "The Tiger Brigade has a better than 50 percent retention rate, which ensures these insurgents are off the streets for the remainder of our tour here in Baghdad."

A lot of times the patrol will execute a cordon and search, and the target in question is nowhere to be found.

Sometimes it happens, though, that they'll wind up arresting someone else connected to that target.

For example, in a recent operation, the 256th conducted a cordon and search and targeted seven suspects.

They only arrested two of their intended targets, but surprising scored an additional eight who they were not specifically after. The others just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time.

There are also missions that don't require such intricate planning.

Enduring missions, like being on the lookout for rocket men and those

placing improvised explosive devices, implore the use of several different tasks because the activity isn't driven by any particular timeline.

Sometimes snipers may be placed where it is believed someone may be wiring IEDs or a patrol may cover a general area where a rocket man may be launching rocket propelled grenades.

On Dec. 3, 2004 an infantry scout platoon of Headquarters Company 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, was on a routine patrol on the lookout for suspicious activity.

They hit an IED and the attack wounded three Soldiers and killed Staff Sgt. Henry Irizarry.

The gunner on the truck in front of Irizarry's vehicle saw the triggerman and, along with air support and the quick reaction force, chased him and his brother, who was acting as a decoy, into a house and held them until they could be detained.

Once they had been arrested, the triggerman, Ziyad Hassin Ali Hammadi, and his brother, Falah Hassin Ali Hammadi, were brought to the Brigade Interrogation Facility for questioning.

Now it falls into the hands of the Judge Advocate General's office and the Tactical Human Teams to extract information from the two insurgents.

In conjunction with the patrol's evidence packet, the legal process of keeping the killers of an American Soldier off of the streets has begun.

## JNN system advances signal abilities

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.  
1st Bde.

The Army has revolutionized the efficiency of their communication abilities with a new joint network node system, known as JNN. The 1st

Brigade's Troop Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division is the first to employ the communication system in a combat zone.

The JNN system performs communication operations at a much faster pace than the former system used by Army

communications specialists.

"The JNN is a commercial network that we use for tactical purposes," said Spc. Danny Ferguson, a JNN systems operator. "We use commercial satellites to bring in and send out communications to all brigade elements."

The result is Soldiers work smarter, not harder while providing the division with the latest technology.

"The biggest benefit is the high increase of data we receive and transmit to and from multiple subscribers," Ferguson said. "The old (mobile subscriber equipment) could only pull in one megabyte of bandwidth. A bandwidth is power behind the push of a signal to a specific source. The new JNN system has the capability of eight megabytes. That's obviously much more power."

Ferguson said that even though the JNN is a brand-new system, it still has the ability to communicate with the old MSE system until everyone gets the latest equipment.

JNN not only enhances the quality and quantity of the battalion's communication abili-

ties - it's also maintained with a fraction of the manpower.

"You get more services with less equipment to maintain," explained Capt. Kathleen Cage, A Company Commander. "The holistic benefits are that it takes fewer Soldiers to operate the new system than the old node center we had before."

The old node center was operated by more than 20 Soldiers, Cage said.

"If you look at the bigger picture, the company and the brigade have fewer Soldiers to support logistically with the use of this system," Cage said. "The company as a whole is streamlined."

Being inexperienced at first with JNN, communications Soldiers received training before the system was ready to join them in Iraq. With the help of civilians who were familiar with JNN, Soldiers became proficient and confident in their ability to use the system.

"It took a lot of civilian help back in garrison to get our Soldiers up to speed on the JNN," Cage said. "We got most of the bugs worked out, and we are pulling in a strong

signal now. It will just take time to get used to operating it."

One of the greatest benefits of the JNN is that it is less terrain dependent.

"Leaders who want to have the ability to place their units in certain positions won't have to worry about getting to a certain spot on the terrain to communicate with their command elements," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Michael Rivera, JNN network technician. "The reason this is possible is because communications are satellite based instead of depending on line-of-sight communication."

Brian Hupp, a JNN field support representative, said that the new system gives the 3rd Inf. Div. capabilities like never before.

"The way things worked before JNN, each unit out in the field was locked into a certain block of satellite capacity, whether or not they were using it," Hupp said. "With the new system, all of the units are locked into the same hub. This sends (every) signal back to a central location, giving them communications abilities on demand."



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Spc. Danny Ferguson, a JNN systems operator, performs preventive maintenance checks on the new system at FOB Dagger near Tikrit Feb. 28.

# Vanguard Brigade builds on 1st Cavalry's hard work

**Pfc. Dan Balda**  
4th Bde.

CAMP PROSPERITY, Iraq – The 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, passed responsibility for the International Zone to the 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division March 4.

“We have worked together to ensure that 4th Brigade will continue and complete all the projects that the 3rd Brigade started,” said Col. John M. Murray, the 3rd Bde. Commander. “(4th Brigade) will continue to work with the local governments of Karkh and Karadah to identify new projects to help the Iraqi people.”

The Kenton, Ohio, native also said that 4th Bde. will continue setting the conditions for Iraq's government to fully establish itself.

Maj. Ross Coffman, the 4th Bde. operations officer said this will be accomplished by using a training methodology in which the unit works with the Iraqi security services to share information and training.

The goal is to gradually transition so that the security forces perform most of the day to day functions while the 4th Bde. provides a supporting role.

“This will ensure that no matter where you are in the country the Iraqi populous

knows that it is the Iraqis, not the Americans, doing the yeoman's work to make this country safe,” Coffman said.

The Vanguard Bde. has a very large area of responsibility since it has replaced two different 1st Cav. brigades; the 5th, and the 3rd.

Coffman said the Vanguards are responsible for the area within, and south of the IZ, from the Tigris River to Baghdad International Airport.

He said here are two reasons why his brigade can maintain responsibility over such a large area.

“The first reason we can take over for two (different brigades) is that they've done such a good job with the Iraqi security forces,” Coffman said. “This allows us to have fewer Soldiers on the ground.”

“The other reason is due to the reorganization and the capabilities of the brigade allowing us to operate over a larger battle space. That's mainly because we have increased the capabilities at the brigade and battalion level,” Coffman explained.

“This allows us to do multiple operations simultaneously, thereby increasing the level of safety in our (sector).”



Besides the obvious security-minded matters, there are other goals the 4th Bde. has in its sights.

“We will support the Iraqi forces during the constitutional referendum and constitutional elections,” said Col. Edward Cardon, 4th Bde. commander. “We are working towards the day when there will be no Multi National Forces in Baghdad. This is why the training of

the Iraqi army is so important.”

He continued, “What we are trying to build, the terrorists are trying to destroy. We are not working against time, we are working with the level of proficiency of the Iraqi battalions. Whether that is tomorrow or six months from now, when they are ready, they will assume responsibility.”

The Vanguard Brigade will also continue where 1st Cav. left off, helping to raise the quality of life for the Iraqi people.

1st Cav. has done a tremendous job in helping the Iraqi people.

Murray said more than \$90 million has been designated for the improvement of essential services, such as sewers, fresh water delivery, electrical distribution and solid waste management.

“Altogether these projects alone brought basic infrastructure necessities to more than 200,000 people in Karkh, Karadah and Zafaraniya and employed thousands of Iraqis from those neighborhoods,” Murray said.

Among the myriad of military operations conducted with the Iraqi security forces, Murray is extremely proud of watching the 302nd Iraqi army Battalion develop from con-

ducting squad level operations to battalion operations.

“Now as a part of the 40th Iraqi army Brigade they are conducting fully independent operations and are completely responsible for the security in many areas of the Karkh district,” Murray said.

Of all the significant events Murray witnessed, he is most proud of the elections that occurred Jan. 30.

“These were the first free, democratic elections in this country in over 50 years,” Murray said. “Seeing normal Iraqi citizens, being protected by Iraqi Security Forces, heading to the polling stations, voting and waving their ink stained fingers despite terrorist threats was the most awe inspiring moment of my deployment here. I am profoundly grateful that I and my Soldiers were here to share and contribute what we could to (facilitate) one of the most historic moments in this proud country's history.”

Coffman believes the Vanguard's mission will be much easier, thanks to the unit they are replacing.

