

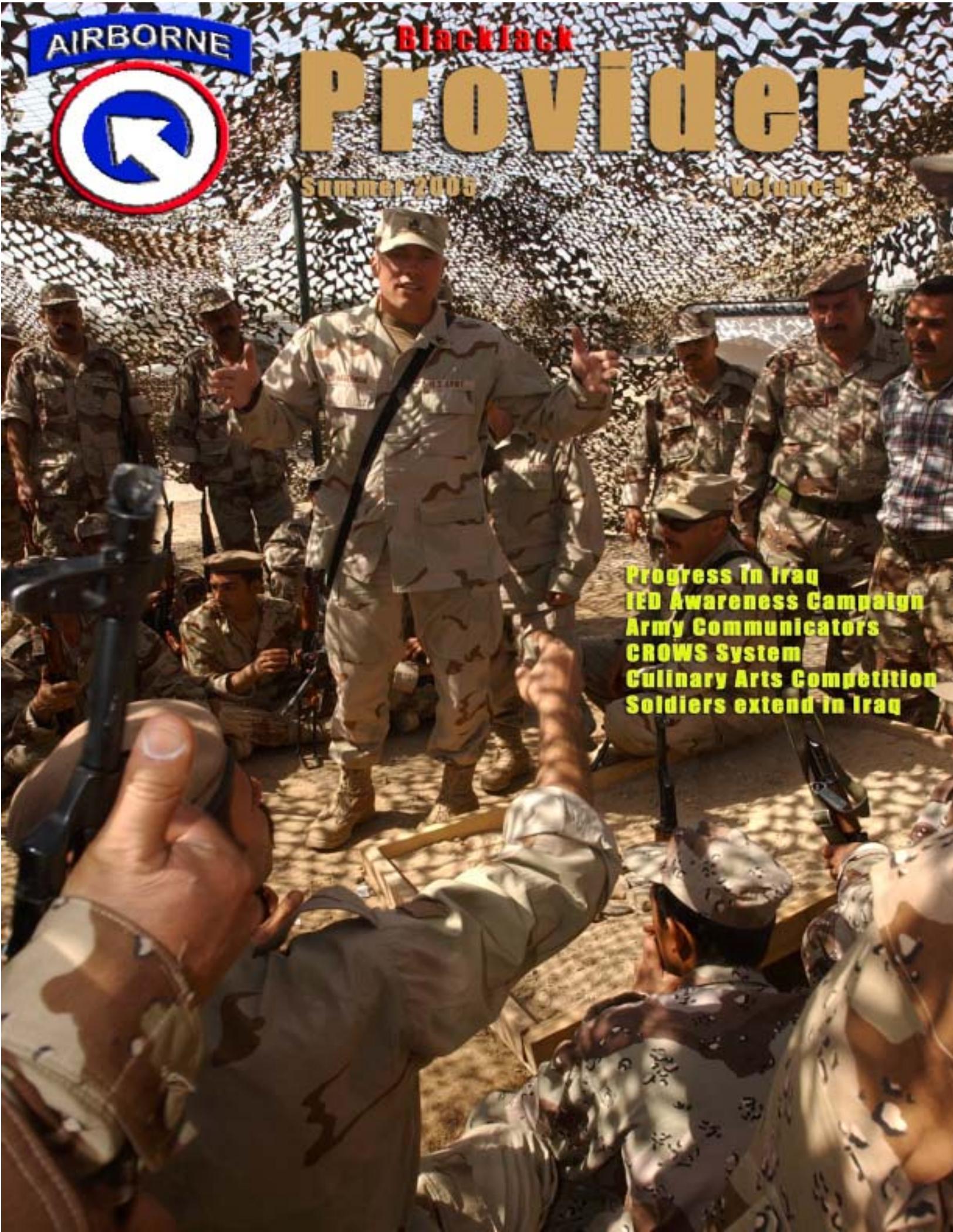
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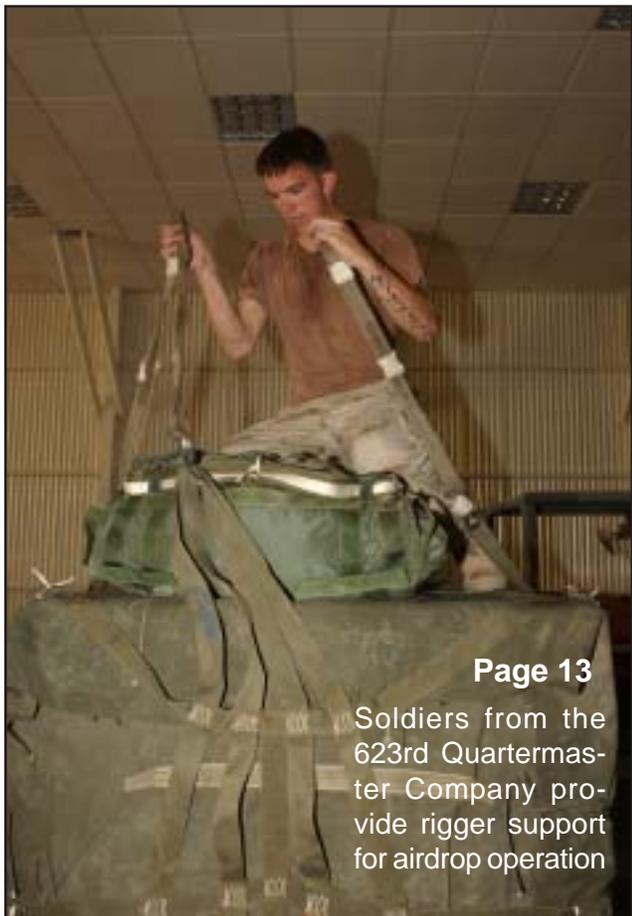
Volume 5



