

The Marne Express

"Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork"

Volume 2, Issue 7

Serving the Soldiers of Task Force Baghdad

May 22, 2005

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Army announces CAB for non-infantry Soldiers

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Special to The Marne Express

In keeping with the spirit of the Warrior Ethos and based on input from leaders and Soldiers in the field to justly recognize the actions of deserving Soldiers in combat, the Army announced today the eligibility criteria for a new combat award with the introduction of the Combat Action Badge.

The CAB may be awarded to any Soldier, branch and military occupational specialty immaterial, performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized, who is personally present and actively engaged or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement.

Although a Close Combat Badge was considered as an

option, Army leadership decided the CAB best meets the intent of field commanders to fully recognize Soldier actions in combat.

Commanders at the rank of Major General will have award authority. The CAB is distinct from other combat badges.

The Combat Infantryman's Badge and Combat Medical Badge will remain unchanged.

The Army will release an

administrative message outlining exact rules and regulations for the CAB in the near future.

The CAB will go into immediate production and should be available this summer through unit supply and for purchase in military clothing sales stores.

For more information, visit the soon-to-be operational CAB Web site at www.army.mil/symbols/combatabadges.

3/1 AD uncovers 3,000 lbs. of munitions from found weapons cache

Sgt. Kevin Bromley
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division's mission was simple: ferret out any and all insurgents in the western region of their area of operations.

"This area harbors terrorists who think that they can operate with impunity, and we are going to show them that they cannot," said Col. David Bishop, 3rd Bde. commander.

Intelligence gathering began several weeks earlier to define the brigade's objectives and the brigade's leadership found an opportunity to begin the operation a few days ahead of schedule.

Operation Quick Sweep was a deliberate cordon and search of a large rural area north-west of Baghdad.

"Our mission will leave no dwelling, vehicle, or hiding place unsearched," said Bishop.

The brigade cut a broad swath through the rural area west of Taji, pushing into areas that have shown significant insurgent activities since the brigade assumed authority over the region.

The operation yielded many successes, including the detainment of several individuals identified insurgents, several weapons caches, and one huge stash of munitions.

In the early morning hours, Pfc. Chris Tingle was patrolling a gravel quarry in 1st Battalion, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's area.

The quarry is an infantryman's dream, according to Bishop, a treacherous series of deep canyons and pits with numerous hiding places. It is here that Tingle found a large weapons cache.

Tingle saw some wooden crates full of ammunition and notified his chain of command.

"I hope we catch the guys that were going to use this," Tingle said.

When members of 2nd platoon, B Company, 70th Engineer Battalion arrived they immediately set to excavating the site.

As Sgt. Jason Faras, Pfc. Leslie Thompson, and Pfc. Harold Kuykendal began digging and found several large caliber munitions.

"It's like Christmas down here," Kuykendal

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Sgt. Kevin Bromley
Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Cady, 70th Eng. Bn., Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow, and Col. David Bishop, examine part of a large weapons cache discovered by 1/11 ACR and unearthed by the 70th Engineers. The weapons cache was discovered during Operation Quick Sweep west of Taji, Iraq.

Al-Rasheed district water purification plant nears completion

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Everyone knows that all living things need water to survive. During the upcoming summer months



Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
The water purification plant is expected to be working at full capacity in about four weeks.

in Iraq, the demand for clean drinking water will drastically rise.

The near-term completion of a project in the Al-Rasheed district will fulfill this need and provide more than 100,000 villagers fresh water.

The \$500,000 project began six months ago and employed 36 people, 30 of whom were from the local area.

In the second Kurtan village, which has roughly 5,000 residents, there hasn't been a source for purified water since it was formed, according to Capt. Christian Neels, the civil-military operations officer for 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment.

Sheik Alwan Kartan, a local tribal leader who has participated in the project since the beginning, said that the villagers who had cars could go to the adjacent areas to get water.

Others who didn't have vehicles had to get their water from the canal that connects to the river, putting them at risk for disease.

"This project will supply the local population with drinking water and reduce some of the water-borne illnesses that the children are coming up with," Neels said.

The project should be complete in about four weeks.

Unsung heroes

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

Transportation for our Army has transitioned from its early forms of horseback to jeeps, two and a half-ton trucks, five-tons, M998s, LMTVs and M1114s.

These platforms have served the Army in many different configurations and have proved to be essential while operating on battlefields past and present.

This edition's heroes are the warriors from the 3rd Infantry Division's Aviation Brigade (Warriors from above and their supporting cast).

Avn. Bde. showcases some of the most competent, confident, flexible, adaptive, warriors in our Army.

The latest initiative in transporting Soldiers in the Baghdad area of operations is the "Marne Express" which provides expedient travel nearly 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The aviators executing this mission are logging in flying hours that they never thought they would accumulate.

They are having fun exercising their duties and it's apparent that they put safety at the top of their priorities.

The Blackhawk and Chinook crews are truly professional and strive to great lengths to ensure that every passenger experiences a safe and enjoyable flight.

I have even witnessed them assisting their teammates while loading and unloading equipment.

Thanks for your service to the division. Last, but not least, the final breed of aviator is the AH-64 Apache Gunship Warriors.

This is the most sophisticated attack helicopter in existence today with all weather capability.

These aircraft are constantly on the prowl, providing quality protection from would-be anti-Iraqi forces.

They respond to a variety of improvised explosive devices and other significant events, giving Soldiers on the ground a blanket of confidence that their brothers and sisters in the sky have their back (Hooah!!).

The Soldiers of this history-rich division continue to perform extraordinary feats of bravery and heroics and I'm truly blessed to be a part of the team, writing history alongside you all.

Thanks again for being "Sky Heroes of the Marne!!!"



Photos above and below by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Spc. Nabor Ortega, A Co., 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Recon), performs maintenance on the Army's primary attack helicopter, the AH-64 Apache.



Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Benner

Above: Spc. Bryon Williams, a C Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment UH-60 Blackhawk crew chief, speaks to his crew through his headset before taking off on a flight.



Right: Capt. Jonathan Tackaberry, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Recon), performs a pre-flight inspection on an AH-64 Apache prior to a mission.

The Word on the Street

What do you think about the Combat Action Badge?



"Badges aren't really that important. The only thing that matters is if you do your job or not."

Sgt. James Higgins
 B Co., 4/3 BTB

"It's a crock, because it's just another 'give-away badge.' If Soldiers want combat recognition, they should be medics or infantrymen."



Sgt. 1st Class Brian M. Rauschuber
 HHSC, STB



"It's one Army: one team, one fight. Everybody should get the same awards."

Pvt. Shareef Carey
 HHC, 4 BCT

"If you joined the military for recognition, you joined for the wrong reason. If you want a (Combat Infantry Badge), go infantry."



Sgt. Shonda M. Curb
 HHOC, STB



"I think it's a good idea, speaking as a combat engineer, but I think it should have more qualifications, like the Expert Infantryman's Badge."

Spc. Shane Rose
 C Co., 6/12 Eng. Regt.

The Marne Express

Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs Office

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Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. Clifford C. Kent

Public Affairs Supervisor: Master Sgt. Greg Kaufman

The Marne Express Staff

Editor: Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Benner

Associate Editor: Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Layout and Design: Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Staff Writers: Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick, Sgt. 1st Class David Abrams, Staff Sgt. Ken Walker, Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper, Sgt. Thomas Benoit, Sgt. Andrew

Miller, Sgt. Kevin Bromley, Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft, Spc. Ricardo Branch, Spc. Natalie Loucks, Spc. Ben Brody, Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr., Spc. Jennifer Fitts, Spc. Derek Del Rosario, Spc. Christopher Foster, Spc. Brian Henretta, Spc. Maria Mengrone, Spc. Erin Robicheaux, Spc. Brian Schroeder, Spc. Matthew Wester, Pfc. Daniel Balda, Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin, Pfc. Mike Pryor.

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Commentary

What the heck is wrong with some people?

Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
3rd Inf. Div. PAO

Since arriving in theater, I've noticed that most of my fellow Soldiers seem to be doing all they can to keep their morale high and their upper lips stiff during this deployment.

They try their damndest to have a positive outlook on life, and bend over extra far to let minor annoyances roll off their backs.

However, I've also seen many Soldiers who, whether on purpose or by accident, seem to thwart this optimism and good attitude simply by being irritating individuals.

Why do they do this? Well, I'm not sure, but it could be that these individuals are not aware of the fact that their actions encourage others to give them a cheery smack in the teeth before continuing on their merry way.

It's too bad that these people can't seem to see beyond their own noses, because in order for our division to truly work together as a team, we need to be cognizant of everyone's interests.

If we go through each day looking only at what we personally want, nothing good can come of it, and we'll have a whole crapload of rugged indi-

vidualists who could care less about their fellow Soldiers.

Sorry, but that idea just doesn't appeal to me, and I sincerely hope it doesn't appeal to you.

So, without further ado, I'd like to do my part by attempting to educate these folks about just a couple of the ways they make life worse for everyone else:

Dear People At The Dining Facility Who Walk Around Like You Are The Only One In There,

Have you ever noticed upon entering the chow hall that it is usually occupied by half of the earth's population?

I was just wondering, because when you flung me out of your path the other day using the "continue to walk straight till you hit somebody" method, you seemed oblivious to the fact that somebody other than you was interested in making it to a table with food still safely atop their tray.

Sometimes, when you need to pass around another person, it's acceptable to announce your presence and then state your plan of passage in a way which encourages fluid, non-collision-inducing movement. "Excuse me" is a term I've heard of which is designed

for that very purpose.

Your decision to merely barrel on through the narrow aisle in the manner of Godzilla on speed, however, left me with the remains of a once-satisfying entrée which was suddenly topped with a non-appetizing fruit-punch gravy and hurled to the floor, where it lay defenseless and inedible.

But you didn't notice, because you were busy yelling something to your friend on the other side of the room, possibly a suggestion on how to make everyone in a crowded, enclosed space want to beat you with a mallet.

At least, that's the effect it had on me.

Maybe you were born this way. Maybe you were raised this way.

However you became the overly obnoxious person you are, you have chosen to hold on to your behavior tighter than a drunk to his bottle, and that is simply inexcusable.

Dear People Who Purposely Stay On The Internet Café Computers For More Than 30 Minutes When There Are Others In Line,

The clocks on the walls are not there for solely decorative purposes, nor do their hands stop moving, even if

you concentrate really, really hard on your computer screen.

Your peers have not ventured over to the computer area merely to gaze in awe and wonder at the pretty pictures dancing across the screens.

They are also not there to provide moral support as you e-mail your friends and families and surf hotornot-dot-com looking for your soul mate.

Believe it or not, all those people standing near the room's entrance are actually hoping beyond hope to one day occupy the seat which you have been warming for much longer than the allotted seat-warming time.

However, they are too polite to walk over and interrupt whatever you're doing, even though they would be perfectly within their rights. They are not the type to creep up behind you and begin tapping your shoulder blade repeatedly until you become as agitated as you've made them.

The whole concept is pretty easy: if nobody else is waiting, e-mail away to your heart's content. If what looks like the maximum capacity of Carnegie Hall has gathered behind you, and you have more than surpassed your time limit, get up and give someone

else a chance to get in trouble for attempting to access distasteful Web sites.

And no, the folks waiting won't just vanish if you pretend not to see them. Thanks to physics, we all know that the only people who can disappear without a trace are the ones we have spent hours waiting for, and of course, small children.

That said, we'd all appreciate it if next time, you'd kindly hoist your behind from that chair and offer it to someone else. And in return, we'll refrain from pulling the cord out of your Internet connection mid-instant-messenger-sentence.

Unfortunately, that's all the time we have for now, but I hope I've made a small bit of difference in the hearts and minds of those I've addressed.

Maybe tomorrow, they'll wake up and think, "Holy crap! I deserve to be punched in the mouth!" and all the madness will stop right there.

If not — hey, I've done my part. Anything further would require a mallet.



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Commentary

My battle buddies are the best a Soldier could ask for

Spc. Jimmy D Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

I am continually surprised by the camaraderie of Soldiers. No matter what the living conditions are here, they drive on.

They joke, laugh and make the best of their situation and surroundings. Somewhere in the back of everyone's mind, they are cognizant of their discomfort.

But the Soldiers around them provide too much of a positive distraction for many of us to dwell in misery.

I have been to many of the forward operating bases here in northern Iraq. No matter how bad one Soldier thinks he has it, believe me, there is another remote outpost not too far away where Soldiers are truly living in squalor.

Many of the smaller places don't have regular hot chow, decent bathing facilities or latrines.

There are no waste disposal sys-

tems — Soldiers actually have to empty the outhouses and burn the waste.

I was at Patrol Base Razor not too long ago watching some Soldiers burn waste. It has to be one of the worst details a Soldier can get.

Yet, these guys are out there laughing and joking while performing their duty. It seems like you can't get them down.

In the city of Samarra, where Razor is located, there are attacks on our troops almost daily, but you never see any of these volunteers giving in to the pressures that the insurgents try to put on them.

They remain alert, aware and full of humor. Much of the humor isn't something you would bring to church, but it is good stuff.

I want the American public to know how awesome their Soldiers are.

I never met people like this in the civilian world. Nobody I remember would be willing to put up with this kind of stuff.

Still, I see Soldiers reenlisting. I see Soldiers sitting anxiously, waiting to go out on that next patrol and find bad guys.

We all miss our families, but having buddies like these make it worth being here.

We all want to go home, but that is not an option.

Most of you will see the pictures and hear the stories, but you will never know what it was like to serve with such an awesome group of people.

Being a public affairs specialist, I go out with different people almost every day. I have made many friends. I can't tell you how good it is to roll into a base and see a guy that you recognize.

You get maybe five minutes to retell all the things that have happened in the last few months, and then they are gone.

Most of the goodbyes are things like "be careful" or "keep your head down."

Most of us have lost a buddy since we have been here. These deaths are

not senseless.

These Soldiers die fighting for something they believe in.

Nobody has to be here. We all know the loopholes in the system. Any of us could have gotten out if we had wanted to; it is an amazing force that drives us to do what we do day in and day out.

We hope you are proud of us, and that you will all remember the sacrifices we make.

We are liberating a people, a nation.

These folks are beginning to see what it is like to be free; to be able to stand up for what is right.

The things we take for granted every day, these people have never known.

I know that will not be the case when we finally pull out of Iraq.

These people will not only know freedom, but demand it.



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Comforting words of wisdom from a retired Royal MP CSM and Army wife

Catherine Agosta
Special to The Marne Express

I'm not writing this to sound preachy or to sound like it's a clichéd answer to a situation, I'm writing this to you as words of advice from a command sergeant major to a Soldier.

I know that some of what you may witness will affect you deeply.

You may hear it in your battle buddies' voice, the sheer weariness of their words, each one sounding as if it weighs a ton, and they may try not to reveal their true heart-crushed emotions when they are uttered.

They may try to hold back a tear, as the realization of the situation you may face over here finally hits home.

Every time you get ready to go outside the compound, you may go through a series of emotions that are too hard to describe.

During the time you're away, your command does not want to leave their post until they know you are safely back.

I knew from the first mention of deployment the situations you might face, the conditions you may live under, and how hard it may be on you being away from your home, your things, while going through

another separation from everything you hold dear in your life.

We should all be able to talk openly about these things. Many here have trod the same path you are now on, and I like to think it helps you that we can do this; you don't have to keep your emotions bottled up inside just because you feel the need to protect pride.

As a leader all I can say at this moment, when you are down, is that you are not alone as long as you wear your uniform and pledge allegiance to your country, you will always be surrounded by your fellow Soldiers.

I am so proud of you all; you are already the shining example of military excellence.

As the Soldier, my advice to you while you are here is this:

Remember who you are, remember all the things in this life that make you whole, the things that bring you supreme joy and happiness.

Make contact with that inner child, the one that gives light to your day and humor and love in your heart, and grasp onto it hard with both hands.

Your inner child, compassion and love for life are always the first casualties of combat, and if you lose them it makes you like all the rest, pessimistic,

moody and normal.

Take a few moments over the next several days to remember the times when you have truly been yourself with someone and relish in those memories.

They are what will help keep that inner child alive and well.

Think of things that you've put off because of work or other intrusions, that you've meant to do with another special in your life. Go through them in your mind, make a commitment to yourself that you will return to that person in sound mind, with your inner child unscathed and not battle-scarred, so you can do these things you've visualized.

Be true to yourself and don't let the vagaries of combat sway you from your path in life.

By all means take a moment to mourn and think of those lost and the conditions under which they were lost, but also in that same moment realize you are now the possessor of something they no longer have, and it is your duty to keep your inner child alive and enjoy your life to its fullest.

In combat, that is the greatest tribute a comrade can give to the fallen: to live your life and live it well, enjoying those precious moments that they can't and be good to those you hold closest to your heart.

What's up, Doc? 'Charlie Med' ready to keep Soldiers healthy

Pfc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

Traditionally, the title "doctor" is bestowed on those who have earned an advanced degree, whether it is medical or philosophy; either way, the term is used as a measure of respect.

In much the same way, medics in the military are affectionately known as "Doc" because of the respect they are shown by their fellow troops.

Medics assigned to C Company, 703rd Forward Support Battalion, known as "Charlie Med," are no different.

Capt. Matt Fairshon, C Co. commander, entered the medical branch after enlisting in the combat arms during the Cold War.