“The 1st Cav. Division has made this transfer really simple, they have really set us up for success,” Coffman said. “It's a difficult task, but due to the great communication between the two units. We are undoubtedly trained, capable and ready to accomplish this mission.”

## “Charlie Rock” Soldier takes a licking, keeps on ticking

**Spc. Erin Robicheaux**  
256th Bde.

BAGHDAD – Thirteen improvised explosive devices, five mortar attacks, and one vehicle born improvised explosive device; this may sound like an insurgent's Christmas carol, but it is actually Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Sandel's score card.

A Soldier with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, attached to 1st Battalion, 156th Armor Regiment, this DeRidder, La. native has faced dangerous encounters more times than any of

his comrades of the 256th Brigade.

Besides counting the incidents, he also counts his blessings every day that he is still here.

“That first IED scared the (you know what) out of me,” he said with grin.

Sandel says that his inaugural mission outside the wire was a prophetic vision into what the streets of Baghdad had in store for him and his “Charlie Rock” Soldiers.

The very first time he ventured into his area of operation he was met with a mortar attack.

A few days later, he hit the first IED, and only

now has the action slowed down.

“November and December were busy for us,” he said. “Right now it's been three weeks since I've been hit and that's the longest I've gone without in a while.”

According to Sandel, his platoon's reactions to IED attacks has improved with each incident, and is now, in fact, second nature to them.

Whether they are conducting mounted or dismounted patrols, if something happens, they shut it down immediately and begin sweeping the area for threats.

He says that, along with incorporating the training that they received at Ft. Hood, they have a strategy that works best for them and within two seconds of getting hit, they are out and scanning their sector.

“It's just like brushing your teeth now,” Sandel said. “We have this process down to an art.”

Recently, the platoon lost Sgt. Seth Trahan, from Crowley, La., to an IED attack.

Sandel said that until this happened getting hit seemed like a normal part of the job.

The Soldiers were clearing an intersection and as Trahan rounded the corner, the device went off, instantly killing him and wounding two others.

“We weren't complacent on the patrols, by any means,” Sandel said. “But until it killed somebody, getting hit was a routine thing.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Stuckey, of Shreveport, La. is the Sgt. Maj. for 1/156th Armor.

He said that Sandel's spirit and enthusiasm for his job have not diminished over time, even in the face of such adversity.

“A lot of the guys who get hit by IEDs get scared and start to wear down, but Sandel has not,” Stuckey said.

Stuckey says that Sandel's leadership is exemplary and shines through in his own attitude for his job, and also in the attitude of his Soldiers.

“He never stops and he's always high spirited,” Stuckey said. “The Soldiers like to go out with Sandel and I think they'd do anything for him.”



Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Stuckey

Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Sandel, from DeRidder, La., rolls out for a patrol mission in his Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

**Do YOU know any Soldiers who stand out among their peers?  
Do you or any of your battle buddies have a special skill, hobby or  
story to share?**

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## TOA, continued from page 1

projects totaling more than \$104 million in Baghdad."

"You've sponsored 14 Iraqi police academies, rebuilt 600 schools, conducted more than 70 electrical projects totaling \$1.8 million, and contributed \$8.3 million in grants to Iraqi businesses," he continued. "Finally, under Task Force Pegasus tutelage, the 40th Iraqi National Guard Brigade took control of its own operational area in Baghdad, marking the first time an Iraqi Brigade has done so. Without question, you have positively touched every aspect of Iraqi life — truly a phenomenal feat!"

He also emphasized the need to continue the hard work that began when

"As great and historic a day as January 30th was for the Iraqi people — and frankly the world — it was not the ultimate goal, which is a free and secure Iraq," Vines said. "We, the Iraqi government and the coalition know there is still much work to be done, but Iraq's progress to date is both extraordinary and irreversible."

Chiarelli welcomed the Marne division and expressed his confidence in the Soldiers and commander who will

be taking on the duties 1st Cav. has performed for the past year.

"The 3rd ID is well-trained, led by gifted officers and non-commissioned officers, and blessed with great Soldiers," Chiarelli said. "The division is poised to ensure Baghdad moves powerfully toward complete self-sufficiency. The people of Baghdad have a partner in the 3rd Infantry Division as committed to the mission as any they will ever see on their streets."

"Maj. Gen. Webster, you've been a great friend to the Cav. and I know that the people of Baghdad will embrace you and your Soldiers as warmly as they have the 1st Cav. Baghdad has a special place in the history of the world and it stands on the precipice of greatness once again."

Upon taking command of TF Baghdad, Webster acknowledged the responsibility being given to him and the Marne Soldiers, and accepted the mission at hand.

"The 3rd Infantry Division has trained hard and is ready," he said. "We will work with our Iraqi partners as they continue to increase their capa-



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Everyone in attendance at the TOA stands and gives honor as the 3rd Inf. Div. Band plays the U.S. and Iraqi national anthems at the parade grounds Feb. 27.

bility to protect the Iraqi people from any foe."

"We will help the people of Iraq maintain their right to freedom and the

pursuit of a prosperous future for all Iraqi citizens," Webster promised. "Our Soldiers know this is right and just."

## STAR, continued from page 1

September.

"Staff Sgt. Payne displayed gallantry and valor that was truly amazing," Chiarelli said. "He did it in one of the toughest neighborhoods in Baghdad — Sheik Maroof."

The neighborhood has many areas that have been dubbed with nicknames like "Grenade Alley", and "Purple Heart Lane" by the Soldiers who regularly patrol there.

The infamous Haifa Street runs along the northern border.

"I've read a lot of citations since I've been here," Chiarelli added, "but I have read none that talks of any greater act of heroism than what Staff Sgt. Payne did that day."

During the late morning hours of Sept. 12, 2004, Payne's battalion was wrapping

up an operation on Haifa Street. As Bradley fighting vehicles patrolled the streets, Soldiers on the ground set up defensive positions in order to pick up other Soldiers who were manning observation posts in high-rise buildings throughout the night.

Payne and his dismounted squad were in their position along the side of the street when the unthinkable happened — a car laden with explosives sped onto the street and detonated into the rear of a Bradley.

"I looked back," Payne said. "It was like ... there is no way that this was happening."

A split second later the blast's powerful concussion hit his squad knocking one Soldier to the ground.

"When I heard the concussion I knew it was real and it was time to go," Payne said.

The force of the blast disabled the 33-ton Bradley, bringing it to a halt. Its rear ramp was engulfed in flames and the upper cargo hatch was blown off.

Small arms fire began to rain onto the street, so Payne had Sgt. Richard Frisbie shift the squad into a new position so

they could provide cover fire while he and Spc. Chase Ash went to help the Soldiers in the Bradley.

"Luckily I had someone there to help out," Payne said. "I had a Soldier to keep control of the squad and another to help me with the wounded."

Payne and Ash ran 50 meters to the burning vehicle while insurgents fired on them. Payne climbed up on top and helped two of the crewmen out of the turret. He then turned his attention to the infantrymen still inside the crew compartment. One by one he pulled them up through the damaged cargo hatch.

"I lowered them down the side of the Bradley to Spc. Ash so he could get them to safety," Payne said. "There was a lot of gunfire going on."

Within seconds of retrieving the wounded Soldiers from the Bradley the vehicle's load of ammunition began to cook off from the intense heat.

According to Payne, the whole series of events lasted nearly five minutes.

"All the training just kicked in," Payne said. "It's hard to explain, I didn't really have

time to think about it."

Once back in a safe position on the south side of the street, Payne's squad teamed together again to further protect the rescued Soldiers as the medic treated them.

"Some of the wounded were unable to get their equipment out of the Bradley," Payne explained. "We had one Soldier that didn't have his helmet and another was (without) his weapon."

Payne's men gave them whatever piece of protective gear they could spare.

"They were giving up goggles and things like that," Payne added. "They were giving them anything they could to provide them better protection than what they had when they got out of the vehicle."

When it was safe enough, Payne and his Soldiers placed the wounded into another Bradley for evacuation to the combat support hospital in the International Zone.

"I owe everything to my squad," Payne said. "If my squad wasn't there I couldn't have completed that mission. My squad was there for me — that's what it comes down to."



Sgt. John Queen,

Although Staff Sgt. William Thomas Payne, third from top left, was the recipient of the Silver Star medal Feb. 27, he credits his squad for their teamwork in the successful rescue of wounded Soldiers from a burning armored vehicle last September.