**Progress In Iraq
IED Awareness Campaign
Army Communicators
CROWS System
Culinary Arts Competition
Soldiers extend in Iraq**

BlackJack Provider

1st COSCOM: The Army's Contingency Support Command



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Soldiers from the 623rd Quartermaster Company provide rigger support for airdrop operation



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Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen
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Letters from the command

The 1st Corps Support Command has been succeeding in ensuring no combat operations are embarked upon without the necessary commodities required for our success. Thousands of combat logistic patrols and flights move supplies, equipment and Soldiers throughout the theater 24 hours a day. The operation tempo is high and in order to continue sustaining the coalition while the operations increases in intensity over the next several months, warriors at all levels must remain focused on TTPs, maintenance, force protection and fitness.

The forthcoming historical milestones will challenge us on all levels and will demand our complete focus.

Most important are the milestones about to be accomplished by the Iraqi people and their government. In spite of the ruthless assassinations of Iraqi officials and senseless murders of civilians, the determination of the Iraqi people to build a peaceful and democratic nation prevails. Government officials announced that they are on track to complete the draft of the constitution by August, they will hold the referendum in October and the

elections remain scheduled for December.

The road ahead leads to positive outcomes. Iraq will become a peaceful democracy with an infrastructure in place to promote bright futures. Our force level will decrease as these milestones are achieved. In the meantime, the challenge to balance and pace the transition process will continue for us. As with any challenge we face, our Soldiers will take them on with the courage and the conviction they have been demonstrating throughout the deployment. A little piece of each of us will remain here in this emerging nation and when we look back at



Brig. Gen. Yves J. Fontaine
Commanding General

the results of this mission we will have the sense of pride and honor of knowing we had a positive affect on this historical process.

Continue to make your country and family proud of the outstanding feats you accomplish each day.

FIRST TEAM, ATW!



Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen
1st COSCOM

Team, we have accomplished many things and will soon be on our way home to our families. However, there is still much to do in a little time. We have already been moving at a fast pace, and the pace will increase with the many upcoming transfer

of authorities that will take place within the next few months. We also have many forward operating base closures that involve many of your units. The times that our transporters will have to spend on the road will increase.