"At that time in combat arms there's only so much I can do in a given situation, training wise," he said. "In medicine, you can see your impact on a daily basis as far as helping Soldiers. That self-satisfaction of knowing that you're helping so many Soldiers and actually seeing it with your own eyes is what filled a lot of my career needs."

"Charlie Med's mission is to provide level two combat healthcare to units at FOB Falcon. This includes approximately 5,500 Soldiers assigned to 4th BCT as well as tenant units.

"We have a very young company, only six of us came over the last time," Fairshon said. "We do a lot of training, but there is still that uncertain-

ty that when you are under fire, or you get that first U.S. casualty. They have developed a huge sense of confidence knowing that they have the training and are able to use that training to save lives."

One grizzled veteran who has served as a doctor in the Army for 14 years manages to undergo new training all the time.

Lt. Col. Jeremiah Stubbs, the battalion surgeon, grew up on a farm helping the animals give birth to their young. While in school, his love for biology coupled with the guidance of a trusted teacher, nudged him towards practicing medicine.

Stubbs deployed from the Medical Activity Command at Fort Jackson, S.C., where he is a family practice doctor. Since he has been in Iraq, he has dealt with much more than he is used to.

"This is far beyond what I would normally see, as far as the trauma," Stubbs said. "I look at this as an opportunity for expansion because I don't get to do all the stuff I'm doing here back in garrison. At the same time we still get to take care of Soldiers. This is what really makes us Army physicians, real Army doctors."

Back in garrison, Stubbs deals primarily with Initial Entry Training Soldiers and retirees. Here he is able to focus on more mission-specific care for the deployed Soldiers.

"By the time we get the Soldiers here, most everybody that's over here knows the dangers," Stubbs said. "We want to mitigate those



Pfc. Dan Balda

Spc. Eric Ingram, a native of Dallas and a medic assigned to HHC, 371Inf., checks an Iraqi Army Soldier's progress after taking shrapnel during a patrol. All the medics assigned to FOB Falcon support C Co., 703rd FSB in their mission.

dangers by keeping them healthy, functioning, keep 'em going and get them home safe."

Stubbs credits his Soldiers for helping him to succeed at his job. "We have a great staff here including our mental health people, our chaplain, our (noncommissioned officers) that are keeping the Soldiers' spirits up and mentoring the younger Soldiers."

Staff Sgt. Ronald Diaz, attached to 4th BCT, is one of those Soldiers mentoring the uninitiated. Diaz is assigned to 1st Battalion 184th Infantry, a National Guard

unit from Modesto, Calif.

Like most of the medics assigned to his unit, Diaz works in the medical field as a civilian.

The medics assigned to 1/184 support 703rd in many ways.

Because the majority of the 1/184 medics are emergency medical technicians back in the states, they have all kinds of experience dealing with the trauma found in a war zone, Diaz said.

For Fairshon, there is nothing better than seeing his Soldiers do their job.

"When I see a casualty come in, and I watch my

medics take care of him, going through all their steps such as IV's and bandaging wounds, whatever they have to do, calling a helicopter to get them to the CSH and then hearing that they have been stabilized, that is the most tremendous feeling of 'what I'm doing is worthwhile and making a difference,'" Fairshon said. "To me it means a lot, it's important for me to have my company in the mindset that what you're doing is for everybody because there isn't a single person back in the states that doesn't want their loved one to come back home."



Photos by Spc. Matthew McLaughlin

Col. Mark A. Milley, 2nd Brigade Combat Team commander, pays his respect to Pfc. Charles Cooper Jr., and Pfc. Darren A. DeBlanc, both Soldiers from 2/14 Inf. Regt. during a memorial ceremony held at Camp Liberty May 5. Command Sgt. Maj. William Morgan, 2/14 command sergeant major, unfurls the American flag during the memorial service for Cooper and DeBlanc.

Soldiers honor fallen comrades

Spc. Matthew McLaughlin
2/10 Inf. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Hardened Soldiers struggled to find words that would give justice to their fallen brothers.

Through their choked words, however, came a sincerity and sense of loss that only comrades in arms could express.

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, honored Pfc. Charles S. Cooper, Jr. and Pfc. Darren A. DeBlanc, both Soldiers from C Company, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment May 5.

Cooper and DeBlanc were killed April 29 when an improvised explosive device detonated in the Abu Ghraib district of Baghdad.

Captain Byron Dobson, C Company commander, remembered them as average Soldiers with extraordinary courage and dedication.

"They were just like everyone else, with hopes and dreams for the future," Dobson said. "They were exceptional Soldiers; dedicated, loyal and unselfish. Their sacrifice will never be forgotten. I'm proud to call them my brothers."

Cooper was born Feb. 25, 1986 in Jamestown, N.Y. He enlisted in the Army July 8, 2004, after graduating from high school.

He reported to Fort Drum in November the same year and quickly made friends with his new 2/14 Infantry comrades, said Pfc. Joseph Carmosiono, a friend of Cooper's from 2/14 Infantry.

"He will be remembered for his quiet, calm demeanor, his great sense of humor, his infectious smile and his ability to make friends quickly," he said. "He was always ready to take in new places and explore the world. We all joked about how he joined the Army to see the world and ended up being

assigned to Fort Drum in his own home state."

Like Cooper, DeBlanc enlisted in the Army shortly after graduation with goals of travel and adventure. DeBlanc was born April 5, 1985 in Evansville, Ind.

He joined the Army on Nov. 20, 2003. DeBlanc arrived at Fort Drum March 2004 and was assigned to C Company, 2/14 Infantry, just as the company returned from Iraq.

DeBlanc will also be remembered by his fellow Soldiers for his easy-going demeanor, said Spc. Derek Speicher, a friend of DeBlanc's.

"Darren was a man with many friends," Speicher said. "He was adventurous and often talked of the places he wanted to see and experience. He could not wait to see the world. He never met a person he could not win over and make them break out in laughter with his kind smile and sense of humor."

Cooper's awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Cooper is survived by his father, Charles Cooper Sr. and his mother, Sherry Weaver.

DeBlanc's awards include the Bronze Star Medal, the Purple Heart Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. DeBlanc is survived by his father, Michael DeBlanc and his mother, Judy DeBlanc.

'All would follow him'

70th Eng. Bn. Soldiers remember fallen leader

Spc. Matthew Wester
100th MPAD

TAJI, Iraq – Silence fell over Warrior Chapel as troops filed past a display of battle streamers, a rifle, and a pair of empty boots to salute their first sergeant for the last time.

Soldiers of 70th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, memorialized 1st Sgt. Timmy J. Millsap in a ceremony here



Soldiers from 3/1 AD stand as an honor guard during Millsap's memorial service.

April 30.

Millsap, A Company, 70th Eng. first sergeant, was killed in combat during Operation Quick Sweep, which involved a coordinated sweep of an area northwest of Baghdad where insurgents are operating.

He died doing his job – leading troops.

"1st Sgt. Millsap was the kind of leader we all wish we could be," said Lt. Col. Anthony M. Wright, 70th Eng. Bn. commander.

"He had a great ability to identify when a Soldier needed a pat on the back or a kick in the pants, and he could administer both with respect and dignity," added Command Sergeant Major Anthony Cady, battalion command sergeant major.

Millsap sought a job mentoring and teaching troops, two areas where he excelled.

"The first time I met him he was the brigade equal opportunity advisor, and he came to see me because he wanted to be a first sergeant," Cady said. "He was a non-commissioned officer who desperately wanted to do what noncommissioned officers do, lead and train Soldiers."

"Being a first sergeant was what he wanted to be and what he was clearly meant for," Wright said. "His leadership in garrison and combat ensured the safety of all his Soldiers while accomplishing the missions."

"Poised, confident and competent, he solved the tough issues, calmed troubled situations, and lightened the mood with one of his wry comments," Wright continued. "His high standards, absolute integrity, and concern for each of his Soldiers was visible to all, and all



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Bromley

A bugler from 3/1 AD waits to play "Taps" during a memorial ceremony for 1st Sgt. Timmy J. Millsap of A Co., 70th Eng. Bn. at Camp Taji April 30. Millsap died during combat operations April 25.

would follow him because they saw a leader."

Beyond being a superior NCO, Millsap was a trusted friend and colleague, known for his wit and warmth.

"He was a gentle and fun-loving guy who could hold a conversation with a brand-new private or four-star general as easily as he could with an old friend," said Capt. Eric Swenson, A Co. commander. "He could drink coffee with the best of them, and would pour me a cup at midnight just so we could stay up and talk about nothing important at all."

His humor was a gift he shared with all those around him.

"Just three weeks ago I visited him at his office and kissed him on his head," said Chaplain (Capt.) Raul Maria, the 70th's chaplain. "He said,

'Chaplain, you kissed me on my dirty head!' and everyone was laughing."

"He was quick to smile that wry smile of his," Cady said. "He had a quick wit, and a sense of humor that never failed to crack me up."

Millsap was also remembered as a devoted family man who planned to spend more time with his wife and daughter after retiring from the Army.

He was a career Soldier, a veteran who had given his country nearly twenty years of service. This was his second combat tour in Iraq.

Maria summed up the impact of the loss of this Soldier, leader and friend.

"We all have this dull ache we call grief," Maria said. "The 70th Engineer Battalion lost a comrade. A daughter has lost her father. A wife

lost her husband. The Army lost a leader, but God has won a soul."

Millsap was awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Purple Heart posthumously.

He earned many awards and decorations during his military career including the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three oak leaf clusters, Army Achievement Medal with four oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal with bronze service star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with bronze service star, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, United Nations Medal, Air Assault Badge, Drill Sergeant Badge, and the Sapper Tab.

3/7 infantrymen remembered fondly by brothers-in-arms

Pfc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." – John 15:13.

Lt. Col. David Funk began Cpl. Jacob Pfister and Spc. Kevin Wessel's memorial service with these words, and from the outpouring of support and words of those involved with the ceremony, there were scores of Soldiers Pfister and Wessel could have given their lives for.

Funk, the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry's commander, referred to both men as heroes, but apologized to the assembled mourners due to the fact that his limited infantryman's vocabulary could not come up with a stronger word to ascribe to the two men.

Nonetheless, he did his best to illustrate the kind man who had laid down their lives in defense of their country and the Iraqi peoples.

"(Both men) were on point the day they died," Funk said. "I mean that both literally and figuratively. They were on point for our nation for this Global War on Terrorism."

"As Cottonbalers, they were on point for the Iraqi people, patrolling the streets of Baghdad, everyday to ensure that this inexorable move towards democracy we have been wit-

nessing will not slow down," he continued. "As members of 1st platoon, A Company they were on point for their squadmates, their friends, their brothers the day they died."

Their brothers-in-arms did their best to describe what Pfister and Wessel meant to them.

Funk thought that Pfister was everything a Soldier and a man should be. In the same fashion, he was a superb infantry team leader as well as a loving and devoted husband to his wife Ashley who is pregnant with their first child, a girl who is due in June.

"Jake insisted on doing the hard jobs, he never shirked his duty," Funk said of Pfister. "It made the Soldiers around him work harder in an effort to keep up with him."

"Cpl. Pfister has always been a hard charger, always in the front," said Capt. Sallee, A Co. commander. "He was the consummate professional; physically strong, mentally alert and morally straight. He delayed his

"As members of 1st platoon, A Company, they were on point for their squadmates, their friends, their brothers the day they died."

Lt. Col. David Funk
3/7 Inf. commander

inevitable success at Ranger School in order to come on this deployment with the squad who he loved so much.

many ways influenced my life. He was a man of great character who would in a second help anyone in need. He had a way to make you feel great about yourself in his presence."

Staff Sgt. Kern followed Sciria with an emotional tribute to the person that taught him more about being a leader than anybody could.

"I don't think I'll ever have the privilege of knowing a more motivated Soldier than Kevin Wessel," Kern said. "The 'weasel,' as we knew him, didn't join the Army for money. He didn't spend his money on cars or going to the clubs. He didn't own a car. What money he had was spent on two things: TA-50 and flight lessons. I don't think I've ever met anybody that is so immersed in the military culture or more proud to be a Soldier."

Fighting back tears, Kern addressed Wessel directly.

"You challenged me, you asked me questions that I had to go and research, I'm a better leader and a better person for having known you. My only regret is that I didn't tell you how proud I was of you. Thank you for your selfless service and for giving your life in defense of our country, our freedom and our way of life. Spc. Wessel, I know you never thought I'd say this, but you're my hero."

Nevertheless, Cpl. Pfister lived the Ranger creed every day."

Sallee then turned his attention to Wessel.

"His initiative and enthusiasm were models for us all to follow," Sallee said. "When most of us would take a knee in the sewage and trash piles while out on patrol, Wessel was probably in the prone. When most of us were satisfied with our knowledge, Wessel was seeking more. Spc. Wessel, what an honor it has been for all of us to know you."

Cpl. **** Sciria took the podium to tell his fellow Cottonbalers about Pfister.

"He was a friend's friend, for me, he was my best friend," Sciria said. "We were brothers and he has in

Essential services improve in East Baghdad

Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – A multitude of infrastructure improvement projects have been completed or are underway in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's sector of Baghdad, east of the Tigris River.

The new Iraqi government, in coordination with Coalition Forces, awards contracts for projects to local Iraqi contractors.

The local contractors, in turn, are required to hire local laborers from the neighborhoods from which the projects take place.

A number of sources fund the contracts, including the Interim Iraqi Government Fund,



Construction continues on the Zafaraniya main sewage line, which will carry sewage out to Rustimiyah North Sewage Treatment Plant.

Commanders Emergency Relief, U.S. Agency for International Development and seized funds from the former regime.

The Spartan BCT area of operations, which includes Sadr City, Zafaraniya, Tissa Nissan and Rusafa, was in need of infrastructure repairs well before the fall of the former regime, according to Lt. Col. Jamie Gayton, commander of the Brigade Troops Battalion.

"The progress now, today, is significant," he said May 3, following a UH-60 Blackhawk flyover assessment he made on project progress, adding, "Especially in Sadr City, surface cleaning efforts and completed sewer projects are evident. 'I've also noticed the people who have clean streets are modifying their behavior to keep the streets that way – instead of throwing their trash out the door, they carry it to the dumpsters across the street.'"

In Sadr City, \$6.8 million was spent on road paving, storm sewer cleaning and line repair, and pothole repair in 44 of the area's 85 sectors.

In total, 1.8 million of the 2.5 million residents in the area are affected by the improvements.

The six-month project had an average labor force of 163 workers per day. A separate project in the area consisted of the repair and cleaning of the main Zebbin line; a sewage main that runs south from Sadr City to the Rustimiyah North Sewage Treatment Plant in southern Tissa Nissan.

The \$5.5 million project, completed April 14, affected all residents from the once volatile region, employing 192 locals per day.

"I'm very excited about the quality and pace of the work (in Sadr City)," Gayton said. "And the people understand that although they have to deal with increased traffic and rerouting now, it is going to better their lives in the long run."

In Al Ameen, an area of South Tissa Nissan, a sewer and road project was recently completed at a cost of \$2.7 million dollars.

On average, 33 laborers per day installed the sewer network that replaced what was originally an open trench system. The network serves 70,000 people in the area.

A number of sewer projects south of Baghdad, in Zafaraniya, are under way. The projects, totaling \$25.8 million, will provide 130,000 residents of the town with functional sewage service.

Work includes the installation of a sewer main

that will extend from the town, east to the Rustimiyah Sewage Treatment Plant, as well as provide the seven villages in the town with a functional, potable, running water network.

Three of the seven villages are complete. Barring any major escalation of violence in the area, Gayton said the remaining villages are expected to be completed by Sept. 1.

"After a slow start, the projects are coming along pretty well," said 1st Lt. Dan Moore, 2/3 BTB, water project manager. "Due to dated plans of the area, which didn't include many of the homes that are now there, modifications needed to be made."

Moore, a Boone, N.C., native, added, "The work is going to get done soon with our intent met – to provide water to everyone (in Zafaraniya)."

A \$3.4 million water project in Al-Amari is near completion. The venture includes rehabilitating the water network for four of the villages in the town as well as the constructing of a water treatment unit to feed the network. It has employed upwards of 62 local laborers since the ground-breaking in June.

Gayton, pleased with the completed projects, is encouraged by what he sees with all the projects currently in progress.

"(When Coalition Forces) first initiated stabilization operations in Iraq, Coalition Forces decided what infrastructure improvements were priority in country," Gayton said. "Now, two years later, more and more of the projects are based on the needs of the people as voiced through their neighborhood advisory councils."

"This allows us to focus our money and efforts on the greatest needs of the Iraqi people."

Although many projects, millions of dollars later, have improved the lives of countless Iraqis, Gayton feels there is still much work to be done, and millions of Iraqis who still need essential services.

"Iraqis are taking the lead (in providing essential services)," he said, adding that the Amanat, or municipal authority, oversees many of the projects that are completed or in the works. "These projects are contracted by Iraqis, supervised by Iraqis, and worked on by Iraqis."

"They are building a new Iraq for the good people of Iraq."

1st Mech. Bn, 1st Iraqi Bde. moves into Abu Ghraib

Maj. Webster Wright
2/10 Inf. PAO

BAGHDAD – The 1st Mechanized Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade began combat operations in the western Baghdad district of Abu Ghraib May 2 with the mission to hunt down and kill or capture insurgents who have been staging attacks in the Iraqi capital.