## Always on duty ...



Spc. Matthew Wester

A Soldier in the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, currently located at Camp Taji, waits in his vehicle while on a convoy as the sun sets over Iraq.

## TUSKERS, continued from page 1

As the Iraqi nation transitions towards stability, the Tuskers are helping Iraqi forces secure the IZ and providing safety for newly elected government officials.

Besides being well prepared for the defensive portion of their mission, task force members are also training new recruits of the 302nd Iraqi army battalion.

The battalion's combat tested senior leadership is rich with training experience.

Stanley not only trained Soldiers and cadets as a drill sergeant at Fort Knox, Ky., but, like Roth, was an observer-controller at NTC. Stanley also taught future leaders as a tactical non-commissioned officer at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Both the operations officer and the executive officer, Maj. Shane Baker and Maj. Kent Watkins, have served in assign-

ments training Army National Guard units. Throughout Task Force Tusker, nearly 100 NCOs and officers have experience as drill sergeants or trainers.

Roth, who leads the legendary unit into the history books again, said that the Tusker battalion is "uniquely ready" to train the Iraqi army.

"The wealth of experience present in this Task Force, taken together with the drive and motivation we've seen from the Iraqi army volunteers, will combine to make a world-class fighting force capable of defending Iraq against any enemy," Roth said.

Task Force Tusker has more than a thousand dedicated Soldiers and Marines in its ranks. The unit has seen service in Korea, Germany, Operation Desert Storm, Bosnia, and most recently, Baghdad, Ramadi, and Habbaniyah.

# 82nd provides security for convention center

**Pfc. Mike Pryor**  
82nd Airborne Division

BAGHDAD – Amid the noise and chaos of Baghdad, the Iraqi Convention Center stands as an oasis of calm. With its sleek, modern architecture, sunlit atrium, and gently swaying palm trees, the building seems many miles away from the violence plaguing other parts of the city.

Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division aim to keep it that way.

Approximately 150 paratroopers from A Company, 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, moved into the convention center in early February to provide security and protection for the government officials, diplomats, contractors, aid workers, and journalists who regularly conduct business at the facility.

While the mission bears little resemblance to the airborne assaults that have traditionally been their specialty, the paratroopers of A Company are taking their current assignment just as seriously.

"It's a very important job. World leaders meet here on a daily basis and it's our job to protect them," said Pfc. John Debrock.

The paratroopers' tasks include manning checkpoints, guard towers and observation points at various strategic positions around the area, including the swank Al Rasheed Hotel and the Iraqi Interim Government building.

Security is tight. Anyone coming to the area must pass through multiple search points.

A squad leader, Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Daniels, said that simply entering the main pedestrian checkpoint requires two pat-downs, four identification checks and a 'once over' by a military working dog.

The security is necessary because of the strategic importance of the facility. The ICC is the hub for much of what's happening in Iraq today. Inside its conference rooms and auditoriums, issues of government, diplomacy, reconstruction and security are debated by some of the biggest movers and shakers in the country.

"This is like the center of Iraq right now, which basically makes it

the center of the world," said Spc. Timothy Viccari, as he and Debrock screened for weapons and IDs at a checkpoint one day.

Hour after hour, a steady stream of people from all walks of life flowed through Viccari and Debrock's gate. Their faces were a snapshot of post-war Iraq. At one point, an ancient, robed Iraqi woman with faded blue tribal tattoos on her face waited just behind a slick-looking reporter with thousands of dollars worth of high-tech camera gear strapped around his neck. They each received the same thorough inspection.

To help pass the slow moments, Viccari and Debrock cracked jokes and bantered with their interpreter to break the monotony. They admitted that while manning checkpoints and guard towers was not exciting "hooah" work, they both knew how important their job was.

Debrock said that providing security for the new government here was part of finishing what America started when it toppled Saddam Hussein from power.

"Some people may have been skeptical ... so helping with the rebuilding is a chance to show that our intentions are good," Debrock said.

The paratroopers enjoy a favorable trade-off for their hard work and long hours at the checkpoints – it's the perk of living within the ICC.

Inside their sectioned-off area, the paratroopers have bunks, wall-to-wall carpeting, heating and air conditioning, indoor plumbing and telephones.

1st Sgt. Mark Byrd, the company's first sergeant, finally received office space in the ICC after months of sharing a cramped room with his commander and executive officer. The spacious, oval-shaped office with leather couches, carpeting and central air became a source of pride for Byrd. As he walked around the ICC, he sang the praises of his new office to people he met like a proud new father.

"You know what the best part is?" he asked one curious state department contractor. "Being able to walk to the latrine in bare feet!"

The ICC is like a mini-United Nations. At various times, the para-

troopers have found themselves rubbing elbows with Ghurka security guards, Iraqi Sheiks, Egyptian Al-Jazeera reporters, South African mercenaries and several American politicians. The unusual mixture of personalities and backgrounds in the facility has led to some strange occurrences.

One day Pfc. Chris Norris was coming inside from playing touch football on the lawn when someone hurried past him surrounded by bodyguards.

"Someone said, 'Hey look, it's Hillary Clinton!' I was like, 'Shut up,' but then I turned around and, yeah, it was Hillary Clinton," Norris said.

There was also an informal pie-eating contest among the paratroopers that was captured on tape by a passing TV news crew.

The footage aired that night on Fox News.

When they're not on shift, or working out, or making the nightly news, the paratroopers occupy themselves by training for the future.

"We're making the most of our

time here," said Sgt. Darrel Patterson.

According to Patterson, they will conduct training on airborne procedures, land navigation, first aid, military history, and several other topics during the upcoming months. They've even scheduled a ruck march.

In the meantime, A Company's paratroopers are just enjoying their new surroundings. They have good reason to – their previous home was an empty underground parking garage which flooded with raw sewage every time it rained.

They all realize that everything good eventually comes to an end, especially in the Army.

"The bottom line", said Viccari, "is that A Company should enjoy what it has while it still has it. The last time we were here, we dug a hole and lived in it for five days. Now I've got wireless internet running right up to my bed. I can't complain," he said.

"Most infantry Soldiers don't get to live like we're doing right now," Daniels said.

"But they all should," Viccari added.



**Spc. Timothy Viccari of Tampa, FL, an A Co, 3/325th Abn. Inf., 82nd Abn. Div., paratrooper, examines the paperwork of an Iraqi woman entering the security checkpoint at the Iraqi Convention Center in Baghdad Feb. 23.**

## Non-infantry units recognized for combat experiences

**Spc. Erin Rubicheaux**  
256th Bde.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers from the 1st Battalion,

69th Infantry Regiment, were recognized for their outstanding service during combat operations Feb. 11.

The 69th is a very involved

infantry battalion, with many of its noncombatant troops participating in missions beyond their certified fields.

Cooks, administrative specialists, and mechanics, are only the tip of the iceberg of the Soldiers who have performed in combat operations.

Even before the plans for the Close Combat Badge was known, the leadership of the 69th wanted their Soldiers recognized for their contributions.

The collective group of first sergeants, along with the battalion sergeant major and commander, came up with a design for the plaque that is inclusive to all of the recipients, no matter what their job specialty.

Spc. Jason Garcia, from New York, N.Y., is a personnel clerk for Headquarters Company. He had a personal hand in designing the plaque and said that it was the collabo-

orative effort of all the leadership which makes it so special.

"All of the first sergeants came up with the (inscription) and they wanted it to be just right," said Garcia.

Garcia also said that the project kept growing bigger and bigger from its inception.

"At first it was going to be a certificate, something that the Soldier could frame," Garcia said. "But then everyone felt that it should be more."

Spc. Mike Timblin, a tanker, was awarded the plaque for his actions during a mission in which he unexpectedly provided combat support.

"I drove the colonel on one of his missions and we hit an (improvised explosive device)," he said.

Luckily, the IED wasn't prepped for detonation and the Soldiers weren't harmed, but the mission wasn't over yet.

"Later on, we also took small arms fire and were hit with a (rocket propelled grenade)," Timblin recalled.

He said that he has encountered a few more engagements since then.