Already we have begun shipping back to the rear some of the items we can do without at this stage in the game. This is done for two reasons, to ensure that everything is accounted for and that we have a smooth transition for when the 3rd Corps Support Command takes hold of the reins. Having said that, it is vital that you ensure that you and

your troops remain hydrated, especially with these soaring temperatures. To prevent heat casualties continue to be smart about what task you and your subordinates are able to accomplish during these record high temperatures. Although we have acclimated, these temperatures are not something we are used to.

Maintain physical fitness is line five of the 1st Corps Support Command's 10 BlackJack Rules. Now is the time to really focus and get back into the Airborne shape you initially arrived here in. I understand that with some of our units, sometimes the mission

interferes with physical training; however, some PT is better than none at all. There are many annual requirements that are waiting for us upon our return and these events include the 20K ruck march, and the 4-mile validation run. Don't wait till you are state side to train up on these events.

Team, the key things to remember are to stay focused because our optempo is picking up; and take care of your body, mentally and physically. It is all about taking care of your Soldiers and each other.

FIRST TEAM!
Airborne!

Progress in Iraq



First active Iraqi post trains its own

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop, BlackJack Provider Staff

AN NUMANIYAH, Iraq—The Soldiers of the Iraqi National Guard conduct missions with supplies and support of coalition forces, but soon, the ING will be taking over these areas.

The 2nd Motorized Transportation Regiment of the ING is currently training, with the assistance of 1st Corps Support Command Soldiers, in the southern base of An Numaniyah, a base operated and maintained completely by the Iraqi National Guard.

“Presently at Numaniyah, we are in the process of training the 2nd MTR and equipping them,” said Lt. Col. Philip McGrath, advisory support team chief for the 2nd MTR from the 122nd Corps Support Group.

“Right now they are in the nine-week advanced individual training part of their training.”

The AST and Military Transition Team (MTT), made up of U.S. Soldiers from the 122nd CSG, made up of only a small portion of the population of An Numaniyah. The majority of the forces on post are active duty and initial entry training ING Soldiers.

Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop





Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

Iraqi soldiers waiting in line while being served in their dining facility at the Al Numaniyah military base in Iraq. A typical meal served to the Iraqi soldiers includes rice, beans, lamb, vegetables such as green peppers and chai tea.

The training of the 2nd MTR consists of the basics of transportation, including road signs and convoy maneuvers which is the classroom portion of the course.

The Iraqi Soldiers then move on to learning how to operate and maintain their vehicles.

“We first teach them backing up a vehicle (when teaching them how to drive),” said Staff Sgt. Angel Huertas, 3rd company truck driving instructor.

“We first give the class to the NCOs and now we’re giving it to the Soldiers.

“We’re getting them ready to do convoys and to get them out on the road,” he said.

The culmination of the course is a convoy live-fire exercise before graduation. Although the training is similar to training given to U.S. troops in this career field, the AST only supports and advises the Iraqi leadership, allowing the Iraqis to develop their own training template.

“We’re not taking a U.S. template and applying it to their training, we just add to the Iraqi system,” McGrath said. “We have to let them do the training and we only assist. The training is going a lot better than expected.”

“I admit there is a gradual progress, but it’s going in good steps,” Maj. Ali Jassim Mohammed Betah Al-Bosalih, commander of 3rd company, 2nd MTR, said through the aid of a translator.

“We have tremendous American support. They provide and help in different aspects.”

The initial success of the training program wouldn’t have ever broken the language barrier without the assistance of a team of translators, which both Americans and Iraqis are thankful for.

“We have been blessed by no less than extraordinary translators, said Al- Bosalih.”

“Morale is very high. The opportunities the new Iraqi Army have sufficient facilities to live in and three good meals a day by Iraqi standards,” McGrath said. “The facility in Numaniyah is probably the premier facility for the Iraqi Army.”