The battalion, composed of armored personnel carriers, tanks, and Iraqi infantry Soldiers, is conducting opera-

tions throughout the 30-square-kilometer town.

Coalition Forces have been planning for the introduction of 1/1 Mech. Bn. for several weeks.

"This battalion is well trained, well equipped and well led," said Maj. Web Wright, spokesman for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. "This introduction will bring a huge capability to the Coalition Forces in this area of operations."

The battalion brings a local eye to the fight against the insurgency.

"Only an Iraqi can really understand what is going on in an Iraqi neighborhood," Wright said. "They speak the language, they know the people, and they can tell when something is just not right within the population."

Abu Ghraib has been a hotly contested battle ground since the war began in March 2003. The Baghdad suburb, formerly a military industrial town for Saddam's army, supported the Hamarabi Republican Guard Division prior to the liberation of Iraq.

Due to the geographic location, Abu

Ghraib has been a trafficking area for the former Ba'ath Party insurgency and Zarqawi terrorist network between Baghdad and Falluja.

"This is a perfect example of what the Iraqi government is trying to accomplish," said Lt. Col. Michael Infanti, 2/10 deputy brigade commander. "They are getting Iraqi Security Forces to take responsibility within the country to destroy the insurgency. These Soldiers are well trained and are willing to fight for democracy and freedom."

Iraqi police step in to assist car bomb victims on Karradah peninsula

Press Release
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Police and firefighters responded quickly to secure the area around an employment office on the Karradah peninsula after a car bomb exploded May 2.

The Iraqi police also helped move 10 civilians injured in the attack to a local hospital for treatment. Six Iraqi citizens were killed in the attack.

"This was a needless attack that targeted innocent Iraqis and another example of the desperation of the insurgents in choosing softer targets," said Maj. Shane Baker, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment operations officer. "By the time we got on site, the Iraqi Police had the situation under control and did not need coalition assistance."

Explosive ordnance detachment teams conducted an investigation of the site and estimated 150 pounds of explosives were used in the explosion.



Iraqi firefighters work together to survey the damage after a VBIED detonated on the Karradah peninsula of Baghdad May 2.

Courtesy photo



A tank crew from C. Co., 1/13 Armor lights up the range with its 120 mm main gun. C Co. recently underwent semi-annual qualification at Butler Range. *Photos by Sgt. Kevin M. Bromley*

Maintaining the standard

1/13 Armor takes on targets at Butler Range



Sgt. 1st Class John Konken of Niobrara, Neb., and Spc. Darryl Leija of Clinton Township, Mich. load Sabot munitions into an M1 Abrams tank in preparation for their qualification run.

Sgt. Kevin Bromley
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – The high pitched whine of turbine engines and the thunderous report of M1 Abrams’ 120 mm main guns echoed across the vast barren desert range south of Baghdad. The tankers of C Company, 1st Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division returned to test their crew proficiency and gunnery at Butler Range. Butler Range was established by Coalition Forces during Operation Iraqi Freedom to allow U.S. Forces to maintain weapons system proficiency during deployment.

“Fire,” commanded Sgt. 1st Class John Konken, his voice crackling over the radio in the range observation tower.

“On the way,” yelled his gunner.

The crew’s exuberance was punctuated with a flash and a chest rattling boom.

The tank crews are qualifying on new tables that have been designed to accurately reflect the types of engagements that they will encounter in Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

“They are shooting new qualification tables tailored

for Iraq,” said Capt. Benjamin Garner, 1/13 Armor’s Battalion liaison officer. “The new qualification table adds small arms engagements that we wouldn’t use previously.”

The M1s raced from firing point to firing point up and down range their tracks clattering over the hard earth.

“I enjoyed it ... if we’re patrolling it’s slower, this helps us learn to listen to the tank commander and keep us on the road,” said Spc. Darryl Leija, a 3rd platoon, C Co. driver.

The old qualification tables focused primarily on the use of the M1 Abrams’ 120mm main gun. The new tables are designed to use the tank as a complete weapons system.

“When you’re running the roads in Iraq, shooting at a car you’d more than likely use the machine gun, not the 120mm main gun,” said Konken, the 3rd Platoon Sergeant.

“We are shooting the new tank table VIII. It emphasizes a lot more troop engagement than the previous tables,” Konken said.

Tanker crews are required to qualify twice per year and the requirements to qualify are very stringent. The entire crew is graded on their reac-

tion times, the execution of their fire commands, and, of course, hitting the target.

“They’re graded on each engagement and they can earn up to 100 points for each one, said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Valdez, C Co., 1/13, who supervised the scoring team.

“The entire qualification table consists of ten engagements and an excellent crew could earn a perfect score of one thousand points,” Valdez said.

In order to qualify, the crews must succeed in seven out of 10 engagements.

However, completing seven engagements does not guarantee that a crew will receive a passing score.

To qualify, a tank crew must earn 700 points out of a possible 1,000.

“Each engagement can have up to four targets and the crews must execute their fire commands and complete the engagements within the time allotted or they don’t pass,” Valdez said.

1/13 Armor was the first battalion to use this range during OIF I and then to return to test their mettle during OIF 3.

“This range has improved 500% since the last time we were here,” Valdez said. It’s as good as any range we’ve fired on before.”

Useful Arabic Phrases

English	Arabic	English	Arabic
I’m a Soldier	ana jundi	The weather is hot	al joe har
Go away	imshi min ihna	Where is there water?	whain aqu miy?
Is this the mosque?	hatha huwa al jama?	Where are you going?	whain inta rayih?
Where do you live?	whain inta ta’Aesh?	What is your last name?	shinu isim al laqab?

58th Eng. maintains vehicles, standards

Spc. Matthew McLaughlin
2/10 Inf. PAO

BAGHDAD — Things fall apart, or so the saying goes. When the inevitable happens, mechanics from the 58th Combat Engineer Company, Fort Irwin, Calif. are there to ensure things don't stay apart for very long.

What makes the 58th Engineers' motor pool exceptional is the variety of vehicles the Soldiers repair, said Capt. Marc Stevenson, 58th Engineers executive officer from Bethlehem, Penn.

The Soldiers maintain eight different vehicles, from humvees to M113 Armored Personnel Carriers to construction vehicles.

The mechanics are responsible for more than 50 vehicles that are in constant use and in need of maintenance. Stevenson said a vehicle breaks down almost once every three days.

Despite the wear and tear, the company maintained a 98 percent operation readiness rate for the entire deployment, something almost unheard of considering the number and variety of vehicles they work on, said Chief Warrant Officer Richard Cody, the unit maintenance technician from Rochester, N.Y.

The mechanics were able to maintain such readiness by cross training the mechanics on each other's jobs. The 58th Eng. motor pool has Soldiers with eight different mechanical military occupational specialties for their diverse equipment.

Normally, one Soldier's MOS may be removing an M113 engine, for example. Another Soldier would then work on the 113 without ever knowing the other Soldier's job, and vice versa.

According to Cody, due to the limited workforce and such



Spc. Jason Wheeler, a 58th Eng. Co. track vehicle repairman from Otsego, Mich., finishes adding on armor to an M113.

Photos by Spc. Matthew McLaughlin

diverse equipment, all 58th motor pool Soldiers are cross trained with their sibling MOSs.

"It didn't matter if all you could do was change tires," Cody said. "Now you can fix the engine too. It greatly increased our operational readiness."

The cross training not only created an efficient motor pool, but it also exceeded new Army standards geared toward cross training Soldiers. Cody said Army mechanic MOSs will be integrated similarly to what 58th Eng. Soldiers have already accomplished.

"They're just talking about it now and we've already done it," he said.

Stevenson said he credits much of the motor pool's accomplishments to their work as Opposition Forces in the high operational tempo and harsh conditions of the National Training Center at Fort Irwin.

Soldiers from the 58th work under similar conditions there as in Iraq, so the unit came prepared with generators and tools they knew they would need under hot, sandy conditions.

"Our guys aren't magically more creative than other guys, but training at NTC prepared us," Stevenson said. "This isn't anything new to them."

Their work at NTC also prepared the mechanics to be creative in accomplishing tasks. Parts that are readily available back home could be difficult to obtain in Iraq, Cody said. The mechanics couldn't wait around for parts to be delivered, so they had to be innovative to maintain their track record.

"We repair instead of replace," said Sgt 1st Class Alejandro Zavala, a maintenance supervisor from Bakersville, Calif. If they didn't have parts, metal workers welded the necessary parts and tools, he added.

The metal workers also created new tools of their own, Stevenson said. Two metal workers created metallic templates used to measure the size of mortar explosions.

The company requested a template and design and left the rest to the welders, said Spc. Timothy M. Marquart, a metal worker from Tacoma, Wash.

"They gave us the design and told us to make it out of cardboard or wood or something," Marquart said. "We're not carpenters, so we made it out of steel. They liked it so much we made a whole bunch. We made 15 every day until we were done."

Marquart and Spc. Paul Cordeiro, Oakdale, Calif., made approximately 100 steel templates for the entire brigade. Both received Army Commendation Medals for their innovation.

"They were given ARCOMs because they definitely thought outside the box to find a solution," Stevenson said.

The metal workers' innovations symbolize the whole motor pool's willingness to get the job done, Stevenson said. The engineers wanted their M113s, their primary mode of transportation, to be up-armored.

There are no M113 up-armor kits available in Iraq, however. No matter, the mechanics and metal workers welded and added armor to their M113s that was so professional looking Stevenson said he thought it was meant for the vehicles.

"The quality is very high," he said. "They didn't just slap them on. It looks like the vehicle was made to have it on. It

took a lot of hard work and long hours making sure the 113s were fit to fight."

The setup of the motor pool itself also greatly contributes to the Soldiers' efficiency, Marquart said. All the vehicles are in proper order, tools are where they are supposed to be and parts are meticulously organized for easy access.

"Everything is organized," Marquart said. "There is no clutter. Everything functions the way it should."

The motor pool also features a shaded work area made out of stacked connexes. The engineers brought large mobile tiles to use as a floor for the work area. The motor pool has all the accommodations of back home, so much so that Marquart said he will almost regret to see it go when the engineers redeploy.

"The way our motor pool is laid out, in my mind it is the most impressive in the brigade," he said. "It's almost to the point where people will be very upset when we have to tear it down."

"It's the best, no doubt," added Spc. Mark Enjambre, a mechanic from New York, N.Y. "You'll never see a motor pool as clean as this. We put pride in our work."

Zavala agreed and said pride is the driving factor behind all of his Soldier's motivation. "It has to do with being proud of what you do," he said. "If you have pride in what you do, it will show."



A regular construction vehicle is transformed into an up-armored dynamo by 58th Eng. Co. Soldiers from Fort Irwin, Calif.

No
Soldier
left
behind

Sgt. Matthew Maupin

"I will not leave a fallen comrade"

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

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

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

You have not been forgotten.



'Murdering' ideas to save lives

Spc. Ricardo Branch
3rd Inf. Div. PAO

BAGHDAD — Throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. Soldiers witness the dangers of conducting daily operations in Iraq during an insurgency.

To better understand and combat the anti-coalition forces attacking them, Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team intelligence section gather and discuss the reasons and motivations behind terrorist acts in a meeting known as "The Murder Board."

"In some cases you have to think like a terrorist, to understand one," said Maj. John Michael Wells, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 256th BCT, intelligence officer.

"If you put yourself in the terrorists' shoes and think of what they'd need and how to carry out a specific task, stopping them from doing those acts becomes easier," said the New Orleans, La., native.

The 256th intelligence Soldiers have "The Murder Board" specifically for that purpose.

Wells said all the analysts meet weekly in an open forum bringing their ideas to the table to explore what can be done to aid Soldiers who encounter the enemy.

"Intel personnel don't normally have to face a (vehicle-borne improvised explosive device) or go on a raid,

so we have to get a good picture or a story told from the reports," said Sgt. Andrew Hyde, HHC, 256th BCT. "We then try to figure out the next line of the story. Once we figure out what is going to happen next, we make recommendations to the commander on how to combat the enemy."

The forum analyzes topics from fuel extortions, the Iraqi election, emerging terrorist cells and various other issues that directly impact the 256th BCT area of operations, and the overall stability of Iraq.

"Sometimes a problem will arise when everyone's divided, and that's where the job becomes a challenge because you have to argue your point and find the grounds on which everyone agrees to come to a compromise," Hyde said.

The Lafayette, La., native found when the Soldiers are in disagreement,

problems are then exposed.

"It's not a bad thing when you don't agree, that's when gaps are identified in the unit's intelligence gathering. The Soldiers can then fix the gaps in the theory and find the best way to present their findings through the chain," he said.

The theory wrangling among the intelligence Soldiers is also where the board gets its distinctive name.

"We call it 'The Murder Board' when the ideas you bring are being 'murdered' because as soon as the topic is up for discussion, Soldiers are shooting it down with their own opinions," Wells said. "As long as they can back it up, anything is fair game."

Wells said he finds intelligence analysts, by nature, like to argue. "The Murder Board" gives them an opportunity to argue their ideas while making sure they have thought through the details and double checked all their facts.

"Sometimes a problem will arise when everyone's divided, and that's where the job becomes a challenge because you have to ... come to a compromise."

Sgt. Andrew Hyde
HHC, 256th BCT

"You know going in that all your points will be challenged, so you have to be prepared," he said.

Spc. Joshua Schuttloffel, from Lennox, S.D., an intelligence analyst with 256th BCT Military Intelligence Company said this was his first time participating on "The Murder Board," which he viewed as a valuable asset to the brigade.

Schuttloffel said this type of meeting is important to build upon the teamwork of the Soldiers involved.

"You're encouraging thought amongst all the Soldiers from the top down," he said. "They see the topic and then predict how and what the enemy may do."

Although it can be challenging for them at times, the intelligence Soldiers of the 256th BCT are motivated and ready for the challenges that sway the daily affairs of the brigade.

"It's exciting to know that your thoughts can influence the whole brigade, if you can run them through the gauntlet of your fellow analysts and they become part of the final assessment," Hyde said.

Whatever the outcome, the Soldiers of the 256th intelligence section know their work will shape brigade operations and will hopefully help to better prepare the Soldiers that must go out everyday on the streets of Baghdad.

"As long as we are here, we will continue to work hard to stay one step ahead of the insurgents," Wells said.

2/14 Soldiers hunt for hidden weapons caches in Abu Ghraib

Spc. Matthew McLaughlin
2/10 Inf. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — "Life is a garden: dig it," one Soldier said, quoting the movie "Joe Dirt" before he began moving earth with a rusted shovel.

When not conducting raids or other combat operations, Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 10th

Mountain Division, treat the town of Abu Ghraib like a giant treasure hunt, leaving no stone unturned in the search for weapons caches.

Entire patrols are often dedicated to searching large areas for buried munitions, according to 1st Lt. Joshua Betty, a platoon leader from College Station, Texas.

"We're denying the enemy the ability to operate," Betty

said. "It's become a big part of our operations. It's really starting to pay off."

The cache hunters aren't alone combing a beach for buried treasure, however.

Soldiers from B Company, 27th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., assist 2/14 Infantry Soldiers with metal detectors.

The engineers scour fields, roads and yards listening for the tone that indicates metal, said Pfc. Samuel L. Goll, a Morris, Okla., native with 27th Eng.

"Whenever we get one, we work them like a horse," said Staff Sgt. Thomas E. Larkin, a 2/14 Soldier from Carthage, N.Y.

"They're always out there," Betty said. "They do a really good job. They find lots of stuff for us."

Betty said the combination of digging and detecting has paid dividends.

Since mid November, 2/14 Inf. has unearthed more than 90 caches in the Abu Ghraib district.



Photos by Spc. Matthew McLaughlin

A group of 2/14 Inf. Soldiers turn over what remains of a car to search underneath it, since insurgents often bury caches in areas they believe the Soldiers will not look.

Many Soldiers can now spot a potential cache by glancing at oddly colored grass or soft dirt surrounded by hard earth.

Keen eyes during expeditions aid them all over the town, including backyards and gardens.

During one search the Soldiers found a large cache buried in an Iraqi's front yard.

"We found (nearly) 60 mortar rounds," Goll said.

Soldiers from 2/14 often

search the outside of houses, Betty said.

"They're very inviting for the most part," Betty said of the residents.

Larkin said part of their willingness to help may reflect on Abu Ghraib residents' desire to be rid of insurgent activity. Some times Iraqis will even lead 2/14 Soldiers to caches.

"They're getting sick of it too," Larkin said. "They don't want it in their backyard."

Several Soldiers said they feel they are improving the situation in Iraq by uncovering caches.

They do admit, however, that there are far more munitions that are yet to be discovered.

"We feel like we're making a dent, but this country has thousands of weapons," Larkin said. "We do our best to find every one."

Goll said he feels frustrated when he returns from a patrol without finding any munitions. Regardless, Betty said he and other Soldiers still go out every day hoping to take the insurgency down one cache at a time.

"Even if we found one cache a month, that's one less piece of ordnance, one less mortar round that can be used to shoot at us," he said.