The plaque, which reads, "Task Force Wolfhound Recognizes You as an Infantryman in Word and Deed," was awarded to approximately 140 Soldiers. At the bottom is the infamous term, "Garryowen."

The song is commonly heard among Irish heritage units, and according to Garcia, Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack, commander of the 69th, was adamant about having the term printed on their plaque.

"Lt. Col. Slack came up with the idea to put it on there," Garcia explained. "It's a part of our history that he's proud of and wants us to be, too."



**Spc. Erin Rubicheaux**

**Spc. Mike Timblin preps the Blue Force Tracker before rolling out on patrol. Timblin, who is a tanker and not eligible for the Combat Infantry Badge, was presented a plaque by the leadership of the 1/69th for his role in combat operations.**



## Meet the 3rd Inf. Div. EOAs ...

**Your Equal Opportunity Advisors want to help!**

EO is located in Building W11-2, Bruce St., Camp Liberty.

Hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**Don't hesitate to stop by!**

Back row: Sgt. 1st Class Tanya W. Toussaint, Master Sgt. Silbia G. Marchan, Sgt. 1st Class Barbara A. Alexander.  
Front row: Sgt. 1st Class Lynn P. Banks, Sgt. 1st Class Tred J. Harris, Sgt. 1st Class Frieda R. Taylor.

# Marine general expresses hope for Iraq

Terri Lukach

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – U.S. and NATO missions around the world and optimism for the future of freedom in Iraq were among the topics discussed today in a radio interview by the top U.S. military officer in Europe.

Marine Gen. James L. Jones, commander of U.S. European Command and supreme allied commander for Europe, appeared on “The Diane Rehm Show,” carried on National Public Radio.

Jones told Rehm that European Command is undergoing a “profound transformation” from the way things were in the 20th century when the United States had a “clearly defined enemy” in the Soviet Union and “a static, reactive defensive posture” designed to fight a war that, happily, never came. EUCOM, he said, is redefining both its structure and its mission.

At the same time, he said, NATO also is “redefining and

‘re-missioning’” itself. The threats of the Cold War, Jones said, “have been replaced by an asymmetric family of threats” that face all NATO nations, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal immigration, and narcoterrorism.

Over the last two years, NATO has rid itself of obsolete infrastructure and transformed from an alliance with a defensive mindset focused on a fixed enemy to one with a much more global and expeditionary concept of operations, the general noted.

NATO also is deeply engaged, Jones said, in the effort to help struggling democracies help themselves, particularly in regions such as Africa and the Caucasus to ensure that they “do not become the Afghanistans and Iraqs of tomorrow.”

Jones expressed optimism for the future of democracy in Iraq, and called its recent elections a “defining moment.”

“The Iraqi people made an eloquent and courageous state-

ment that bodes well for the future of that country,” he said. “This is the time to stay the course, and NATO will help.” The general noted that all 26 NATO nations have voted to take on the mission of training and advising the new Iraqi security forces. The training will proceed in three ways, he said. First, NATO will train Iraqi security forces and the emerging Iraqi general staff within Iraq. Second, NATO nations will train Iraqi security forces in countries other than Iraq. Third, NATO will serve as a type of clearing house for military equipment and other donations that can be used immediately by the Iraqi security forces.

Already, Jones said, the mission is going extraordinarily well. “We are well into the developmental and production cycle of turning out capable Iraqi fighting units that, over time, will be able to stand on their own,” he said. “It is a significant challenge, but one with profound implications for the future. Whatever time it takes

to accomplish will be worth it for the future.”

In response to questions, Jones said he agreed with Gen. John Abizaid, head of U.S. Central Command, that the insurgency in Iraq is weakening, noting that those now being targeted by suicide bombers are primarily Iraqis themselves. In time, he said, it will be a problem for the Iraqi security forces to solve. Until then, he said, the multinational coalition will be there to help.

Regarding whether the U.S. should have committed more forces to the fight, Jones said the force assembled to defeat Saddam Hussein’s army was indeed adequate and did so in rapid fashion — more rapidly, in fact, than anyone expected. As for any lack of armor or equipment, Jones said, the forces that delivered the “stunning victory” over the Iraqi regime “were not under-equipped.”

Discussing the U.S. Marines’ overwhelming victory in routing terrorists and foreign fighters from Fallujah, Jones

described urban warfare as “the most difficult and costly we can engage in.” Fallujah presented tough problems, he said, but the Marines — well trained and well led — did an “extraordinary job.”

In Fallujah, Jones said, the insurgents made a strategic error. “They thought world opinion would force us to pull back, and keep us from going on to the bitter end,” he said. “Had they believed we would persevere, I believe they would have left town a lot quicker.” Fallujah was a major strategic defeat for the insurgency, he said, “and I’m not sure they have completely recovered.”

As to when U.S. and coalition forces will leave Iraq, Jones wouldn’t speculate on a timetable. But he did predict success for U.S. and multinational forces. “The coalition is engaged in a massive effort to bring peace, stability and democracy to countries that have not had that experience,” he said. “I am absolutely convinced that it will be successful.”

## Speedy care, better gear help troops survive injuries

Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Servicemembers fighting the war on terror are surviving what normally would be fatal injuries due to improved protective gear, better-trained combat medics and quicker evacuation procedures, according to a doctor who has been to the front line three times.

Army Dr. (Lt. Col.) George Peoples served two tours of duty in Iraq and one in Afghanistan as part of a forward surgical team.

He now is chief of surgical oncology and on the general-surgery staff at Walter Reed Army Medical Center here, where he has treated wounded servicemembers from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

One reason many critically injured servicemembers are coming home alive is because of the speed of the care provided on the battlefield, Peoples said during a March 1 interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel.

In Iraq, Peoples was one of 20 or so doctors, nurses and other health care professionals who made up the 224th Forward Surgical Team.

Using medical equipment from their

backpacks, he said, the teams can initiate surgical care within 15 minutes.

He said in combat, the team’s role is to perform “basic life- and limb-preserving procedures, and to get patients to the next level of care.”

The mobile unit followed closely behind the 3rd Infantry Division during its initial war offensive in Iraq, and was within “meters of where some of the fighting was taken place,” he said.

Peoples said having forward surgical teams able to set up as many as two portable operating rooms within minutes so “near to the point of injury” presented better opportunity to perform lifesaving procedures. “There, he continued, “you basically have a ground ambulance ... that can bring casualties of the battlefield directly to your door in matter of minutes.”

And the military’s ability to rapidly evacuate critically injured soldiers from the battlefield to the next level of care at facilities such as the Landstuhl (Germany) Regional Medical Center and Walter Reed, Peoples said, is another

reason lives are being saved.

He said the Air Force handles the “movement piece” exceptionally well and helped reduce the evacuation time to four days from point of injury to Walter Reed, down from the previous 14-15 days.

“The quicker you can get persons back, I think the more efficiently they can be cared for, perhaps better cared for,” Peoples said. “And ultimately I think that impacts their long-term health.”

Peoples also pointed out the role combat medics and troops on the ground play in saving lives. “At the point of injury, a soldier’s life is either saved or lost by the initial action taken by a combat medic or someone who has been trained in some basic first-aid skills,” he explained.

Peoples said procedures such as placing a tourniquet, stopping bleeding or stabilizing injuries become very critical on how well patients are “going to do in the long run.”

He pointed out that body armor and

up-armored vehicles are another reason many lives are saved. “People are surviving these devastating injuries because they are not developing life-threatening injuries to the chest or abdomen,” he said.

Peoples noted that body armor “protects the core of the soldier in their chest and abdomen” where “a lot of the injuries would have been mortal in previous combat.”

He said the military is working to revamp body armor so that protective plating will cover even more body parts, and that ballistic eyewear has helped cut down the number of eye injuries.

But even with these protective measures, Peoples said medical facilities are seeing “much more devastating extremity injuries,” with damage to bones, tendons, ligaments, blood vessels and nerves.

He noted that more is being done to improve care for servicemembers needing rehabilitation services. “New facilities are being created, new resources are being put toward their care. This problem is being faced head on,” he said, “because we know that we now have a generation of soldiers who have a lifetime ahead of them of having to deal with the ravages of this war.”

**“The quicker you can get persons back ... the more efficiently they can be cared for.”**

Dr. (Lt. Col.) George Peoples  
Chief of Surgical Oncology, Walter Reed



Making a difference

Pfc. Michael Pryor

BAGHDAD – Soldiers with A Company, 3rd Battalion, 325 Airborne Infantry Regiment, participated in a humanitarian aid mission in the Tahri Theater neighborhood. The Soldiers distributed clothes, toys, games, sports equipment and shoes. All items were donated by the Spring, Texas, community.

# Aviation Soldiers get settled at Taji

**Spc. Derek Del Rosario**  
Avn. Bde.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Yuri returns to his room in the evening, exhausted from the day's work.

His room is very organized; his bed is made with his shoes neatly tucked underneath.

He looks on his wall and imagines what new art work he can put up.

Yuri takes off his work boots to relax his feet, turns on his laptop to listen to some relaxing music.

His roommate Michael enters the room; his side of the home is a little more cluttered.

Random items are sprawled on his

bed, but it is in this disorganization he finds organization.

He takes a quick glance at the family pictures above his bed, cracks open a can of soda and relaxes by playing his video games.

At first glance this might seem to be your average college dorm room, but the occupants of this room are actually Pfc. Yuri Armstrong and Spc. Michael D. Boyle, both assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Attack Recon Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, and just a couple of Soldiers out of many who are living in these rooms here at Camp Taji.

Most Soldiers and contractors working here live in trailers that room up to

three people. The rooms come furnished with a twin bed and wall locker for each service member.

These trailers are set up in small communities known as pods, which are spread out over the camp.

Each pod has additional trailers used for male and female latrines, which are cleaned daily and contain flushing toilets, sinks and individual showers.

According to some Soldiers, it's easy to get the wrong impression on what to expect when being deployed to Iraq. Armstrong was pleasantly surprised when he opened the door to his new room.

"My living situation cannot be better," said Armstrong. "There was a lot of buzz back in the U.S. — that we would be living in tents and that the housing was going to be bad, but we actually have it pretty good."

Most Soldiers here first stayed in tents when they lived in camps in Kuwait prior to movement into Iraq.

These camps acted as staging areas before being stationed at a base in Iraq, and wall lockers, beds and flushing toilets were a rarity. After coming from Kuwait, Armstrong's roommate was expecting worse.

"This is way better than any tent," Boyle said. "This living situation is ten times better. We have a roof and it keeps the wind out — I cannot ask for more."

The concept of a roommate might also be new to some of the Soldiers here.

While many Soldiers came from living in barracks at their duty station in the U.S., there are many Soldiers here who are married and lived off-post, or are activated reservist who have not lived in barracks for an extended period, so they have not had a roommate in a long time.

Despite what living conditions Soldiers are leaving behind in the States, some of the Soldiers here understand the dynamics of sharing a room with another service member.

"We haven't had any troubles with each other yet," Boyle commented on having a roommate. "But people are always going to get into little arguments with roommates."

"All roommates bicker," he added, "especially considering the situation we are in here. People here work through it though; we all understand we are deployed here for at least a year."

Some Soldiers also wish the rooms were bigger, but according to Boyle, Soldiers should appreciate the living situation here.

"Some people here complain about the space; that it is too cramped and there is not enough space to put your things," he said. "I think despite this, they can still appreciate not living in a tent. I am happy just to have a roof over my head and having a place to relax."

For Armstrong, the hospitality is what he appreciates most, and he feels that actions are being taken to make sure Soldiers are happy with their living situation.

"Camp Taji and the unit are taking care of us, the Soldiers," said Armstrong. "Hospitality helps us feel at home, which is important for Soldiers on deployment."

Home is definitely where most Soldiers hope to see soon, but in the meantime, it seems the Soldiers of the Aviation Brigade are making the best of the situation and trying to live as comfortably as possible here at their temporary home at Camp Taji.



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Pfc. Yuri Armstrong (left) and Spc. Michael D. Boyle, both of HHC, 1/3 Attack Recon Bn., will share a room at Camp Taji for the duration of their deployment.



Spc. Erin Robicheaux

Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Stuckey and the Senior Leadership of 1st Battalion, 156th Armor Regiment collected more than \$2600 from their Soldiers for the 1st Cavalry Division's Bronze Memorial Fund. Here Stuckey presents the money to Command Sgt. Maj. James H. Mays, 256th Brigade. The bronze statue of a U.S. Soldier kneeling next to a little girl will be accompanied by a wall that lists the names of all fallen Soldiers under the command of the 1st Cavalry. The memorial will be located at Fort Hood, Texas. The Soldiers of 1/156th Arm. Regt. are grateful that their comrades will be remembered in such a way, according to Stuckey. "This is a part of history," he said.

## DESERT JUSTICE

## Tax center now available

**Capt. Gary McNeal**  
Staff Judge Advocate

The Office of the Staff Judge Advocate 3d Infantry Division opened the Marne Tax Center (Forward) on 7 March 2005. The Tax Center assists Soldiers with getting their Federal and state taxes e-filed.

The Marne Tax Center (Forward) is co-located with the Legal Assistance Office at Camp Liberty (formerly Victory North) in the Legal Services Center Bldg C25.

Soldiers not located at Camp Victory may coordinate with

their Command Judge Advocate to set up a time for getting their taxes done.

Tax Center Personnel will travel to other locations to assist with e-filing tax returns.

Soldiers will need to bring their military identification card, a copy of their W-2 forms and any other related tax documents, and social security numbers for themselves and their dependants.

Military W-2s may be downloaded from the "My Pay" website. E-filing is the fastest way to receive your refund.

If you owe taxes you may

wish to use the filing extension.

Service members receive an extension to file their taxes when they are serving in a combat zone.

The extension is for 180 days plus the number of days during tax filing season that you spent in the combat zone.

Tax filing season is from 1 January to 15 April, or 115 days.

So if you came into theater on 20 January, you would have 180 days plus 86 days served during tax filing season, or 266 days from the date you leave the combat zone to get

your taxes filed. Write

Operation Iraqi Freedom across the top of the return.

If you are married and filing jointly, you will still receive the extension.

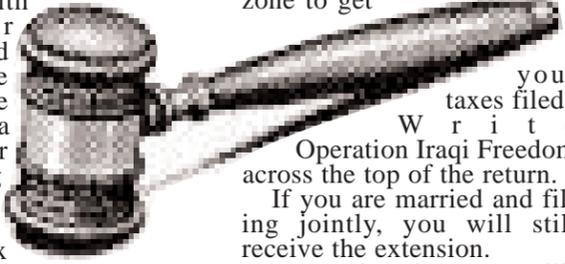
Remember that your military pay while in theater is exempt from federal taxation as well.

The amount of the exemption equals the pay for the highest enlisted rate.

Anything that you make beyond this amount is taxed.

Always check with your individual state treasurer as to your state's policy on taxation of service members.

The Marne Tax Center (Forward) is a great resource for Soldiers to use while they are deployed.



## Chaplain's Corner

## The meek shall inherit the earth

**Chaplain (Lt. Col.) James White**  
3rd Inf. Div.

"Strong commanders are those who can impress upon their troops that they must be followed even through fire and danger of any kind ... people follow because they recognize his qualities; it would be reasonable to say that a man like this goes to war with strength in his hand, since so many hands are prepared to obey his mind and directions; and great indeed is the man who can use his mind rather than his physical might for great achievements."

So wrote Xenophon, the Greek general and statesman — and student of Plato — over two millennia ago.

His point is that genuine leadership can never be a matter of coercion over those who are led.

Rather, Soldiers must see in their leaders, whether commanders or noncommissioned officers, people of outstanding integrity who embody the principles they espouse: liberty, selflessness, justice, mercy, compassion, discipline, and the like.

Today, the people of a free Iraq set their own course as a nation. It is possible only because Soldiers like you, who were born in freedom, stood with them in their time of need.

As great as American technology, know-how, and resources may be, they pale in comparison to the character of our leaders, whose good example inspired ordinary men and women to achieve extraordinary things in the cause of freedom.

Xenophon's remarks raise one of the great issues of human existence, namely, the relationship between being and doing.

Ask yourself: what takes precedence in my life? Who I am or what I do? For many Americans, the answer is obvious.