Above: Spc. Robert Fairfax, a Wilmington, N.C., native with 27th Eng. Bn., walks through a field of scrap metal while on patrol. Right: Sgt. Ruben Paredes, 2/14 Inf., starts digging after an engineer detects metal in Abu Ghraib.



'Amber Waves' ensures agricultural success



Spc. Ricardo Branch
3rd Inf. Div. PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from 256th Brigade Combat Team ensured that farmers of the greater Baghdad area will be able to boost their agricultural development immensely with additional farm equipment during an equipment signoff event at the Al Radwanayah Provincial Civil Military Operations Center May 2.

"We're about to make a bit of history today," said Brig. Gen. John Basilica Jr., commander of 256th BCT. "Handing off this equipment will give assistance to the farmers of the region and provide better agriculture to the Iraqi people."

256th BCT signed over 37 tractors, 16 water pumps, and 56 five-horsepower generators to the Ministry of Agriculture to pass down to farmers in need of the equipment.

The equipment, originally purchased under the old regime, lay dormant in a Sadr City warehouse for the past three years. Upon finding the equipment, Soldiers transported it to a secure area for repairs and eventual distribution to the farmers.

Present to receive the farming equipment, Saub Hussien, a representative of the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture, said the equipment being signed over will be put to good use.

"We want to thank the U.S. government and U.S. Army for their support and efforts to make this happen," Hussien said. "Their help will make Iraqi's agriculture better and assist many farmers of this area and many others like it."

The tractor hand off is part of an ongoing project for the Soldiers of 256th BCT, who have provided agricultural aid for some time.

"This is all part of Operation Amber Waves, which was initiated during 1st Cavalry Division's time," Basilica said. "The 256th BCT is out here to assist the local farmers with improving their farming and really just make this signoff happen."

"It's really been a three-fold mission however, as we've already given seeds, fertilizer and now equipment," he said. "This will help promote and improve the chances for Iraqis to feed themselves."

Approximately 100 local farmers and members of the United Farmers of Iraq witnessed the transfer of equipment.

Sheik Rasheed Al Shably, director of the UFI, says the tractors will be a great help in reconstructing and improving the Iraqi agriculture economy.

By providing tractors and a trained operator to any farmer submitting a request, the farmers and the government of Iraq are committed to improving agriculture for all of the Iraqi people, he said.

With the Ministry of Agriculture and the newly formed Iraqi government working side-by-side, farmers can now turn to the government for aid.

"This sends a strong signal that the Iraqi government and Ministry of Agriculture are working together and providing the level of assistance that they should," Basilica said. "Now if a farmer has an issue, he turns to the Ministry of Agriculture, who will assist them further."

Photos by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

Brig. Gen. John Basilica Jr., 256 BCT commander, signs documents handing over responsibility for farming equipment to the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture at the Al Radwanayah Provincial Civil Military Operations Center May 2.



Thirty-seven tractors were officially handed over to the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture May 2. Originally found in a Sadr City warehouse, the tractors were repaired and transported by 256th BCT Soldiers during one of their missions supporting Operation Amber Waves.

'Muthana' Bde. receives battle training

Maj. Web Wright
2/10 Inf. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – One of the newest weapons against the insurgency, the 3rd Battalion, 3rd "Muthana" Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, began advance marksmanship and close quarters battle training recently at Muthana airfield in Baghdad.

In the shadow of an uncompleted mosque near FOB Muthana, leaders of the 3/3 IA trained their Soldiers in marksmanship skills, live

fire exercises, and close quarter battle drills.

"The 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade is right on track with their training," said Maj. Web Wright, public affairs officer for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. "They have really impressed the Coalition advisors with their ability to pick up the training and their dedication to this effort."

The 3rd Muthana has been living and training under fairly austere conditions.

As the unit progresses with their training, so too does the

construction of the base.

Currently, the Soldiers are living in tents and making due with rudimentary facilities.

The end state is a significant military base with the newest provisions the government can provide.

The unit will continue training under the direction of the Iraqi officers in charge of the unit and coalition advisors.

Once certified as mission capable, they will assume combat operations in the Baghdad area.



In the shadow of the construction of the Grand Muthana Mosque, Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army Brigade listen to a briefing prior to marksmanship training.



Photos courtesy of 2/10 Mtn. Advisory Group

Soldiers from 3/3 IA Bde. hone their weapons skills at the live fire range in Baghdad. 3/3 is a newly formed unit of Iraqi volunteers intent on combating and defeating the insurgency.

403rd CA gunners protect convoys

Spc. Jennifer Fitts
100th MPAD

BAGHDAD – Three humvees cruise slowly down a city street, the turret gunners scanning the surrounding area for threats.

Disinterested neighborhood residents merely glance at them, until one of the gunners abruptly shouts and gestures.

Immediately heads snap around and jaws drop when they hear the sound of female voices and notice the feminine features of the Soldiers behind the machine guns.

With an increased operations tempo, female Soldiers are stepping up to take on some of the roles traditionally filled by males such as providing unit and convoy security.

Some units, including military police, are using an increasing number of females for patrols outside the wire.

Despite this, there's often only one female gunner in a particular convoy or patrol at a given time.

What makes A Company, 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, a New York-based Reserve unit, different is that it doesn't have just one female turret gunner, but three.

In fact, all of the turret gunners for this particular 10-person civil affairs team are females.

"They point, they look, they're very surprised to see females," said Spc. Amanda N. Godlewski, a chemical observation specialist assigned to the civil affairs unit, recounting the reaction many Iraqis have to seeing a female in the turret.

"(The Iraqis) used to get really confused," said Spc. Robyn L. Murray, a civil affairs specialist from Niagara Falls, N.Y. "I was the first. I volunteered on the second day we were here."

The civil affairs team that Murray was assigned to needed a gunner who

knew how to use a squad automatic weapon.

Murray said she jumped at the opportunity to "man" the machine gun in the turret.

Soon after volunteering to take the gunner's position, Godlewski, from Syracuse, N.Y., said she enjoyed being up on top of the humvee, shrugging off the thought of feeling exposed.

Fellow female gunner Spc. Lilly R. Withers, the unit's mechanic, agreed with Murray and Godlewski.

"I wouldn't do anything else," she said.

Withers said the reactions from other U.S. Soldiers occasionally mirrors the initial confusion of the locals.

She said most of the other troops she's encountered are receptive to the idea of female gunners and have voiced their support to her.

"I do get a few questions," Withers said. "The infantry thought it was strange they (the unit) chose to put us on the guns."

The women's presence in the turrets has had a positive effect during their civil affairs missions.

"They turn a lot of heads, civilian and military," said their team chief, Cpt. Timothy H. Wright, of Jamestown, N.Y. "They get a positive reaction from the civilian populace."

Withers said Iraqi women have been very friendly toward her and by judging from their reactions and gestures she feels they are supportive of female Soldiers.

She said after the women figure out she's not a man "then, they want to come talk to me, see my eyes and hair," said the blonde Cortland, N.Y., native.

The reactions the female gunners get from the public can be very helpful in stressful situations since they get a lot of attention said Wright.

"They get the point across and people listen to their voices," he said.

Wright's 10-person team is larger than a standard civil affairs team since it consists of two teams combined into one due to the team often being outside the relative safety of the forward operating base.

Venturing outside the wire is something the female gunners accept.

"I get kind of scared sometimes," aid Withers, "but I like to be in control to keep my team safe."

"People call us when they need to go somewhere," said Wright.

With mission tempo in full swing, going "somewhere" is merely a moment away.

This means that Wright's civil affairs team covers a lot of ground.

Patrolling an area that covers nearly 70 square miles, the Soldiers are out on a daily basis, sometimes running more than one mission a day.

"We have the largest operating area

in the al-Rashid district," said Wright. "We are helping out in 43 'muhallahs' or towns."

The civil affairs team stays very busy performing such diverse tasks as identifying and assessing needed projects in their area, helping coordinate U.S. Army work efforts with key Iraqi leaders and collecting data on local attitudes.

Wright said the overall positive reactions resulting from the female gunners' presence has contributed to the success of their missions.

The civil affairs team may get a few sideways looks at times, but their boss has nothing but praise for his female Soldiers.

"I'm proud of them," said Wright. "They listen well and they react when it's needed. They're as motivated and dedicated as any male Soldier I've ever worked with."



Capt. Timothy H. Wright
Spc. Robyn L. Murray, Spc. Amanda N. Godlewski and Spc. Lilly R. Withers, 403rd CA Bn., sit on the top of a humvee while waiting to go out on a mission.

550th 'Renegades' teach IA medics life-saving skills

Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick
DSB PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Nearly 20 members of the Iraqi Army were trained in combat medic skills in a class held May 2 thru 5.

The IA Soldiers, from 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th

Division, came ready to learn.

"The attitudes have been great," said Col. John J. Lammie, a doctor with the 550th Area Support Medical Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, Division Support Brigade. "There's been a lot of enthusiasm and a fair amount of class participation. "They've done a very good

job." "They're fast learners, they're eager learners," said 1st Lt. Ronald A. Leach, a physicians assistant with the 550th. "They're just an awesome group of people to work with."

Members of the 550th, nicknamed the Renegades, have been working with some of the Iraqi Soldiers since the unit's arrival here.

"We've been sending one of our providers, either a physician assistant or one of the physicians, almost every morning to work with them during their sick call," said Lammie, who hails from Fayetteville, N.C.

Leach, from Hardinsburg, Ky., said the trainers don't go over to conduct sick call, but to teach the Iraqi medics, walk them through and help them develop their skills as medics.

Lammie said the Iraqis also bring some of their cases to the 550th's Troop Medical Clinic.

"They look to us to give them some guidance on the

medical side," said Lammie. "They do not hesitate to bring a patient over to our clinic for our help when they deem it necessary."

The teamwork between the two clinics has been encouraging to the DSB doctors.

"We've seen a lot of improvements in the last few months," said Lammie.

Lammie said they've helped the IA medics with how to take vital signs, as well as developing an organized approach to getting the patients through.

They've also assisted them in identifying what supplies and medicines are useful in treatment.

"They get a fair amount of their supplies from the Ministry of Health," said Lammie. "They have an excellent medication selection; basic, but really does address the needs they tend to see."

Some of the students have already had experience tending to patients prior to the class.

Lammie said one of the

students has actually managed a clinic before.

Several of them coming for the training are platoon or company medics, said Leach.

Leach said the four-day training is a condensed Combat Life Saver course.

Lammie said the training included starting intravenous lines, splinting fractures and litter carries. They also taught them how to approach a patient with multiple traumas and to evaluate those patients.

"We're trying to get them ready for future missions," said Leach.

Leach said these Soldiers, in the very near future, are going to be out manning posts and pulling security.

A Chief Warrant Officer 4, who is an adjutant in the Iraqi unit, translates during the classes and at the clinic.

He said his Soldiers believe in the training they're getting here and believe that the U.S. troops and Iraqis can work together for peace and security.

Lammie said it's been a real privilege to work with the Iraqi medics, and added that there's been a tremendous warmth and welcome that they've extended to the Renegades.

"I think each of us has enjoyed the experience," said Lammie. "It certainly has boosted our Arabic a little bit and has boosted their English as well."

He added, "My prayer really is that the skills that were worked on together will be the ones that really will save their lives and make them more efficient in sustaining their fighting force."



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick
Above: 1st Lt. Ronald A. Leach, right, describes splinting procedures during the four-day course for IA medics. Right: Leach, one of three instructors for the course, shows his IA students how to make an improvised litter.





Pfc. Thomas J. Hargraves and Pfc. Winston Chin, tactical unmanned aerial vehicle operators with Shadow Co., 3/3 Avn., move a TUAV onto its launcher.

Spc. Brian Henretta

Shadows in the sky ...

Taji UAVs keep watch outside wire

Spc. Brian Henretta
Avn. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Though it may look like an overgrown toy, it's a multi-million dollar aircraft system that has the ability to be one of the most useful and deadly assets for the 3rd Infantry Division, even though it has no weapons.

The Shadow Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle has emerged as one of the division's most useful tools to successfully identify and track down enemies around the Baghdad area.

This is made possible by Soldiers from Shadow TUAV Company, 3/3 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion.

All Shadow TUAV flights around the Baghdad area are

launched from Camp Taji airfield.

Control is then given to an operator from the brigade that requested the flight mission.

Each brigade has a flight control center to fly the TUAV on their mission, said Capt. John D. Di Dio, Shadow TUAV Company commander.

Shadow Co.'s primary mission is making sure flights are on time and that they land safely.

There are a lot of tasks involved to make sure this happens.

There are maintenance teams who work around the clock on both the aircraft motor and the body and another team of experts who work on the complex camera and electrical systems that are used to relay information back to

the controllers.

Another team controls the take off from the launcher and the actual flying of the planes until they hand over control to forward operators in Baghdad.

Di Dio said once the TUAVs are patrolling in the air, their operator's mission is to use the advanced camera system to search for enemy attackers using mortars and improvised explosive devices.

The TUAVs also track people and vehicles and watch over raids.

"The great thing about UAVs is that commanders can watch the battlefield in real-time ... you can look at a target as we speak," said Di Dio.

If a target is spotted it allows commanders to position necessary forces to execute their mission as rapidly

as possible and to keep their eyes on the target.

The usefulness of this reconnaissance asset is that since it's unmanned, any danger to human lives is removed, Di Dio said.

"It's a big help to the aviation brigade because it provides aerial reconnaissance but takes pilots out of harms way."

The planes run silent, are relatively small and can't be seen while in flight, therefore people don't even know when they are in the air patrolling above them Di Dio said.

Full control of the TUAVs is handed back to operators from Shadow Co. for landing when the mission is complete.

Although landings are mostly controlled by comput-

ers and satellite dishes, the systems must be surveyed carefully to ensure the dishes are at exact levels of elevation.

"This ensures that the plane has actually touched the runway and can slow down when the computers think it did," said Pfc. Thomas J. Hargraves, a TUAV operator with Shadow Co. "The plane can crash if it's off by even a small amount."

The team of Soldiers in Shadow Co. have worked very hard to master their craft of putting TUAVs in the sky.

"I still have fun every time I see one take off or land," said Di Dio.

"It's a great feeling to work on these planes," Hargraves said. "I'm just happy to be part of something that flies."



Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, 42nd Inf. Div. commander, gives Lt. Col. Todd Wood, 2nd Battalion 7th Infantry Regiment commander, a combat patch during a ceremony at FOB Dagger April 4.

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Marne, Rainbow Soldiers receive 42nd Inf. Div. combat patch at Dagger

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and the 42nd Infantry Division held a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Dagger to receive their combat patches April 4.

Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 was not the first time Soldiers from these two divisions have fought side by side.

"The combat patches being presented today are a reminder of another point in history where the Rainbow Division and Marne Soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder on the battlefield as we do today," said Col. Mark McKnight, 1st BCT commander. "In the summer of 1918, the 42nd Infantry Division and the 3rd Infantry Division defeated the German army at the second battle of the Marne, making the turning point of the First World War."

Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto presented commanders of Task Force Liberty and their command sergeants major with a 42nd Inf. Div. combat patch.

"It is hard to believe how much a small piece of cloth can mean to a Soldier," Taluto said.

Taluto went on to explain how throughout history Soldiers have always been proud to don a combat patch on their shoulder as a sign of having been in a battle.

The date of the ceremony was significant because exactly two years before, the 1st BCT deposed former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

"As the sun rose over Baghdad, the regime of Saddam Hussein awoke to a new reality," McKnight said. "Their propaganda could no longer stand up to the light of that morning sun. The Raider Brigade, as the first element of the 3rd Infantry Division, had arrived in Baghdad."

"We came not as conquerors but as liberators," he continued. "We came to help the Iraqi people shove aside a tyrant as the Iraqis embraced freedom and liberty as if they were a long lost brother."

McKnight asked the Soldiers to be proud of the patch they were now authorized to wear and to keep Soldiers of the past in their minds.

"I would like all of you to remember one thing," McKnight said. "When you look at the combat patch you earned here today, remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country."

CSA visits his Vanguard troops

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PAO

FOB FALCON, Iraq – Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker visited 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3d Infantry Division at FOB Falcon to present purple hearts to seven Soldiers and reenlist 30 others May 7.

Before presenting the awards, Schoomaker said, "It's my pleasure and a great honor to do this today."

The Purple Heart recipients were: 1st Lt. Cameron Murphy, Headquarters and Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment and Clovis, Calif., native; Staff Sgt. Michael Baroni, C Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, and Crestwood, Ky., native; Spc. Douglas Fessenden, A

Company, 3/7 Inf., and Brookline, N.H., native; Spc. Aric Mason, A Company, 1/184 Inf. and Temecula, Calif., native; Pfc. Daniel Bottom, D Company, 3/7 Inf., and Springfield, Ill., native, and Pvt. Owen Halfman, A Co., 3/7 Inf., and a Sacramento, Calif., native.

He told the reenlisting Soldiers that he is told every day from people around the U.S. that they are proud of the Soldiers serving in Iraq and thanked them for choosing to reenlist.

The Chief of Staff of the Army also saw a demonstration of the Buffalo Ironclaw by 36th Engineer Group.

The Buffalo is one of the ways the Army is combating the threat of improvised explosive devices.



Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army chief of staff, talks with 3/7 Inf. Soldiers at FOB Falcon May 7.

Air Force meteorologists play critical role in mission planning

Spc. Maria Mengrone
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – One important factor often overlooked when planning an outdoor event is weather, but when it comes to the global war on terrorism, accurate weather predictions are key to mission preparation and success.

Air Forces meteorologists with 15th Expeditionary Air Support Operation Squadron, 3rd Infantry Division, are especially mindful of the importance in alerting commanders on daily weather conditions.

"Our job is to try to predict what the battle space will look like and allow planners to exploit or work with the conditions," said Capt. Chad D. Little, staff weather officer, 15th EASOS. "If you are aware of the conditions you have to operate in you can figure out the best way to take advantage of the enemy who is operating under the same conditions."

The 15th EASOS provides division planners with vital information that impacts most aspects of a mission including weapon systems functionality, troop convoy movements, and flight activities. The weather team also generates a five-day forecast which can be critical to mission planning.

"We try to make sure that the Soldier is not out putting up antennas when we know a severe thunderstorm is developing," Little said. "We provide valuable resource protection for the Soldiers and their equipment."

Flight activities are largely dependant on weather forecasts because several variables such as visibility, wind speed, altitude and rain must be taken into account.

No one understands the weather team's significant role better than the pilots who have to make mission essential decisions based on weather probability.

"We have to know the weather outlook," said Blackhawk pilot, Capt. Joseph B. Stanyer, Assistant Air Operations Officer, Special Troops Battalion. "Are sandstorms or rain coming? Is visibility going to be low? It's critical to any mission when we try to fly especially because it can change so much."

"The weather team is essential, we have to have them," he said. "Everywhere you see aviation you're going to see some sort of weather detachment."

The 15th EASOS covers the 3rd Inf. Div. area of operation, a region covering most of Iraq. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom I weather data was

not accurate. Currently, computer model data is updated twice daily and forecasters theater-wide submit hourly reports allowing more reliable and timely weather updates.

The weather team is put in a unique position, said Staff Sgt. Gerry Q. Thompson, non-commissioned officer in charge of 15th EASOS. For the first time, detailed surface level weather information is being collected and disseminated for worldwide use.

During the upcoming summer months, sandstorms and extreme temperatures are important weather factors that can adversely affect a mission's success.

"We've already had our first taste of sandstorms," Thompson said.

The summer Shamal event is a weather phenomenon consisting of severe winds that pick up sand and dust in the western region of Iraq. The Shamal causes massive sandstorms that can last anywhere from a couple of hours to as long as four days. Visibility varies from zero to less than a half mile with winds sometimes ranging 25 to 30 miles per hour. During severe sandstorms, Soldiers are advised to remain indoors.

Sandstorms are especially worrisome because sand and dust seeps into the crevices of equipment and weapon sys-

tems, Thompson said, which causes functionality failure if proper precautions are not taken.

The weather team issues weather warnings and advisories up to three days before an approaching sandstorm. Advance warning allows leaders to plan convoy movements around the impending severe weather conditions.

Another factor to consider is the intense heat. Soldiers are the backbone of the overall success of a mission so staying hydrated in a harsh desert environment is important, especially since temperatures in excess of 110 degrees are rapidly approaching, Thompson said.

The months of July and August are the hottest months with an average high of 110

and the extreme high is 123 degrees, Thompson said.

Many elements that go into mission preparation are dependant on weather conditions but the 15th EASOS meteorologists agree that weather can be very dynamic and forecasts don't always go as predicted.

"Weather is not an exact science," Thompson said. "100 percent accuracy would be great, but everyone has to deal with the bumps and bruises that come along with this job."

Little agrees, "The best part of our job is when our forecasts happen as we predicted."

"The most satisfaction we get," he said, "is when there are no weather related accidents or injury to Soldiers due to weather."



Photos by Spc. Maria Mengrone

Above: Air Force meteorologist Staff Sgt. Gerry Q. Thompson, 15th EASOS, collects data from the tactical meteorological observation weather satellite system used to measure a variety of weather information.

Left: Thompson uses computer model data to predict weather forecasts used for mission planning.

Soldiers return fire, protect FOBs 24/7

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

All is quiet on any given forward operating base. Soldiers are walking to the dining facility, the gym or to call their loved ones.

All of a sudden, explosions resound through the FOB.

Driven by instinct, Soldiers take cover and wait to find out if the explosion was an outgoing or incoming round.

After a few minutes, they hear another explosion, much louder and much closer.

The explosions come from Coalition Forces artillerymen, doing what they do best in a mortar or rocket attack: counterfire on the enemy's position.

"This is what we do, all day, everyday," said Pfc. Edward Reitmeyer, a 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment Paladin M109A6 self-propelled Howitzer driver. "We support a large area. Anytime someone receives incoming in our (area of operation), we send some right back their way."

Most of the team's recent mission have been fired into a certain hotspot.

"The majority of our missions are counterfire," said Staff Sgt. James Hutchinson, a 1/41 FA chief of section. "Obviously we support our-

selves (at FOB Paliwoda), but the majority of our rounds are fired to support FOB McKenzie."

Since the enemy firing on the FOB is usually out of visual range, the team members who work in the Paladin have to rely on electronic targeting support to acquire their target, Reitmeyer said.

"Nine out of 10 times, we don't know if we hit our target," Hutchinson said. "We are firing from radar acquisition. We react really fast, but we have to hear back from higher to see if we hit the target before they got away."

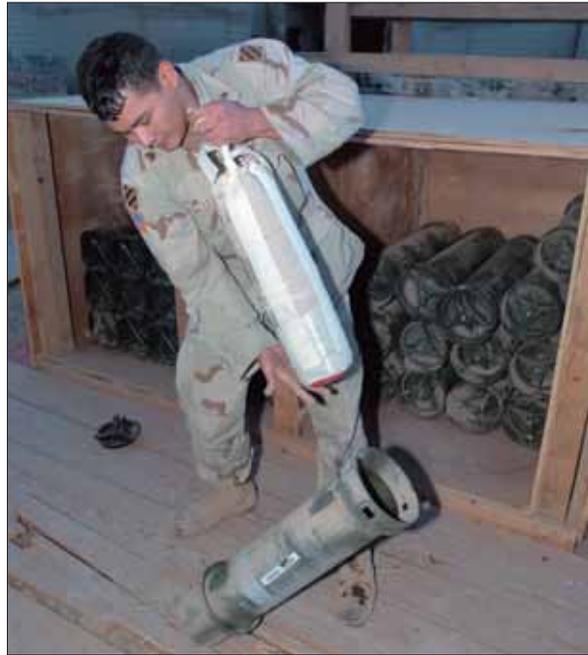
Since time is of the essence, the team of Soldiers has to be ready to fire at a moment's notice.

According to Sgt. Orlan Valle, a 1/41 FA Paladin gunner, the crew always has rounds at the ready, just in case.

"This team has fired the most rounds in real world missions," Valle said.

Since most of the attacks on FOBs are indirect fire from mortars and rockets, the artillerymen's job is a very important one.

"We are the FOB's most important protection," said Pfc. Stephen McCoy, a 1/41 Paladin cannoneer. "We support the FOB from the inside with a 20 mile range. We are the ones who keep the Soldiers out of the line of fire."



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Sgt. Orlan Valle, a 1/41 FA Paladin gunner, pulls powder charges from a canister for inspection before loading the powder and canister into a Paladin Howitzer at FOB Paliwoda May 5. The gunners make sure to have rounds ready in case of attack.

Combat logistics keep units rolling, ready for missions

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

In a deployed situation, the Army survives because of its supply lines.

Without food, water medical supplies and fuel, missions would not get accomplished.

Every day in Iraq, there is a combat logistics patrol somewhere on the highway carrying much needed supplies.

When planning a CLP, leaders try to consolidate all the orders into one convoy. The type of unit we are, we take all the logistic elements in the brigade and combine all of this into one huge movement," said Capt. Akaninyene Okon, a 3rd Forward Support

Battalion battle captain. "That's how we determine the type of vehicle we are going to use on a CLP."

Okon said they rely on information from other units to decide what goes on each convoy.

"The support operations officers who are tied in with all the units in our sector do a lot of the legwork," he said. "We hold a logistics synchronization meeting to decide what is needed. The support officer does the coordination, makes a list of what each unit needs, and we send it out."

The CLP convoys consist of more than just the supply vehicles. For such a big operation, many assets are needed to insure the convoy reaches

its destination safely.

"Anytime time a CLP leaves the FOB, the basic components are maintenance and recovery assets," Okon said. "We also have to have medical support in case something happens, and of course the strong arm, which is security that has to go with them."

The CLPs are in constant contact with their headquarters to make sure everything runs smoothly.

"We are always tracking the CLPs from point A to point B," said Sgt. 1st Class Keith Ancrum, a 3rd FSB operations non-commissioned officer in charge. "In case they come into enemy contact, or if somebody gets hurt, we have to update the commander. It's

just situational awareness; we want to know what's going on with the Soldiers at all times. Not just necessarily voice communications, we have the means to communicate with them through text messaging."

The Soldiers who go out on the convoys have mixed feelings about what they do every day. There is always a threat of improvised explosive devices along the roadways they constantly travel.

"It's nerve racking, looking at every inch of ground," said Spc. Craig Wilson, a 3rd FSB mechanic. "You really can't watch everything. I've seen a couple of IEDs go off. It is exciting at the same time."

"The biggest challenge is actually riding by these guys on

the road and wondering if they have something in their vehicle that's going to blow me up," said Cpl. Larry Woods, a Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment fueler. "Every time we roll, it's an anxious feeling."

Despite these challenges, supplies get to where they are needed everyday through the efforts of these Soldiers.

"Pushing supplies to the people who need them is vital to the mission," Ancrum said. "That's why we are here."

"The main purpose of forward support is to keep the brigade functioning," Wilson said. "The brigade wouldn't be able to do their mission without us."

SWEEP, continued from page 1



Maj. Timothy Raymond

Part of the weapons cache unearthed by 70th Eng. Bn. Soldiers during Operation Quick Sweep northwest of Baghdad.

said. "Things just keep coming up." He exclaimed.

As they continued to unearth more and more munitions, the 70th Engineers knew they had something big. They brought in extra Soldiers to continue the sweep.

"This is an excellent find ... these munitions won't be used to build any (improvised explosive devices)," said Lt. Col. Anthony Wright, commander of the 70th Engineer Battalion.

The engineers pulled almost 3,000 pounds of large caliber explosive munitions out of the weapons cache in six hours of grueling hot work, and the staff and Soldiers of 3rd Brigade agree that Operation Quick Sweep was a success.

"It's clear to me that yesterday's find saved an untold number of U.S. and Coalition Forces' lives," said Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Cady, 70th Eng. Bn. command sergeant major. "They pulled one round out every 20 seconds for about two and a half hours...It was unbelievable."

All in a day's work ...

Raids become routine for 5/7 Cav.

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO



The people behind the insurgency in Iraq are sometimes very educated and very sneaky. Subduing these individuals takes police type tactics, which includes searching buildings, conducting street foot patrols and raiding the houses where suspected insurgents are believed to be staying.

For Soldiers of A Troop, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, raiding houses is one of their everyday tasks.

"The raids normally consist of getting some (intelligence) on the house and the target we are supposed to capture or detain," Sgt. Beau Saucier Dismount, a 5/7 Cav. squad leader. "Basically I will brief my Soldiers on the target's importance, and the basic layout of the building and surrounding property."

The platoon leadership gets everyone involved in the planning to make sure they are all on the same page when the raid goes down.

"Once we receive the intel, and get the guidance on what it is that actually needs to be done," said Sgt. 1st Class Sherman Reynolds, a 5/7 Cav. platoon sergeant. "That's when we actually go into our planning phase. The operation and scheme maneuver is how we are going to conduct the raid."

He continued, "Once we go over it with each other, we bring in the squad leaders and brief them, get any kind of info or suggestions they have and brief it out to the platoon. Normally we will find some little odds and ends that have to be shifted."

Saucier says he doesn't have to guide his Soldiers through the raid, as he trusts their performance from the many raids he has conducted with them.

"I don't go too much in

depth with how we are going to hit it," Saucier said. "They know their job and how they are going to do it. I just give them the basics and they do the rest. They are great, professional Soldiers."

When entering a suspected insurgent's house, the Soldiers have to be prepared for anything.

They never know what kind of situation they are getting themselves into.

"I'm nervous of what I'm going to find, what I'm going to come in contact with," said Pfc. Michael Sankadota, a 5/7 Cav. dismount gunner. "You try to plan ahead, but you really can't. You deal with the situation as they come to you. You train up on how to do things, but you make mistakes. From lessons learned, you go back and do better the next time. Everyday we go out it's a new adventure. There's a lot out there that can happen, but you have to wait for it to come to you."

Many times there are other civilians inside among the suspected insurgents.

The Soldiers have to make the best of the situation and deal with them while still accomplishing their mission.

"If there are women and children and the house, we have to calm them down," Saucier explained. "If we have to ballistically breach the door, it freaks the women and children out."

"When you go in, your adrenalin is already pumping," he added. "When you get in there, it's tedious. You have seen your target on paper, and you're thinking, 'What if his beard has grown out or something?' Then you see him, and snatch him. Picking him out of everyone in the house can be difficult. Normally, if there are a bunch of men in the house, we will go ahead and detain them all, putting special

emphasis on the ones we came for."

The Soldiers on the ground are not alone in the raid.

Other elements are present to offer support in case something doesn't go as planned.

"With every raid, if we have air assets, we have to coordinate through them," Saucier said. "We normally mark the roof, so they know that the building is clear. We cut a chemical light open, and mark a big X with the fluid inside."

The Soldiers agreed that trust is one of the most important factors when going into an unknown situation.

It would be much harder to conduct raids if they could not count on each other's performance.

"Personally what calms me down the most is knowing that my Soldiers are the best at what they do, hands down," Saucier said. "You couldn't ask for better performance in these conditions out of cavalymen."

"I'm confident in our guys doing what they're supposed to be doing," Sankadota said. "We don't worry about each other doing their jobs. I trust our guys 100 percent."

The reason for raiding houses and detaining suspects is part of a bigger picture that will lead to safer environment for the Iraqis when Coalition Forces eventually leave.

The majority of Iraq say they love the new Iraq, they are in charge of their own destiny," said 1st Lt. Joshua Rambo a 5/7 Cav. platoon leader. "But there are those few that are opposed to westerners being here. For whatever their reasons are, they are impeding the progress. In that way the few are hurting many. We look for not only the threat to us but the threat to the Iraqi people. If we can get rid of that threat, Iraq will have a brighter future."



Photos by Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Top: Pfc. Patrick Okane, a 5/7 Cav. dismount, throws blankets off of a dresser as he looks for IED-making materials during a raid May 3. Above: Soldiers from A Troop, 5/7 Cav., listen as 1st Lt. Joshua Rambo explains approach procedures for the raid.



Sgt. Beau Saucier, a 5/7 Cav. team leader, kicks in the door on a suspected insurgents house during the raid.

All together now

U.S. Soldiers work with Iraqis, Macedonians during cordon and search

Spc. Matthew Wester

3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – An hour before dawn, a squad of American and Iraqi Soldiers move across a street to search a house.

A column of American, Iraqi and Macedonian vehicles move into position to cordon off the roads surrounding the town.

This is just the beginning of a long mission to find and seize illegal weapons and munitions to ensure the stability and security of this part of Iraq, just northwest of Baghdad.

Soldiers of 70th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, and 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment teamed up with 1st Battalion, 1st Mechanized Brigade, Iraqi Army and Macedonian Rangers to cordon and search the town of Hor al Bash May 5.

The combined operation of forces from three continents integrated A



Spc. Matthew Wester

Sgt. Casey Torneden and 1st Lt. Daniel L. Colomb check a list of houses to be searched in Hor al Bash.

Company, 70th Eng. with the IA down to the squad level.

"The intent is that a four-man Iraqi Army team searches every house and my Soldiers do the paperwork and documentation as we collect the intelligence," said Capt. Eric Swenson, A Co. commander.

"(A Co.) put an American section or squad with an Iraqi section or squad," said Command Sergeant Major Anthony Cady, 70th Eng. Bn. command sergeant major. "I personally went with two other American Soldiers and eight Iraqi Soldiers and conducted searches of about 25 houses," Cady said.

At each house, an Iraqi Soldier knocked on the door, asked the occupant of the house questions and looked through the house, careful not to destroy any property or disturb the daily activities of the family living inside.

After gathering information, the team moved on to the next house, marking the previous house to ensure the residents weren't searched twice.

The integrated search teams went about their task methodically and professionally, and for the most part didn't meet with any resistance from residents.

"Like any human beings, the Iraqis want to live in a safe and secure environment," Cady said. "When we're out there the anti-Iraqi forces aren't."

On the west side of town, the Macedonian Rangers helped to secure and search alongside Iraqi Soldiers.

The Macedonians, from a country known mostly for being the birthplace of Alexander the Great, contribute a platoon-sized element to stability efforts in Iraq. The Rangers work as part of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

"The Macedonian Ranger Platoon is a very well-trained, well-disciplined outfit," Cady said. "They are highly skilled, technically and tactically competent, and a huge part of our task force."

The integration started with the planning for the operation and input from all the countries involved.