Clearly, what people do is the most important thing, and the more they do, the better. There is some merit to this idea, because a strong work ethic has made America synonymous with achievement and ingenuity.

The only problem with this line of thinking, however, is that eventually we convince ourselves that no problem is beyond our ability, that salvation itself is within our reach.

In its most sinister form, this attitude of pride makes us lay claim to the authority of God himself.

The Scriptures offer us another way of looking at the relationship between being and doing, and they come down squarely on the side of the virtue of humility.

They suggest that if who we are is the moti-

vating principle for our actions, then we will do the right thing, and promote God's love, justice, and mercy in the world.

The prophet Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13, for example, addresses himself to the "humble of the earth."

These people are not the high and mighty, the wealthy or powerful. Instead, they recognize one basic truth about themselves, namely, that everything they have and are is a gift from God.

They did nothing to deserve even life itself, and so they have no cause for boasting, especially before the Lord.

Likewise, in his letter to the Corinthians 1:26-31, St. Paul reminds the members of the community he founded that even according to the standards of the world, there are few who can lay claim to "greatness."

Indeed, genuine greatness lies in conviction that as disciples of the Lord, we ourselves are not the center of the world.

Instead, we are stewards of a wisdom, strength, and righteousness that far exceed the natural abilities of human beings unaided by grace.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:1-12, Jesus himself recognizes the need for humility.

Interestingly, we know nothing of the crowds whom Jesus addressed; their wealth, power, prestige, intelligence, even their names remain mysteries to us today.

What's more, there is no evidence in the gospel that these people forsook their previous station in life and did new or different things: parents continued to raise their children; workers continued to labor, farmers continued to raise crops; one imagines, Soldiers continued their missions.

Yet inasmuch as these people placed themselves radically at the disposal of God, they accomplished great things by means of divine grace coursing through their lives.

What they did was shot through with the love of Christ himself.

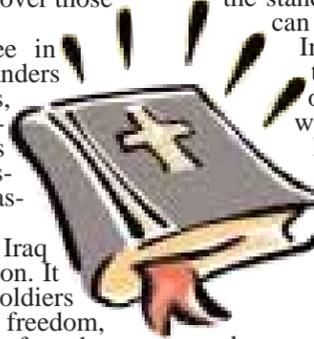
We Soldiers presently find ourselves defending the cause of freedom and democracy in Iraq.

There are some who question the role of the U.S. military in dealing with the evils of terrorism and tyranny in our world.

We, however, must be firmly convinced that our cause is just.

Let us examine our consciences to determine whether or not we have the right intention of freeing the oppressed.

If we do, we can be confident that our actions in the days and months ahead will be consistent with our duty toward God.



## Marne Tax Center Hours

Monday through Saturday

9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Camp Liberty

Legal Services Center

Building C25

## A warrior's tribute to a fallen comrade

## "We Gon' Miss You"

Things won't be quite the same, and I'll tell you why.  
Because somebody done made an Outlaw cry.  
I begin to think and remember all the good times,  
When Minsoo was here, because he was a friend of mine.  
It's crazy how your time passed so fast according to man's watch,  
I've been knowing you from Basic Training to the sandbox.  
Plato said, "Only the dead have seen the end of war."  
They would expect us to be deterred, but really we got the hunger for more.  
Fallen but never forgotten, his early departure won't be in vain.  
I shed many tears the night your last breath came.  
But once again the gates open her arms to receive another soul,  
Time waits for no one, no matter how young or how old.  
Rest In Peace King, it ain't over, it's a start.  
I'm the one left with this Purple Heart.  
And we the ones left with the grieving and pain  
But when people hear Choi, they gonna honor your name.  
Outlaws keep it moving; we still have missions to be fulfilled.  
We gotta watch each other's back, and we gotta keep it real.  
For today is not promised, and neither is tomorrow;  
It could bring happiness, or it could bring sorrow.  
But something is certain, and this is true:  
Minsoo Choi, we gon' miss you.  
— Pfc. Morris L. Dixon, Feb. 26, 2005

*Editor's note: Pfc. Morris L. Dixon, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, was Pfc. Min S. Choi's fellow mortarman the day Choi was killed by an improvised explosive device. Dixon, 20, is from Atlanta, Ga., entered the military Feb. 10, 2004. His father, Morris Dixon, served eight years as an infantryman in the 82nd Airborne Division, and left the Army as a staff sergeant.*

### Division Chapel Services Camp Liberty

#### Friday

7 p.m. Jewish Service

#### Saturday

10 p.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.: Christian Non-instrumental  
8 p.m.: Collective Protestant



Sgt. Nicholas J. Olivier, 3/156 Inf.  
Spc. Jacob L. Palmatier, 1/30 Inf.  
Spc. Colby M. Farnan, 4/1 FA  
Spc. Jason L. Moski, 4/1 FA  
Spc. Adam N. Brewer, 2/7 Inf.  
Spc. Wai P. Lwin, 1/69 Inf.

## In Memory of ...

Spc. Azhar Ali, 1/69 Inf.  
Spc. Michael S. Deem, STB  
Pfc. Min S. Choi, 6/8 Cav.  
Pfc. Danny L. Anderson, 26 FSB  
Pvt. Landon S. Giles, 6/8 Cav.



## Army wins military boxing championship

**American Forces Press Service**  
Special to The Marne Express

FORT HUACHUCA, Ariz. — Huachuca means thunder in Apache, and Army boxers unleashed a hailstorm of blows here Feb. 19 to once again take the Armed Forces Boxing Championship.

The Marines came in second, followed by the Air Force and Navy.

The Army has won 27 of the 29 championships since the series began in 1967. The Marine Corps won in 1978 and 1991. No championships were held in 1982.

"This has been a very special year for me. This team has a special place in my heart, because most of the boxers are inexperienced," said Army head coach Basheer Abdullah. "(The national championships) will be a learning process for us." He noted his team also will be working with the International Military Sports Council (CISM).

All four services brought inexperienced teams to this year's com-

petition.

An exception was Marine Cpl. Eric Canales, a 2004 CISM medalist, who was one of two boxers to defeat his Army opponent.

His Marine teammate Lance Cpl. Jackie Saye stunned the crowd when he knocked down Army Pfc. Corey Stewart despite having received two standing eight-counts.

Air Force head coach Edward Rivas is looking forward to building on the championship experience. "We have a small team, somewhat inexperienced. I'm very proud of all of them," said Rivas. "We'll be back next year."

The lone Navy boxer of the night, Petty Officer 2nd Class Deano Jenkins, was visibly upset when his attempt to make a mark for his service was stopped by Army Staff Sgt. Christopher Downs early in the second round.

New Army boxer Spc. John Franklin is the first Army National Guard member to earn an armed forces gold medal. "This means a lot to me," said Franklin, originally a member of Company B, 110th

Engineers, in Kansas City, Mo., and now assigned at Fort. Carson, Colo.

"My unit believed in me to represent the Guard," he added.

He now looks forward to making it in the top three at the nationals and earning a spot on the CISM team.

Another newcomer to the Army team, Spc. James Villa of Fort Lewis, Wash., could barely contain his excitement about winning. "Wow! I'm dumbfounded," Villa said. "My unit supported me throughout the trial camp," he said. His next goal is making it into the Army's world-class athlete program.

Military boxers will now prepare to make their mark at the nationals March 12-19 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

The CISM world military boxing championships will be held June 29 to July 5 in Pretoria, South Africa.

Fort Huachuca garrison commander Col. Jonathan Hunter will serve as the chief of mission for the U.S. delegation.



Elizabeth Davie

Army Spc. Quentin McCoy, left, of Fort Carson, Colo., outpointed Marine Cpl. Wilfrido Gonzalez, 25-17, at the Armed Forces Boxing championship.



Courtesy photo

Chris Haag sprints to the finish line during the 2004 IC4A Championships. Haag currently holds on of the fastest records in the IC4A.

## Army track looks for win at IC4A championships

**goarmysports.com**

Special to The Marne Express

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Army's men's and women's track and field teams return to action this weekend as they travel to Boston, Mass., for the ECAC and IC4A Championships.

The Army women's team will be competing at the ECAC Championships, which are being held at the Reggie Lewis Arena. The Black Knight men's team will be looking to improve on its fifth-place showing at last year's IC4A Indoor Championships, which will take place at Boston University. Both meets are slated to begin on Saturday, March 5, and run through Sunday afternoon.