At the final operational meeting the night before the mission, Iraqi and Macedonian officers took their turn briefing the leaders of the units involved, pointing out their planned movements and responsibilities on



Spc. Matthew Wester

Iraqi Soldiers, of the 2nd Mechanized Company, Iraqi Army, man a T-55 tank as 70th Eng. Bn. Soldiers provide security in a M-113 armored personnel carrier during a cordon and search operation in Hor al Bash May 5.

the tactical sand table.

A translator worked tirelessly to overcome the language barrier and maintain the lines of communication.

"During the briefing last night, the Iraqis asked very good questions," Swenson said. "They're thinking tactically, have a grasp of the terrain, and they want to get out and do these operations."

That tactical thinking and focus on the mission produced results, with eight suspects detained in the area assigned to F Troop, 1/11 ACR and a census of the people and buildings in the town completed during the operation.

Cady explained that the detainees had contraband in their houses or were involved with anti-Iraqi forces.

Joint operations like the search of Hor al Bash are part of an ongoing trend in the area around Taji, with 3rd Brigade Soldiers working side-by-side with their Iraqi counterparts and



Sgt. Kevin Bromley

Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Cady interviews a local man to obtain information about terrorists who operate in the area.

other coalition partners.

"As the Iraqi Army becomes more and more proficient, more and more of these types of operations will happen," Cady said. "Soldiers from the U.S. will become more comfortable working with them, and they will become more comfortable working with us."

Topo helps move pieces on battlefield 'chessboard'

Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

If I were to ask 10 Soldiers what they thought the "Topo" section did for 4th Brigade, I would probably get 10 different answers, unless three of those Soldiers were the topographical analysts who work in the section.

"Our mission is to provide terrain analysis to the brigade and supporting units as well as the multinational units," said Sgt. 1st Class Charles Purnell, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the section.

"Topo," as they call their section, helps Soldiers see what's out there, so they don't have to go and find out for themselves.

"We give them eyes before they get on the ground," Purnell said. "We give them the quickest route with the best terrain based on the vehicles they are

driving. We try to get them from point A to point B in the most expedient and safest way."

Sgt. Enrique Villarreal, a native of Indio, Calif., enjoys his job because of the complexity inherent in helping Soldiers by mapping out most of Baghdad and the surrounding areas.

"Whenever I talk to someone I'll ask them if they have maps for their given patrol sector," Villarreal said. "Then I ask them what kind of maps they have, have (they) gotten anything from us? If they haven't then I tell them to stop by, and we will get them something that's going to make their job easier. It's upsetting that sometimes those guys don't stop by. They don't realize how much our products can help them. We can build a product specifically for each mission they do. They think they

"Each piece is only allowed to move in a certain way ... We lay down a map and show people where they can move."

Sgt. Enrique Villarreal
Topographical analyst

are just going to give us something they can get from supply."

Sgt. Gary Worley credits the other topo teams in the division with helping his section to thrive by sharing information and resources.

"More people know about us now, so we are able to help more because people are coming to us, knowing we have the tools to help them succeed," he said.

Purnell, a native of Kansas

City, Mo., started out in an offshoot of topography that has changed much over his 14 years in the Army.

"I've gone from alcohol markers and cotton balls to fix your mistakes, to sticking a disc in a computer and having all the information brought up on the screen," Purnell said.

Villarreal has had to gain quite a bit of new knowledge in his time serving his country as well.

"A lot of people think of war in chessboard terms," Villarreal explained. "Pawns are basic Soldiers, the king is the general. If you want to put our job into that equation, we would be the people who make the chessboard. Each piece is only allowed to move in a certain way. That's what we do. We lay down a map and show people

where they can move."

The role of topo plays a part in keeping Soldiers safe while moving through out Baghdad.

"It's the difference between life or death," Purnell said. "Our products can help save lives because if they can take a route that's less dangerous than Route Irish, that helps them get to their destination 10 minutes earlier, with fewer personnel, less insurgents and less constricted urbanized areas, it lowers the risk. They won't have to deal with the traffic on Irish."

Purnell has a very succinct way of letting people know how their products can help any Soldier:

"Imagine how much better off Jessica Lynch would have been if she had an updated map that showed her exactly where she was at to help her and that convoy not make the wrong turn."

Operation Commando Brickyard underway

Spc. Maria Mengrone
100th MPAD

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from Task Force 1-41 Infantry, 1st Armor Division assigned to 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division kicked off Operation Commando Brickyard to flush out insurgents in the suburb of Abu Ghraib.

“The mission is to infiltrate the area with a strong military presence in order to weed out and deter anti-Iraqi forces that may be hiding there” said 1st Lt. Jason M. Alexander, C Company, fire support officer, TF 1-41.

The operation is a joint effort between U.S., Estonian and Iraqi Army troops working toward a common goal of securing the area by conducting house to house searches for weapons and bomb making materials and setting up arbitrary observation points on major roadways and rooftops to monitor suspicious activities.

“Task Force 1-41 is making some progress in the area,” Alexander said. “We found a barrel buried in the ground full of weapons, ammunition, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades. We are also starting to spot their improvised explosive devices before they can be set off.”

During the initial surge period into the area, Soldiers of 1-41 worked extended shifts and rolled through the sector in mechanized convoys consisting of M1A1 Abrams tanks, M2 Bradley fighting vehicles, M113 armored personnel carrier and up-armored humvees.

Soldiers in 1-41 are aware that the AIF are continuously observing and planning their next attack.

“We try not to set a pattern by using the same routes during our patrols,” Alexander said. “The idea is to show strength in force and numbers and discourage further attacks against Soldiers.”

“We see insurgent activities spike then decline throughout other areas, but Abu Ghraib for the most part remains constant with insurgent activities,” said Cpt. Andrew D. Swedlow, assistant intelligence officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

Abu Ghraib is the western entrance into Baghdad and although a large part of the population in the area is Sunni Muslim and the majority in the west are



Photos by Spc. Maria Mengrone

During a routine stop in the Abu Ghraib neighborhood, a 1-41 Soldier maintains a watchful position of the surrounding area to deter any anti-Iraqi forces.

Shiite Muslim, insurgent activities are widespread throughout both areas, Swedlow said.

Even ousted president Saddam Hussein couldn't control the residents of Abu Ghraib.

Mostly, the area is rampant with opportunists looking to make fast money to support their families because of the high unemployment rate, he said.

“Currently, civil military operation projects are underway to get the people jobs so that (they) aren't out emplacing improvised explosive devices,” he said.

The operation will continue with “steady state operations” which includes continuous shift rotations and constant monitoring and scanning of the area to reinforce the military presence in the area.

Iraqi police stations are present in the region, their role in the overall mission is important in maintaining the



Soldiers of TF 1-41 Inf., 2/10 Mtn. conduct a routine patrol on an M1A1 Abrams tank during Operation Commando Brickyard.

area, Swedlow said. “We would like to see more Iraqi police patrolling the area.”

“I hope it (the operation) let's the population see that we are trying to help them,” he said. “When they see

a Soldier out in their area and realize we are not going to leave them then they will be more willing to come out and start sharing information with us about the guys who are causing trouble in their neighborhood.”

ISOPREP provides positive ID, security for TF Baghdad Soldiers

Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick
DSB PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — On December 17, 1981, Red Brigade terrorists kidnapped Brig. Gen. James L. Dozier from his apartment in Verona, Italy.

Dozier, the highest ranking U.S. NATO officer in Italy, was rescued January 28,

1982 in Padua, Italy, by elements from the Nucleo Operativo Centrale di Sicurezza, an elite Italian anti-terrorist police unit.

Dozier looked nothing like his pictures after 42 days in captivity. The clean-shaven face and flat-top hair cut were camouflaged by a full beard and long hair.

How can rescuers be sure they have the right person if

their features have been altered?

Pfc. Ebony N. Davis, the mail and awards clerk for the Brigade Troops Battalion, Division Support Brigade, said in emergency cases, the units use the Isolated Personnel Report to identify Soldiers who've been detained for a long period.

If something happens to prevent a captured person

from being recognized, they will use the information stored in the ISOPREP system, said the Raceland, La., native, who works in the battalion's personnel section.

Spc. Sarah E. Meyer, a signal intelligence analyst with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, DSB, 3rd Infantry Division, said ISOPREP is a collection of information concerning a Soldier's personal life that is not recorded anywhere.

“We don't want them to use anything in their military records that could be readily available,” Meyer said.

Capt. Kenneth A. Hoisington, BTB's adjutant, said his human resource Soldiers work in conjunction with the intelligence section to ensure 100 percent of the servicemembers have provided the required information. The intelligence section takes the finger prints and they collect the written data.

The Soldiers going through ISOPREP provide four short scenarios, such as first romantic crush or first car, as well as a code number that they might remember under duress, said Meyer.

Hoisington, from Hinesville, Ga., said it's for the protection of the Soldiers who are out there.

Staff Sgt. Manuel G. Maisonet, the BTB personnel noncommissioned officer in charge, said his section started collecting the information and taking unit member's photos for their files while they were still in Fort Stewart, Ga.

“We have units that were attached to us that didn't do it before coming,” said Cpl. Graciella M. Campos, a BTB human resource sergeant.

The section built files on the 550th Area Support Medical Company, one of DSB's newly attached units, while in Kuwait, said Maisonet, who hails from Barceloneta, Puerto Rico. They took care of getting the 3rd Battalion, 117th Field Artillery Regiment, Alabama National Guard, when they joined the BTB here.

Maionet said Soldiers aren't the only ones his section takes care of. There are nearly 15 civilians working with his unit that also are placed in the data base.

Campos, who comes from Miami, Fl., said it was the first time she'd ever processed this type of data.

ISOPREP is not new to the military, Meyer said, Special Operations groups have already been using the system.



Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick

Staff Sgt. Manuel G. Maisonet, right, the battalion administration section noncommissioned officer in charge, takes photos to be used in an ISOPREP packet.



IP recruits are lined up by the academy instructors, where they will be in-processed into the Baghdad Police Academy to begin the eight-week training course.

Upholders of the law

Iraqi Police recruits 300 to join ranks in Baghdad

Spc Chris Foster
256th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD — Three hundred Iraqi men took the final step to becoming members of the Iraqi Police force April 19.

Two hundred and nine Iraqi Police recruits were manifested through the 256th Brigade Combat Team Military Police platoon and the remaining 91 recruits were manifested through other brigade combat teams in the 3rd Infantry Division.

These men went through all the necessary screening showing that they are serious about the commitments and sacrifices that they will face as IPs.

With the support of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 256th BCT's military police, the IPs made substantial progress as the number of volunteers grows with each recruiting drive.

The recruits volunteered for the force March 28.

At that time, those who passed the screening process received a letter stating they were accepted into the academy, and given a time and place for the next phase of training.

Staff Sgt. David Billings, an MP platoon sergeant from Lafayette, La., said the recent turnout was more than the platoon expected.

"The recruits are really dedicated to their training and they are taking their job seriously," Billings said.

The 3rd Inf. Div.'s effort to add new members to the police force is obvious in the number of recruits that are in police academy and working at the police stations in Baghdad.

They are using the training to uphold the law in the streets of Iraq.

The training is an eight-week course, which is the recruits' first step into law enforcement.

The IPs are trained by military police and Department of Defense police instructors who provide the candidates with the basics of police training.

Their goal is for the recruits to be equipped with the basic aspects of law enforcement by the time they leave the academy.

The training began with the classes on the new IP mission, philosophy and role as law enforcement officials.

Later on in the course the recruits gain a basic understanding of weapon systems, which leads into strenuous live-fire situations.

The challenge is to make good decisions to keep the recruit safe while protecting those around them and to stress the importance of maintaining situational awareness at all times.

The recruits perfect their shooting skills on the firing range, rehearse the tactical and proper way to apprehend a suspect, and maintain self defense skills.

They also attend classes that cover different situations which require the recruit to think and give input on what they think needs to be done in these events.

As the students progress in their training, they become more confident in themselves and their fellow officers.

One to two new classes begin each month.

The Iraqi Police Academy remains full because of the Iraqis' desire to help their country in its fight for a better life.

Ministry of Agriculture growing again as Iraqi infrastructure improves

Spc. Jennifer Fitts
100th MPAD

BAGHDAD – Improvised explosive devices often damage more than the intended targets, including offices vital to the restoration and growth of Iraq's governmental infrastructure.

The vehicle-borne IED targeted at the Al-Sadeer Hotel in downtown Baghdad was one such incident.

On the morning of March 9, insurgents posing as Iraqi policemen pounded on a gate blocking off a parking area between the Ministry of Agriculture building and the hotel, saying they needed help.

When the gate was opened, a garbage truck loaded with explosives was driven in and detonated by more insurgents.

The VBIED damaged the hotel badly, blowing doors out of their frames and shattering windows.

The explosion also destroyed the power generator for the Ministry of Agriculture building, leaving three to four hundred people in the dark and affecting, in one way or another, the approximately 11,000 ministry employees nationwide.

Now, even though evidence of the blast still remains visible as a greasy black circle, piles of shattered aluminum window frames in the parking lot and hanging ceiling tiles twirling in the breeze in the Al-Sadeer lobby, the ministry's lights are coming back on thanks to the donation of a powerful new generator.

"We've been working on this since about three days after the attack," said Sgt. 1st Class Warner J. Stadler, a Texas Army National Guard Soldier attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, referring to the replacement generator.

The Ministry of Agriculture is a vital part in the revitalization of Iraq's economy.

Operation Amber Waves, one of the projects Stadler is involved with, aims to assist the ministry with programs to help farmers recover from years of damaging subsidies from the former Saddam Hussein regime as well as lingering

damage from the Iran-Iraq war, including crop dusting, and building farmer's cooperatives.

"Rebuilding the capacity to serve and promote agriculture is one of the goals of Operation Amber Waves," Stadler said. "When the MOA's national headquarters building was damaged in the bombing attack against the Al-Sadeer Hotel, this was a big setback."

Stadler arranged financing for the generator purchase through the Commander's Emergency Response Program, a program dedicated to easing the impact of combat operations on the country's infrastructure.

Valued at around \$300,000 dollars, Stadler said this replacement generator is able to supply all the power needs of the ministry until Baghdad's power grid can provide 24 hour electricity.

"We've allowed some room for growth," in the demands on the generator, said Stadler, carefully selecting the best generator for the extreme conditions found in Iraq.

Rather than just randomly picking out a generator, Stadler and 3rd Inf. Div.'s effects coordination center consulted with an expert from Kellogg, Brown & Root who looked at the electrical wiring in the ministry building to make sure a generator was chosen that could handle the required load and the extreme desert temperatures.

After determining the best generator, Stadler and the effects coordination center presented bids to the 3rd Inf. Div. command group, and detailed the effects of the loss of power on the MOA's overall activities.

The generator was delivered March 20, by 612th Engineer Battalion, an Ohio National Guard unit attached to the 3rd Inf. Div.

The narrow street leading to the ministry building which was littered with cement barriers proved to be no match for the two drivers towing the generator

"Rebuilding the capacity to ... promote agriculture is one of the goals of Operation Amber Waves"

Sgt. 1st Class Warner J. Stadler
HHSC, STB

and the fuel tank.

In some places, power lines and network cables had to be held out of the way with long pieces of wood while the truck carrying the 12-foot tall generator crept

towards the parking lot.

The drivers of the two tractor-trailers were a bit daunted by the small gate leading to the parking lot, but got through the opening with some careful maneuvering, creative backing and a lot of determination.

At 33 feet long, with several feet of the generator hanging off the back of the low trailer, making the tight turn a true test of skill.

Ministry employees and security guards gathered to observe the installation of the generator, some offering helpful suggestions, others simply watching from windows and rooftops.

Several contractors were on hand to help muscle the generator into place after being lifted off the trailer with a crane. The generator was heavy enough to lift the front two axles of the crane truck off the ground while men pushed and shoved the monster in mid-air.

The new generator, more powerful

than the destroyed one, will sit in the same place the old generator sat, the steel beams of the old housing warped and twisted by the VBIED blast.

Although there are some security concerns about the placement of the generator, more cement barriers and guards, added since the attack, makes the prospect of a second attack less likely, said Stadler.

Although getting the generator in the parking lot was quite a challenge itself, Stadler said the entire generator donation process was a bit daunting.

Not only was there the mountain of paperwork and coordinating instructions to deal with, but also the two delivery trucks can make a tempting target for insurgents.

Sometimes, contractors hired to help install projects have to worry about being targeted simply for working with American forces.

It's not easy, but Stadler enjoys not only the challenges of helping rebuild the infrastructure of Iraq, but the rewards as well.

"It is very gratifying when we are given the opportunity to do something that makes a difference in many peoples lives. By providing a power generator for the Ministry of Agriculture, we help them regain their productivity in support of the agricultural infrastructure," Stadler said.



Iraqi contractors unload a new generator, delivered by 612th Eng. Bn., at the Ministry of Agriculture building in downtown Baghdad.

Spc. Jennifer Fitts

Easter service a bright spot for Orthodox Christians

Spc. Jennifer Fitts
100th MPAD

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – A priest wearing a brilliant gold robe slowly circles an altar draped with a bright white cloth while Soldiers and civilians hold lit candles and sing softly, “Lord have mercy.”

The bells on the silver incense censer he swings ring brightly, and the sweet smoke floats across the sanctuary. A Marine non-commissioned officer, wearing a long black cassock, assists the priest by singing parts of the service.

Orthodox Christian Soldiers and civilians in the Camp Liberty and Camp Victory South areas celebrated Pascha, Orthodox Easter, with services at the South Victory chapel May 5. Pascha was May 1 this year.

Soldiers from 2/10th Mountain Division, 3rd Infantry Division, and from the Ukraine, as well as other units, participated in the service, known as a Paschal Liturgy. Two visiting chaplains observed the service.

Chaplain (Maj.) Peter M. Dubinin, an Army Reserve chaplain from Woodlawn, Tenn., celebrated Orthodox Easter services in northern Iraq during the week after Orthodox Easter, known to Orthodox Christians as Bright Week.

Two other Orthodox chaplains were also in theater, making this Pascha even more special for deployed Orthodox. This is the first Pascha since Vietnam that Orthodox chaplains from all three services have been in theater at the same time.

Navy Chaplain (Lt.) Eugene Wozniak celebrated with Orthodox Christian service members in the south of Iraq, while Air Force Chaplain (Lt. Col.) John Stefero celebrated around the Persian Gulf.

“This is for Orthodox Christians the very climax of all that God has done to effect our salvation,” Dubinin

said to explain the importance of Pascha. Paschal liturgies are celebrated every day during Bright Week, reaffirming the importance of Easter in the Orthodox Christian church.

Though he enjoyed the Liturgy, “more important is the opportunity to partake in confession and communion,” said 1st Sgt. Jeffrey T. East, acting Command Sgt. Maj. of the 2/15th Field Artillery Regiment from Ft. Drum, N.Y. “It allows you the opportunity to unburden your soul and celebrate in your faith.”

“The liturgy was extremely uplifting,” said East, “My faith is extremely important and is my strength during the deployment.”

“One would be hard pressed to maintain strength of spirit without the Sacraments. The Liturgy is central to the most important Sacrament – the Eucharist,” said Maj. Bill Papanastasiou, Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

Due to the differences between Orthodox and Western church calendars, Orthodox Christians celebrated Easter almost five weeks after Catholic and Protestant Easter.

For many of the Soldiers attending the Liturgy, this was the first Orthodox service they had been able to attend since deploying from Ft. Stewart, Ga. and Ft. Drum, N.Y.

“I attended a few (Liturgies) in Kosovo, in 2001. This was the first time on a military installation, though,” said Special Agent Cooper Tieaskie, 48th Military Police Detachment, Criminal Investigations Division.

There are no hard numbers for the number of Orthodox in military, but there are only 35 Orthodox chaplains in all three services, including active duty and reserve components, and Orthodox Christians may find themselves alone during important church

holy days.

“It is... frustrating to the Orthodox Soldier when it seems they don’t get the support they need for an Orthodox priest to come and minister to them the Holy Sacraments of the Church,” said Dubinin.

Participating in the Liturgical life of the Church, such as Confession and Communion can be very difficult for deployed Soldiers, said Papanastasiou.

It is difficult to find Orthodox services due to the limited Orthodox priests in the Army, however the biggest challenge is to keep the lent during the holy days due to the physical demands of deployment,” said East.

Part of the challenge of ministering to deployed Soldiers involves helping Soldiers’ chains of command “understand what an Orthodox Christian is and why services provided to the Protestant and Roman Catholic Soldiers just don’t meet their spiritual needs,” said Dubinin.

Orthodox chaplains have to balance their time between the needs of their unit and the needs of Orthodox Soldiers, said Dubinin, and that can be difficult.

“I was fortunate this time around in that my commander was very supportive for me to serve Pascha and Bright Week for the Orthodox service members within the area of operation,” he said.

Dubinin also got support from the Multi-National Corps-Iraq chaplain’s office.

“I let them know where I wanted to celebrate services and they, along with chaplains in the designated locations, made all the arrangements,” he said. “The tricky part was the air transportation.”

“There was only one day I had difficulty getting out of the location. Even so, I made it in time to conduct the service,” he said.

Reserve chaplains can be deployed for between six and 18 months. Dubinin will be in theater for four and half months before returning home, and will return to theater after a six month rotation as a chaplain for the rear detachment for a deployed unit.

Asked about his reward for leaving family and friends for several months, Dubinin said “In the chaplain corps, we have a saying that characterizes what a chaplain does; to bring God to the Soldier, and the Soldier to God. When, by the grace of God, I am able to do this, I fulfill my calling as a chaplain.”



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker
Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Dubinin, prepares the Eucharist. The Eucharist is the body and blood of Christ used in Communion during Orthodox liturgy.



Above: An Orthodox Soldier holds a candle during the Pascha service. The flame of the candle represents the light of Christ returning to the world after His Resurrection.

Right: Maj. Bill Papanastasiou, HHSC, receives Communion, for the remission of sins and eternal life, from Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Dubinin.



**Do you have a creative idea for something new in
The Marne Express?
Do you have a funny or exceptional photo
you want to show people?
If so, contact brenda.benner@id3.army.mil
All submissions are welcome and valued!**

Soldiers celebrate on Cinco de Mayo

Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers celebrated Cinco De Mayo with live music and celebration at the 3rd Infantry Division Morale, Welfare and Recreation complex May 5.

An informative program, "A Celebration of Liberation" was presented by the Equal Opportunity Office and featured the 3rd Inf. Div. band 'Latin Heat' which played two sets of Latin music.

After the first musical performance, information regarding the historical significance of Cinco de Mayo was presented by Capt. Edgardo Soste and Sgt. 1st Class Belinda Rhanes.

The program continued with a poetry reading in Spanish by Kellog, Brown and Root employee Virginia Rodriguez.

Sgt. 1st Class Belinda Rhanes, 3rd Inf. Div. non-commissioned officer in charge of MWR, explained that Cinco de Mayo, translated as the 5th of May, commemorates the victory of the Mexicans over the French army at the Battle of Puebla in 1862. It is primarily a regional holiday celebrated in the Mexican state of Puebla.

The program continued with a trivia pursuit game led by the EOO NCOIC, Master Sgt. Silvia Marchan in which the winners became contestants in a piñata bash.

Each contestant was blindfolded and spun around before their repeated attempts to strike the treat-laden piñata box.

Spc. Leonel C. Garza, Headquarters and

Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion, of Mc Allen, Texas, delivered the final lethal blows that broke the piñata open, releasing a wide assortment of candy, sunglasses and several gift certificates.

In piñata party tradition, Soldiers scrambled to the floor grabbing for the goodies as fast as they could.

"For me, Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of heritage and family," Garza said. "We get together to bar-b-cue and see long-lost relatives or catch up with our close relatives. To me, family is most important. This holiday personifies it for me."

Sgt. Ketty Wilson Gonzalez, B Company, 210th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, said, "It's great to feel a little of our Latin culture here in Iraq. It keeps my morale high. To remember Cinco de Mayo and celebrate together with my fellow Soldiers is special."

Fuegos Latinos closed the celebration with a second set of popular highly energetic Latin music.

Soldiers clapped their hands and tapped their toes with the beat, not wanting the evening to end.

Oddly enough, Cinco de Mayo has become more of a Chicano holiday than a Mexican one.

Cinco de Mayo is celebrated on a much larger scale in the southern portion of the United States than it is in Mexico.

Millions of people, even those not of Mexican descent, celebrate this significant day with parades, mariachi music, dancing, traditional food and other types of festive activities.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker

Spc. Leonel C. Garza, HHOC, STB, finally won his battle with the stubborn piñata, releasing candy and several gift certificates for the crowd to enjoy at the Cinco de Mayo celebration.



Above: Soldiers and civilians celebrating Cinco de Mayo choose their favorite candies after the piñata was broken. Right: Pfc. Angel Gonzalez, trumpet section leader Sgt. William Baez and Staff Sgt. Javier Solivan, energize the crowd by singing traditional and contemporary Latino songs for the Cinco de Mayo celebration.



Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Benner

Spc. Matthew Shuck lays down the rhythm for the specialty band, Fuego Latino. The band's much-appreciated performance had Soldiers clapping their hands and tapping their toes to the beat.

Thinking about reenlisting?

This may be your only chance to receive a bonus, change your military occupational specialty or get the duty station you've always wanted.

To find out if you're eligible for all the benefits of a reenlistment, talk to your unit career counselor. They are the experts on reenlistment policy. Don't trust the "barracks lawyers" or you may miss out on up to \$15,000 tax free!

Bonuses are for ANY MOS All Soldiers E-3 and above, regardless of estimated time of separation, and with less than 14 years active federal service may reenlist and receive a bonus up to \$15,000:

Zone A

- Between 17 months (continuous) and six Years active federal service
- E-4 and above; some E-3s are eligible
- Never received a Zone A bonus before

Zone B

- Between six and 10 Years active federal service
- E-5 and above only; E-4s are not eligible for Zone B
- Never received a Zone B bonus before

Zone C

- Between 10 and 14 Years active federal service
- E-5 & above only
- Never received a Zone C bonus before
- Zone C is paid up to the 16th year of service

Marne Medical Mentor

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

Have a Marne-velous EML with these tips

Senior Medical Staff
Special Troops Battalion

Medical Care

If near a military base go to their clinic or emergency room.

To avoid a bill for medical care from a NON-MILITARY medical facility you must either:

Call your home-station Tricare office for authorization to be seen at a civilian hospital or clinic

Or call Tricare national toll free number (877)363-6337 or access their website at www.tricare.osd.mil.

Tell any doctor who treats you that you've recently been living in Iraq/ SW Asia

Fatigue and Driving

Being tired impairs your driving just as much as drinking.

Get enough sleep before long drives and stop for naps if needed.

Plan ahead for driving trips. Remind yourself of safety when driving.

Relating to Others

If you have been out of the forward operating base frequently, you may find you do not enjoy being in crowds or busy places.

If you have spent a lot of time alone during deployment, you may want to be around people.

Either one is normal. Enjoy your leave and relax.

Your Significant Relationships

Being home for two weeks is not enough

time for reintegrating.

Your short EML may not be time to fix existing, unresolved relationship issues.

You may need to wait until after your reintegration during final home coming.

Your Flight To and From Home

Long travel in association with dehydration, lack of movement, and recently damaged leg veins can result in a blood clot in the leg.

Take an aspirin before your flight.

During the flight drink plenty of water and get up out of your seat often to allow better blood circulation in your legs.

Report any pains in your calf or trouble breathing in the weeks right after your trip.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Abstinence is the only method that is 100 percent proven to prevent STD's.

If you intend to engage in sexual activities, protect yourself and your partner with a condom.

Alcohol

Use alcohol in moderation.

If you drink alcohol, ensure you use a designated driver-NEVER drink and drive.

Too much alcohol may negatively affect your behavior around others.

DO NOT allow alcohol to ruin your leave or your military career.

Stress

Need emotional help? Call Army One Source for free counsel at (800)464-8107, available 24 hours a day, or get online assistance at www.armyonesource.com.



rocky's hydrant

... where we listen to what you have to say!

If you want to be heard, e-mail: brenda.benner@id3.army.mil

Dear Rocky,

What's the hold up with the toilets in the D-MAIN building?

We can put a man on the moon and oust Saddam Hussein, but we can't repair the toilets so they will flush?

There must be military plumbers somewhere on this multi-camp complex with all of the engineers running around.

Someone please help! I'm developing Carpal Tunnel syndrome from battling with these stubborn toilets.

-Disgruntled flusher

Dear Rocky,

It's embarrassing enough for us to have to dump all our dirty clothes out on a counter before we turn them in, but it's even worse when the clothes can't be contained on the tiny counter space provided, and laundry falls all over the floor - where there is hardly room to stand, much less bend over to pick up stray socks. The laundry personnel, however, seem to have an overly large workspace. This is a bit backward to me.

Is there any way to get a bigger laundry trailer (with space for more than two people to stand inside at once), or at least flip that table around,

so those of us who need the room will have it?

-Claustrophobic

Dear Rocky,

After working 12-plus hours a day, then getting a fairly good night's rest and perhaps some PT, I'm usually pretty hungry in the morning and believe that breakfast IS the most important meal of the day. Some days more so, because my duty schedule and commitments forces me to miss lunch. So, I'm walking down the road between LSA 17 and the DFAC, there is a brisk breeze coming from the west, and BAM, it hits me - that awful stench from the sewage trucks collecting our deposits from the wonderful meals we have so indulged.

I sometimes find myself losing my appetite when this happens! Not only that, they like to start pouring water all over the road, just to keep the dust down, but in the long run, it just makes a mess for everyone having to walk through the stuff.

I would like to know why all these service trucks have to service our area first thing in the morning, when we have no other alternate route to get to and from the DFAC? It would be nice if those who

schedule these services could be a little more sensitive to Soldiers and our limited meal schedules at the DFAC.

So, please, could some of these services be postponed until after breakfast hours? It sure would start my morning off on a more pleasant note.

-Snap, Crackle, Poop

Dear Rocky,

I'd like to ask why the servers in the mess hall have to put so much food on our plate. Even when I ask for a small portion, they fill up the entire section of the plate.

All one has to do is look at the Soldiers at the trash bins to see how much food is wasted. It is wrong to waste so much food.

My questions are: Do the mess hall servers get paid by the pound?

Does KBR make so much profit per pound of food that they encourage their workers to pile it on?

Possible solution: Put a smaller amount of food on a plate. If the Soldiers want more, they will speak up.

-Too Much

If you know (or are) someone who can help these individuals, tell us! Send e-mail to: brenda.benner@id3.army.mil

DESERT JUSTICE

U.S. citizenship attainable

Capt. Uma Nagaraj

Legal Assistance Chief, MND-B OSJA

Congratulations on making the important decision to apply for U.S. citizenship.

This article will give you a brief overview of the process.

First, do you qualify? At this time any person who is actively serving in the military automatically becomes immediately eligible to apply for citizenship.

You must be serving honorably. You must have either been lawfully admitted as a permanent resident or have been physically present in the US or a qualifying territory at the time or your enlistment, re-enlistment, or induction.

Second, do you possess good moral character?

This is very important. Do not lie at your interview or on your application. There are several questions about committing crimes. You should answer these truthfully even though they may be sealed or expunged.

If you do not tell the truth, USCIS may deny your citizen application. If you are granted naturalization and USCIS later discovers that you have lied, your citizenship may be revoked.

If you meet all the eligibility requirements, then it is time to apply.

First you must fill out the application. You can download the application from the USCIS website

(www.uscis.gov) or obtain an application from the Judge Advocate General office or PSB. PSB will help you complete all the application requirements including Form N-426 which is the certificate of military service.

You will also be required to submit fingerprints and photographs. Fingerprints can be taken at PSB or at some MP companies on Victory South. Photographs can be obtained at the PX.

As of October 2004, there is no application fee for military applicants applying for naturalization based on service. Once you have completed and submitted the application, the waiting begins.

No one can tell for certain you how long the wait will be. Factors such as criminal history, name issues, and military history, can delay the processing of your application.

Understand this is an INDIVIDUAL process. It is up to you to keep track of your application. You can do so on the USCIS website. If USCIS asks you to provide additional documentation, do so as soon as feasible. Pay very close attention to everything that USCIS sends you and follow instructions to the

letter.

If you have any questions about what USCIS wants, please contact USCIS or JAG for help. Typically, a packet takes from three to six months to get through this part of the process. If there is something unusual in your file, it can take longer than a year.

After some time, you will receive notice that you have an interview. If you cannot make your interview appointment (because, for example you are deployed!), you must notify USCIS.

Send an e-mail message including your name, Alien Number, Social Security Number, date of birth, e-mail address, country where you are located, and when you believe

that you will be returning home to rome.natz@dhs.gov.

In addition, you should mail a copy of your orders along with the notice back to the place where your interview is scheduled.

Attend your interview. Bring any documentation that USCIS requests. When you attend your interview you will be asked questions about yourself and your application.

Again, do not lie. USCIS can view lying as worse than the concealed fact. During the interview, you must demonstrate knowledge of US Government and History. You will be tested. The USCIS website can help you study for the test and even offers you flashcards. You may be asked to read or write to test your basic knowledge of English.

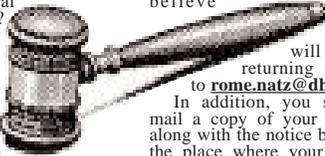
After the interview, your application for US citizenship will be granted, continued or denied. You may be able to get sworn in immediately if your application is granted.

If your case is continued, USCIS may need additional documentation or investigation. If your application is denied, you will receive a written notice explaining why. Your letter will explain how to appeal the decision.

Finally, you will take an oath of citizenship and receive your naturalization certificate. Do not lose this or send the original anywhere. Congratulations! You are now a citizen.

Now for the hopeful news: Multi-National Division — Baghdad is working with Corps and CENTCOM to bring USCIS to theatre. At this time, there are no firm dates. However, we are tentatively planning for something in AO Baghdad in the next three months.

If you have not already done so, please submit your information to PSB. The Marne Express will let everyone know as soon as we receive notice from higher up on USCIS activities in Iraq. If you have any questions, please come see legal assistance.



Chaplain's Corner

What is worth giving your all?

Division Chaplain's Office

Special to The Marne Express

One of my favorite songs is sung by Ray Boltz and is entitled "What If I Give All?"

The song tells the story of a young boy who heard a preacher say, "A dime would feed a hungry child."

The little boy pulled out a dollar and asked his mother how many that would feed.