Twenty-two members of the Army men's team have qualified for the IC4A Championships, while 10 athletes on the Black Knights' women's squad will be competing at the ECAC Championships.

On the men's side, Eric Heely and Philip Sakala lead a deep group of distance runners into this weekend's action as each is expected to challenge for an individual title. Heely qualified for the IC4A Championships in a pair of events,

but has elected to compete in the 1,000 meters, while Sakala set the standard in the mile last weekend at the Fast Times Invitational. At last year's IC4As, Heely claimed fifth place in the 1,000 meters and Sakala won the mile.

Paul Strozier and Cory Wroblewski each qualified for multiple distance events as well, but each runner will focus his attention on the 3,000-meter run. Christian Iten and Steve Migliore will bolster Army's lineup in the 1,000 meters, as each runner will compete alongside Heely in that discipline.

Chris Haag (800 meters) and Adrian Perkins (500 meters) will represent the Black Knights in the middle-distance events at the IC4A Championships. Last year, Haag placed 10th at the IC4As in the 800 and currently holds the ninth-fastest time in school history (1:51.87). Perkins qualified for the IC4A Championships by posting the fourth-best 500 meters time in Academy history earlier this year at the Penn State Invitational (1:04.46).

Rudy Mejia, Craig Buerstatte, Caleb Wells and Matt Schmitt lead Army's contingent in the field events. Mejia will be competing in the long jump, while Buerstatte,

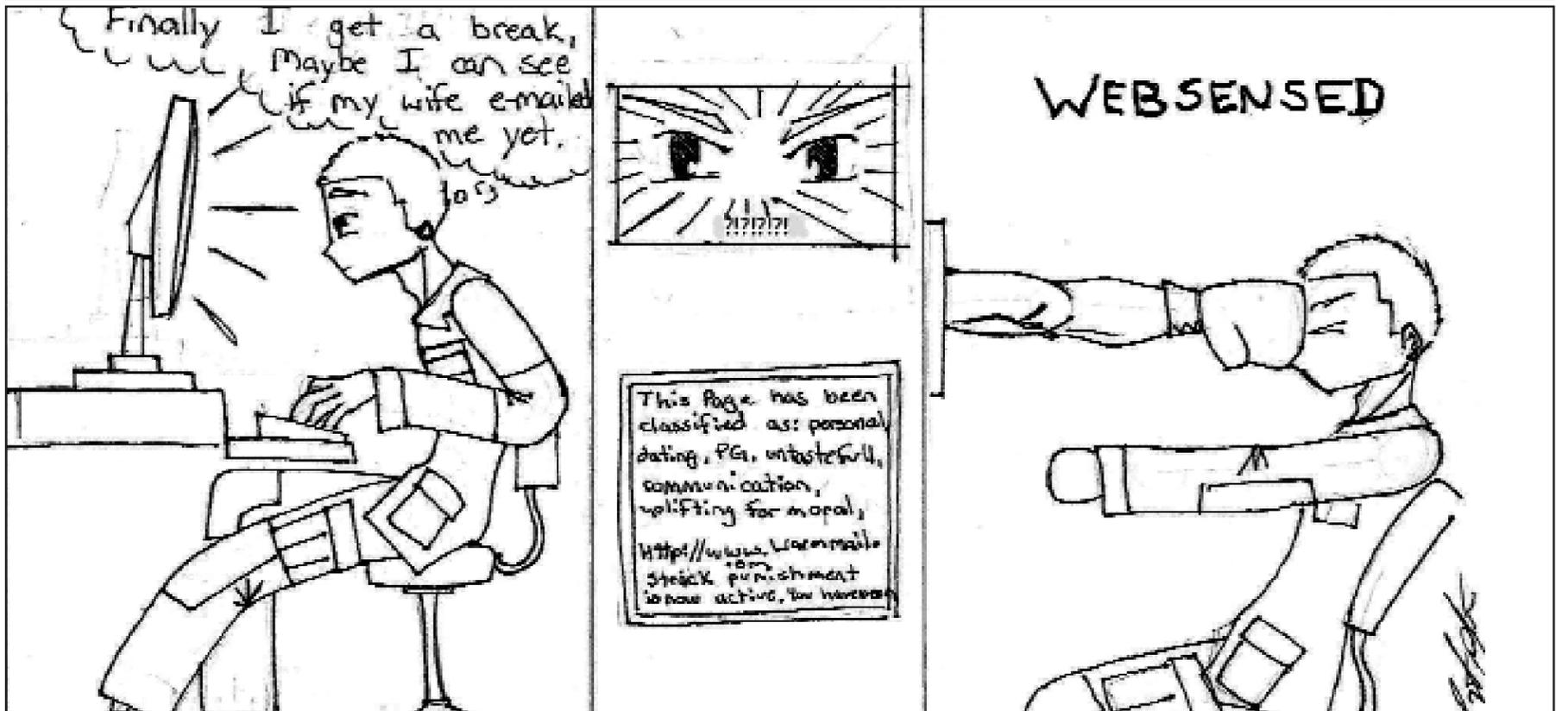
Wells and Schmitt will be participating in the throwing events. Gavin Mohrmann, Gavin McMahon and Eric Lobdell will be competing in the pole vault.

On the women's side, Tiffany Martin, Dominique McLeggan, Margaret Clark, Ashley Urick and Derin Kozlowski will be competing in individual events for Army at the ECAC Championships.

Martin will challenge for the ECAC title in the long jump. Two weeks ago, the senior from San Antonio, Texas, set the Patriot League Indoor record with her personal-best leap of 19 feet, 10 1/4 inches. McLeggan qualified for the ECACs in a pair of sprinting events, but will focus her efforts on the 400-meter dash, where her time of 56.54 lists sixth on the Academy all-time ledger.

Clark (1,000 meters) and Urick (mile) are distance specialists searching for individual titles of their own. At last year's ECAC Championships, Urick placed sixth in the mile. Kozlowski, meanwhile, is Army's lone entrant in the field events. The plebe will test her skills against the field in the high jump. Kozlowski qualified for this weekend's meet with her jump of 5-7, which won the discipline in the Army-Navy meet.

## Cartoon Corner



The Marne Express is looking for artists for a bi-weekly comic strip! Contact ricardo.branch@id3.army.mil.

## In the Movies

### 'Elektra': Not elektrafying but not a dud

**Pfc. Ricardo J. Branch**  
3rd Inf. Div.

Many people in critic land ripped on Jennifer Garner's new movie "Elektra," the newest comic to movie spin-off, deeming it bland and categorize it along side "Catwoman" as a flop.

If people sit through it and seriously judge it by the movie's own merits, it serves up a good dish of entertainment, touches all ranges of emotion and, like life itself, doesn't dress things up but ends on a different note not seen in many of today's films.

Regretfully, the film Elektra was introduced in had a fluid storyline with a few loose ends in the plot.

Rather than clear up any of those loose ends in this one, we the audience are given more.

The last appearance of Elektra Natchios (Jennifer Garner) in the "Daredevil" movie saw her get killed off rather quickly, which reduced Daredevil to a brooding mess that resulted in the Kingpin's eventual downfall. We, the audience, cried in outrage and were rewarded with a spin-off film starring the sultry Garner.

One problem arose really early in the script though: how do you bring back someone from the dead?

Directors these days will find themselves backed into a corner trying to solve the problem of resurrecting a dead hero, or anti-heroine in this case. The result is a gamble of blending real-

ism and fantasy in having Elektra brought back from the dead by ancient resurrecting techniques courtesy of a blind man (Stick).

After being resurrected, Elektra gets taught martial arts by Stick and then goes into overdrive enhancing her deadly combat skills. Becoming too deadly in her training, Elektra eventually gets let-off from Stick's tutelage and becomes a free agent.

Soon taking contracts for money with no questions asked, Elektra becomes an assassin for hire.

Like any killer with super-powers, contract hit-woman Elektra doesn't bother boring us with hopes and dreams of a better tomorrow. She makes a pretty good living killing people and minding her own business.