She smiled and replied that a dollar would feed ten.

Without any hesitation the little boy reached back into his pocket and pulled out three dollars, the sum total of all his money. He then asked, "What if I give all? What would that gift do?"

His mother answered, "My child, a gift like that would change the world, it would feed the multitudes."

The final verse of the song pictures God the Father and His Son, Jesus, looking down on humankind.

They are experiencing pain because of the mess we've made of our lives and the gift of His creation.

Then Jesus looks at the Father and asks the question: "What if I give all? What would that gift do?"

The Father answers, "My Son, a gift like that will change the world, it will free the multitudes."

This is a powerful song. It draws a beautiful picture of God's love for all people.

In addition, it shows how we should love each other.

Like the little boy, we should reach back in our pocket and give all we have.

It's obvious that some things are so precious the decision to give all seems to be natural.

Some things are worth all we have. For the little boy in the song it was feeding hungry children.

What's worth your all? Or even closer to home, what's worth my all?

This is an important question and not as easy to answer as you may think.

There are influences all around us willing,

even anxious, to educate us about what is really worth our all: the clothes we wear, the car we drive, the shape of our bodies, who we hang out with, where we live, how much money we make, the speed of our computer, the level of our education, the school we attended, the rank on our collar, and the list goes on and on.

Some people would have us believe these are the important things in life. They encourage us to give our all to ensure we get them.

Are they right? Should we give our all for the things listed above, the things our society sometimes elevates above all else?

I don't think so.

The important stuff, the stuff we should give "our all" for, are the things most of us take for granted — things like placing God on the throne of our lives, convincing our spouse we really do love him or her above all others, taking time to be with our children, and dedicating time and energy to become men and women of God.

It's so easy to get confused, or even worse, to be deceived.

We all want to be good at what we do. We want to excel, to be considered the best, or at least a success.

If you're like me, you steal from the important things in life to give to the mundane.

What a tragic mistake and waste of our energy. We must be very careful as to what we choose to give our all.

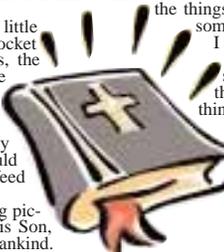
Let us pray!

Lord help us! Open our eyes and help us distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, treasure and trash.

Help us prioritize our lives to honor You and all the important things You have given us. Teach us to cherish our families and friends, to understand the value of invested time in someone else's life.

Give us compassionate hearts, sharp minds, strong bodies, and wills which are submissive to You.

Lord, forgive our stubbornness and stupidity. And above all else, make us wise as we choose the important things in life which are worth "our all."



Rhythm of the Marne

With the 3rd Infantry Division firmly in authority of Task Force Baghdad, the 3rd Inf. Div. band, the "Rhythm of the Marne," is operational and available to provide musical and ceremonial support throughout the division's footprint, including all assigned and attached units.

The band is capable of providing several diverse musical ensembles to include ceremonial band, stage band, Latin band, jazz combo, rock combo, R&B combo, trombone quartet, brass quintet, solo piano and ceremonial bugler.

The unit also encompasses the Division Color Guard.

Contact Information

*Sgt. 1st Class Chapman,
Operations Supervisor:*

DSN: (318) 847 2337

NIPR:

franklin.chapman@id3.army.mil

*Staff Sgt. Powell, Operations
NCOIC*

DSN: (318) 847 2338

NIPR: lance.powell@id3.army.mil

Chief Warrant Officer 3

Catchings, Commander:

DSN: (318) 847 2307

Cell: 0790 193 2101

NIPR:

fred.catchings@id3.army.mil

In Memory of ...

Staff Sgt. William J. Brooks, 1/64 Armor
Sgt. Kenya A. Parker, STB

Spc. Stephen P. Saxton, 1/3 ACR
Pvt. Charles Cooper, 2/14 Inf.



Ready to rumble

Boxer uses Army training, discipline, determination both in and out of ring

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
Avn. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – During the hot afternoon hours in the motor pool of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (General Support) a Soldier sits in a small trailer, cramped inside a room where just stretching his legs become a chore.

The sweat beads up under his brows as he types on the computer keyboard, recording and tracking vehicle parts. Patience, composure and self-control are all practiced in the confines of this little room.

Fast forward a few hours later: The same Soldier is in the fitness center and has gone from composed to intense in the matter of minutes. The Soldier now focuses his energy on a heavy bag; every blow a concentrated and calculated strike.

This is the life of Sgt. Eric K. Eshun 2/3's Headquarters and Headquarters Company, logistics specialist by day, boxer in training by night.

Eshun's interest in boxing began when he first joined the Army in 1999. He would watch the boxing matches that he never saw on television while he was growing up in Seabrook, Maryland.

"The way that people show interest in basketball or football and know players and their stats, that's how I know boxing," said the 5-foot 11-inch tall athlete. "Watching great boxers like Roy Jones Jr., Felix Trinidad and Oscar De la Hoya got me really interested."

His interest in boxing led to him buying a pair of gloves and train like the boxers he emulated. After being deployed here to Taji, Eshun saw a flyer for Friday night fights at the gym.

When he saw the flyer, he knew it was something he had to do, Eshun said. "I wanted to be able to say that I wasn't just a spectator to the sport I love so much. I wanted to be a participant at least once and maybe even have some fun at the same time."

As long as his schedule allows him, Eshun tries to get to the gym every night in order to train for his match.

His routine begins by running on the treadmill for at least three miles, followed by some push-ups and heavy bag work.

The 190-pound athlete maxes his Army Physical Fitness tests, but knows that training is still essential in order to match up in the ring.

"I'm in the Heavyweight class, so there could be some pretty strong guys



Spc. Derek Del Rosario
Sgt. Eric K. Eshun, HHC 2/3 GSAB, hits the heavy bag while training for a match. He is the only Soldier in his battalion to participate in Camp Taji's Friday Night Fights.

in my class," he said. "I think endurance will be the key. As long as I don't get tired and can last the rounds, I think I will be alright."

Eshun draws upon some of his characteristics in the motor pool to help him in his training by using the same hard-work attitude.

As part of his job, Eshun orders parts for the vehicles and mounted weapons of the 2/3 GSAB. He also helps in the maintenance of vehicle deficiencies and the dispatching of trucks.

Eshun always keeps his mind on the mission, and he plans to use his commitment to the mission to remind him to stay focused on training.

"The (battalion's) mission can't get

accomplished without transportation. My job is to stay focused on the maintenance of these vehicles," said Eshun. "I am very determined when it comes to my job, and I want to transfer that determination to my training to help me in the ring."

Win or lose his fight, Eshun knew that participating in this event was something he had to do. For him, it wasn't an issue of victory, respect or pride, but rather an issue of character.

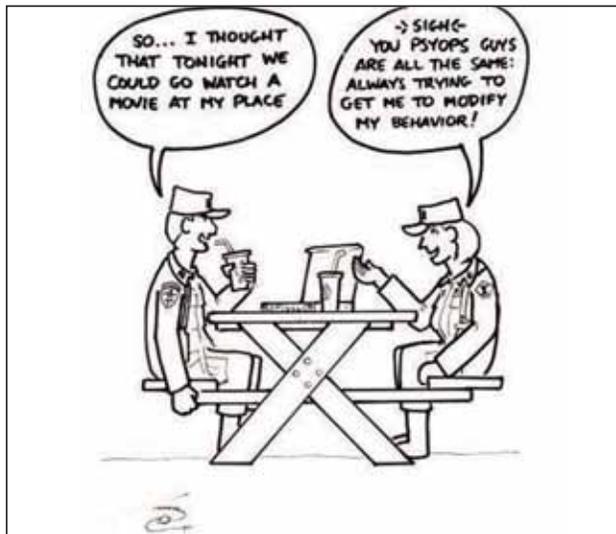
"I wanted to prove to myself that I can do it," Eshun said. "I know there are some skilled boxers out there, but it's not so much about winning or losing. I'm going out there and give it my all for those three rounds and prove to myself what I am made of."

Camp Liberty MWR weekend 10K a runaway hit



Courtesy photos
Above: Spc. Derrick Jackson, HHC, 612th Engineer Battalion, with a time of 36 minutes, 51 seconds, won first place in the 21- to 27-year-old group, and Spc. Emiliano Perez, E Troop, 101st Cavalry Regiment, 36 minutes, 47 seconds, came in first place in the 17- to 20-year-old group in the MWR 10-kilometer run. The winners were awarded a commanding general's coin, a certificate of achievement signed by the of Multi-National Division-Baghdad commander, a phone card and a free meal at Burger King.
Left: Participants in the 10K take off at the race's start April 30.

Cartoon Corner



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

The Book Nook

How good are you at HaLo 2?

Created by Spc. Ricardo Branch

D) Particle Beam Rifle

1. Can you beat a Deathmatch game with only a plasma pistol?

- A) Of course, who can't?!
- B) No way! I'm not insane.
- C) Sometimes, when I'm feeling merciful.
- D) Are you serious?

2. What is your quickest kill during a multiplayer game?

- A) Zero to five seconds; I was born for this game!
- B) Five to 10 seconds; I prefer to give them a fighting chance.
- C) 11 to 15 seconds; I'm only a rookie.
- D) 16 to 20 seconds; help!

3. How long are your best killing streaks while taking on friends?

- A) One to 10; I'm still learning, okay?
- B) 20 to 30; who wants a piece of this?
- C) 30 to 40; I can take on almost anyone.
- D) 40-plus; one word: MASTER.

4. If you were horribly beaten, you'd do which of the following?

- A) Practice like crazy for a rematch.
- B) Thank a higher power that nobody witnessed my shame.
- C) Tell everyone he cheated and unplugged your controller.
- D) Call home crying while plotting bitter revenge.

5. What is your biggest highlight in the game?

- A) What highlights?
- B) That's easy — beating anyone who challenges me!
- C) Getting a triple-kill in under a minute!
- D) Multiple head shots ... 'nuff said.

6. What does the legendary difficulty setting mean to you?

- A) Truckloads of patience.
- B) It's a walk the park — too easy!
- C) Legendary?! (insert curse word here)
- D) I'll get back to you on that one.

7. You are in close combat range. Which weapon do you use?

- A) Sniper Rifle
- B) Energy Sword
- C) Rocket Launcher

8. What is the best strategy you like to use in the game?

- A) I'm a camper. I methodically take out my victims!
- B) Invisibility! "Predator style" unseen and deadly.
- C) Normal. You like it when they see you coming!
- D) Hide in a corner. Don't shoot me.

9. Can you survive "King of the Hill" for one minute with eight players?

- A) Yup. Any hill, any time!
- B) One minute?!? Try two minutes on the hill!
- C) It's a challenge for me but I probably could ...
- D) You're out of your mind!

10. When you're finished, you leave your foes doing which of the following?

- A) Panting at the long grueling match against a great player.
- B) Crying at such a terrible loss against you.
- C) Grins of happiness, you were such an easy victim.
- D) They don't leave, the score's still tied.

PENALTY SECTION
Adjust your points for every "yes" answer
• Do you dream about HALO 2 on your off time? (DEDUCT 3 PTS.)
• Did you get an X-BOX for the sole purpose of playing HALO and later HALO 2? (ADD 10 PTS.)
• Do you spend more than 5 days a week playing HALO 2? (DEDUCT 7 PTS; you're supposed to be working!)
• Do you own more than one X-BOX? (ADD 3 PTS.)

SCORING:
For all As give 1 point, Bs 2 points, Cs 3 Points, Ds 4 points
Your Total Score:
10 to 20: You are not even a challenge. People laugh after playing you. My mom would win a match against you.
21 to 30: You're a decent player. Not great, but you have potential.
31 to 40: You've earned the right to brag, as most people are laid to waste by your fierce HALO 2 skills.
41+: You've earned the grand title of Halo 2 Master — however, this also proves that you have no life.

'Outlander': An outlandishly good tale

Spc. Jennifer Fitts
100th MPAD

Okay, so it sounds a little out there. Am I really writing a review for a time-travel bodice-ripper "romance" novel that manages to combine history, sex, violence and love?

I know, you're probably thinking I'm out of my mind. I'm not. Trust me.

(And guys, don't turn your noses up too fast. My husband, who's a combat engineer, sniffed mightily when I threw this book at him, and now he's hooked on the whole series.)

It's the end of the second World War; after four years of combat nursing on the battlefields of England, Claire Randall is heartily sick of being away from her husband.

To recapture their love, the couple takes a second honeymoon in Scotland to rediscover each other and start to enjoy their marriage.

Life is wonderful. Claire and Frank, her husband, are young and in love and rambling around the Scottish countryside, both indulging passions abandoned since the start of the war.

Along the way, Claire picks up snippets of local history and lore, including old superstitions about the circle of standing stones at the top of a nearby hill. (Think Stonehenge, the budget model.)

Not content with second-hand accounts, and with the pretext of chasing down some interesting plant specimen, Claire sneaks up the hill to observe an ancient pagan ceremony.

Other than some rather ordinary women in wrapped in sheets reciting words passed down through their families, Claire doesn't see much.

She does think she hears something, but shakes it off, telling herself it's the effect of being up so early, and the atmosphere of chanting witches. Returning the next day, Claire decides that perhaps she did hear something, and touches one of the stones.

That's when life gets interesting. Claire does hear something this time, a kind of distant screaming. After the world turns upside down, Claire blacks out...

And wakes up on the same Scottish hillside she passed out on. It's still cloudy and cool, so it doesn't seem like too much has changed, and Claire decides that she's just had a bit of a bad spell.

Stumbling down the hill, Claire leans rather quickly that she's not in Kansas anymore, or 1945 Scotland, for that matter.

Running into a group of English troops, Claire is mistaken for a few things, the best of them being an English spy.

Since she's not sure that being taken into custody by the English is a great idea, Claire slips away from her "guardians" and runs smack into a roving band of Scottish cattle thieves.

Dragged through the wilds of Scotland by a band of wanted men, Claire is: introduced to a wily old Scottish Highland lord, accused of being an English spy again, taken for a demented prostitute, and forced into marriage as a way of keeping track of her.

That's just the start, too. I haven't mentioned being poisoned, beaten, dealing with jealous Highland girls, being tried as a witch, or falling in love.

It's all in there somewhere, woven together with Scottish history, humor, revolutionary politics and a generally phenomenally good story.

The characters are well-developed and they actually have an adult relationship. (The sex is good, too, but it's pretty secondary to the story itself.)
I have to admit I had a bit of trouble with the first 30 pages or so, but after that, I couldn't put the book down. I literally ate dinner with it in my hand for about a week, and got less sleep than a college student cramming for finals. I'll bet you do the same.

Crossword

Created by Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Across

- 1. Enthusiast
- 4. Sandwich comb.
- 7. Bar, in some places
- 10. Soldier support org.
- 11. Fox's titular role
- 12. Model
- 13. Spoken
- 15. Young scoundrel
- 16. October's stone
- 17. Backflip facilitator
- 20. "Yes," in Spain
- 22. "Diary ___ Young Girl"
- 23. Letter's afterword (abbr.)
- 24. "___ and behold"
- 26. "It was a very good ___"
- 29. 10th ___ Div.
- 32. Spark

Last issue's solution

A	S	S		I	E	D		H	E	R	A
D	O	N		E	T	A		A	M	I	R
A	L	I		R	A	Y		G	O	N	E
M	O	I		H	E	R	O	D	E	S	
	A	O		O	C			D			
P	B			W	A	R		E	H		L
S	A	G	E		S	H	E		O	F	I
A	B	O	D		C	G		L	O	V	E
E	G			C	G			L	O	V	E
M	A			I	U			R	G		
				M	O	I		H	E	R	S
V	A	S	E		O	D	E		I	R	P
V	I	A	L		M	I	L		A	P	O
E	D	I		E	L			N	E	I	T

- 35. Petitions to a higher being
- 37. Falcon, for one (abbr.)
- 39. Sign on a diner
- 40. Per (abbr.)
- 41. Not quite CPT
- 43. On the ___ (fleeing)
- 44. Moon of Jupiter
- 46. Mid-semester vacation
- 52. Make a funny
- 55. Sharp pull
- 56. Olden days
- 57. Give aid
- 58. ___ out a living
- 59. Nada (Lat.)
- 60. 18-wheeler
- 61. Sea-people's prefix
- 62. Pine tree's output

Down

- 1. Ado
- 2. In a hurry (abbr.)
- 3. Night, to Pierre
- 4. Mormon leader
- 5. Ewe's offspring
- 6. Error in print
- 7. Snap and Crackle's buddy
- 8. "God Bless The ___"
- 9. Trousers supporter
- 12. Pea locale
- 14. "The Chronicles of Narnia"'s

Professor Kirke

- 18. Cleopatra's killer
- 19. "___ and shine!"
- 21. Publicity
- 24. Allow
- 25. More or less
- 27. Significant period
- 28. Support grp.
- 30. Task Force (abbr.)
- 31. Negative response
- 33. Recollection
- 34. Degree (abbr.)

36. Ladies' undergarment

- 38. Online diarist
- 42. Peak
- 45. Slightly open
- 46. Establish
- 47. Object
- 48. A-bomb, for one
- 49. Long times
- 50. Prima donna's main event
- 51. Seaweed kin
- 53. ___-wan Kenobi
- 54. Barrel

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