Unfortunately Elektra is bitter and killing people isn't the balm she hoped it would be. With the superpowers of strength, as well as the ability to see in the near future, Elektra is morose, suspicious and prone to living in the past. She cannot get over the death of her mother.

The excitement then builds as Elektra gets into a predicament of sorts when she accidentally meets her "targets," single dad Mark Miller and his teenage daughter Abby. After accepting their invitation for Christmas dinner, she decides she cannot kill them.

She suddenly becomes a killer with a conscience after relating to Abby, who also lost her mother.

Now hunted by her former employers, Elektra unleashes a whirlwind of destruction on those unfortunate enough to get in her way.

The recent craze of comic book-based films by major industrial giants has produced numerous hits and misses, by box office numbers anyway. Some, like "The Incredible Hulk," have tanked hard, while others, notably "Spiderman," have caused movie fans to scream for more.

Trying to fill that void, "Elektra" ends up sitting right in the middle. It's got enough action to keep me asking "what happens next?"

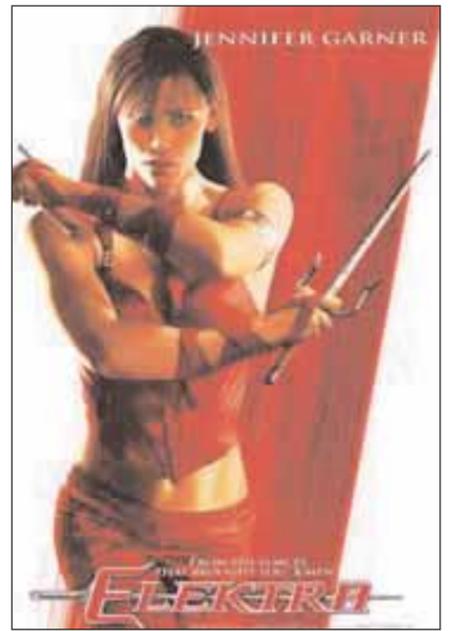
It's one of those movies that I categorize as a "popcorn movie;" it's got enough questions and holes to make me sit through with my sack of popcorn wondering where the story is going, but it gets soggy by the end of the bag.

As for the casting, Garner was indeed a perfect fit for the role of Elektra. She knows karate, does her own stunts, as seen in her television hit "ALIAS," and looks tough without losing that touch that makes her so appealing.

This movie is no hack job either, dominated by wire works and special effects.

There is not a happy ending, a love story, or personal redemption. Like real life, nothing gets cleaned up and neatly wrapped in plastic.

Instead, it's a film about a woman



trying to survive with what she was given and somehow find acceptance with the inner demons plaguing her mind.

With that in mind if a femme fatale that kicks butt and is endearing to you, watch "Elektra." But if plot holes give you spasms, I'd take the advice of Monty Python and "Run away! run away!"

This movie started out elektrafying but falls slightly short in the end to just all right.

## The Book Nook

### Grisham's 'Last Juror' last on my list for a riveting read

**Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft**  
Associate Editor

Is John Grisham running out of material? That was my initial thought as I trudged through the final pages of "The Last Juror."

The plot line was decent, with plenty of Grisham-style twists and turns, and the characters were well-developed, as any devoted fan would expect.

But there comes a point in every story, be it a high-quality suspense novel or a trashy romance, when the reader just wants to get to the end already.

In this book, that moment comes sooner than you'd expect.

It's set in a small Mississippi town (surprise, surprise, eh, Grisham lovers?), where a feisty Yankee journalist in his early 20s has just swept in and bought the local newspaper.

He turns the rag upside down, makes friends with the local yokels, and subsequently (and inadvertently) becomes involved in ... you guessed it! ... a high-profile murder trial.

The protagonist, Willie Traynor, is similar to most of Grisham's good guys - nice personality, limited

funds and generally the underdog.

His newfound friends in the town of Clanton also fit the mold - a healthy mix that includes all races and all creeds, with your usual misfits and alcoholics thrown in as well.

In my opinion, these secondary characters are very carefully drawn, so much so that I wished their descriptions actually had as much to do with the plot as Grisham may have intended.

As it is, the pace of the story was heavily slowed by seemingly superfluous chapters in which one learns more about various townsfolk than would ever be necessary to be properly involved in the plot.

As per the Grisham standard, "The Last Juror" includes at least one intense jury trial scene - in this instance, told from a journalist's point of view, rather than a lawyer's.

However, the trial is not where the climactic point is found, unlike many of his novels. In fact, I wasn't even sure where to look for that point after 300 pages with no conclusive ending in sight.

My theory is that the author may have gotten bored with sticking to the plot, and instead decided to introduce new characters and provide unnecessary informa-

tion about those already in existence, you know, to shake things up a bit.

Although well-rounded characters are essential to good story-telling, Grisham seems to have gotten carried away this time.

Still, with the addition of all these extra people, you'd expect a few extra last-minute surprises, right? Wrong.

The dramatic conclusion I'd been holding my breath for was, at best, an unexpected one, and at worst, a hastily contrived resolution to a watered-down plot.

But it was in no way the product that (in my mind) should have been the result of so many pages filled with background, description, history and suspense.

It certainly wasn't a courtroom thriller like those which have won the author his fame and recognition.

The fact that Grisham was writing about a journalist - not a lawyer, a judge, a juror, a defendant or a plaintiff - may have been the reason for this disappointing novel's awkwardness. If not, I'd have to say that the man is losing his touch.

So here's my advice, Mr. Grisham: Get some rest, take a vacation, and go back to writing about lawyers.

## Crossword: From Comics to Movies

### Down

1 - A raging green monster is this film's star

2 - An anti-heroine who's an assassin for hire

3 - Fought vampires throughout his trilogy

4 - Tobey Maguire played this costumed hero

6 - He wears a skull on his shirt

7 - Mutant group that fights evil across the globe.

9 - Alfred washes his clothes, maintains the house and irons his cape.

### Across

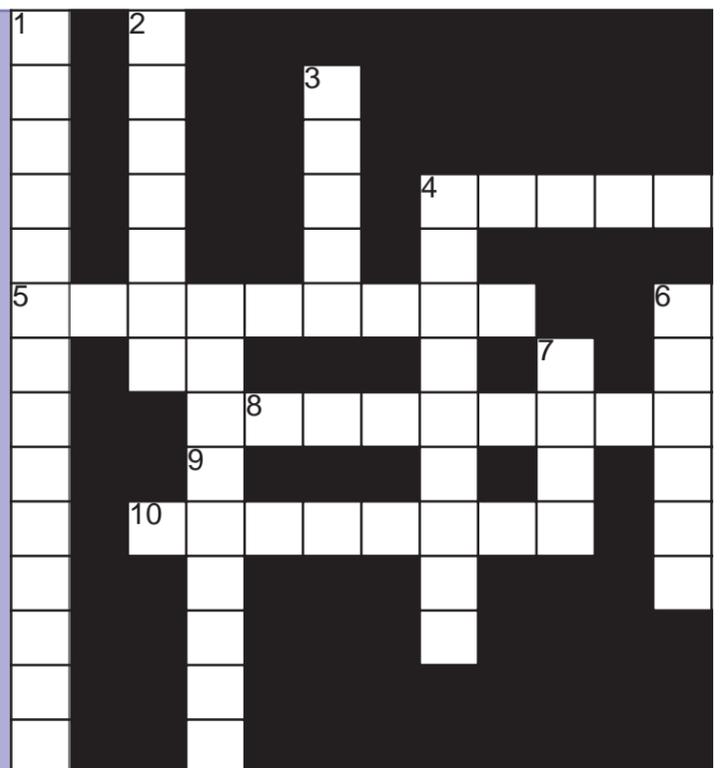
4 - This troubled hell spawn was created by Todd McFarlane

5 - He's a blind crimefighter that took out the Kingpin of crime

8 - The Man of Tomorrow -- "Kal-EI" to his friends back home

10 - She's not purrfect, but she knows how to take out the villains

\*see next edition for answers



Last Week's Answers:  
3rd Inf. Div. Faces and Places  
Down:  
1. Georgia

2. Spartans  
3. Sledgehammer  
4. Rocky  
5. Marne

6. Webster  
Across:  
1. Grant

2. Raiders  
3. Paul Smith  
4. Vanguard  
5. Paul Smith