Although the 2nd MTR is only in the first steps of becoming an active-duty Iraqi transportation regiment, there’s not a worry in the minds of the Soldiers of the regiment that they will be successful.

“We’re working hand-in-hand (with the Americans) to do our jobs properly and I do appreciate the work they do for us,” said the commander of the 2nd MTR, who asked to simply go by the name of “Colonel J” through the aid of a translator.

“We’ve seen that [the U.S. Soldiers] are doing their best to get the Iraqi Soldiers trained. I am very thankful for them.”



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

Iraqi Soldiers of the 2nd Motorzied Transportation Regiment march in formation while practicing drill and ceremony at An Numaniyah. Members of the 1st Corps Support Command monitors and provides assistance to the regiment when required.

U.S. troops up-armor Iraqi vehicles

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop, BlackJack Provider Staff

CAMP DIAMONDBACK, MOSUL, Iraq -- The Iraqi armed forces are welcoming an increasing amount of a new tool to use in making their country safe- armored vehicles.

Until recently, Iraqi forces in northern Iraq were conducting operations without the protection of up-armored vehicles used by the U.S. Army to protect its Soldiers, but the Soldiers of the 536th Maintenance Company, 17th Corps Support Battalion, 917th Corps Support Group have given the Iraqi military a safety tool that has proven effective, and they have no plan to stop add-ons.

“We started off doing a few (Iraqi) trucks in the beginning,” said Capt. Tynice Roundtree, commander, 536th Maint. Co. “Then other (Iraqi) units came around and asked us to do theirs too.”

The majority of the trucks that the company up-armored were Russian-made Y-7A seven-ton trucks and the Russian Y-3A 4-speed jeep used by the Iraqi forces.

Additionally, the 536th Maint. Co. has also added armor to a few of the Nissan pickup trucks used by the Iraqi forces.

“[The Iraqis] wouldn’t go out since they didn’t have armor. When we first started, the executive officer of the (Iraqi’s parent unit) 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment came down with the Iraqis and we [started the up-armor process for their vehicles],” said Chief Warrant Officer Lee Rowland, allied transition technician.

The company has up-armored about 42 Iraqi National Guard and

Iraqi regular army vehicles, Rowland said.

The Iraqi vehicles, which can’t carry a lot of weight due to their design, have to be carefully armored so that the engine can still perform the mission, Rowland said.

The metal used to armor the doors and the front of the vehicles is custom cut from a metal template, the same used to armor U.S. trucks.

“We try to [armor] the doors, the front and sometimes the floor. It all depends on what [the Iraqis] want,” he said.

“We give them protection from gunfire,” Rowland said. “The success rate has been pretty good.

Up-armorings the large seven-ton trucks takes about two and a half days. Currently, the company is focusing on completing the jeeps, in which the majority of them have already been completed.

About 50 jeeps were brought to the company for up-armorings, they have already completed 36.

“The jeeps on average take about four-to-six

hours,” said Spc. Jeremiah Snedginar, welder.

Since the armored vehicles have been in use, several lives have been saved, and Iraqis make sure that members of the 536th Maint. Co. know that they are thankful for what they have done for them.

“The best part is when the (Iraqi) unit comes back to thank [our Soldiers],” Roundtree said. “It makes them feel really good about what they do.”

“I’m really proud of what my Soldiers have done,” Rowland said.

Armored vehicles for combat logistics patrol missions are a commodity the U.S. Army has worked on supplying its Soldiers since the necessity arose.

Now the emerging Iraqi military that will progressively assume control of their country can have the same advantage in combat safety.



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

Spc. Jeremiah Snedginar, a welder from the 536th Maintenance Company, 17th Corps Support Battalion, applies an armor plate to the tailgate of an Iraqi Y-3A jeep.

Iraqi police train with U.S. troops

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop, BlackJack Provider Staff

TAJI, Iraq — As Iraq continues to transition to becoming democratic society, coalition involvement in training Iraqi Soldiers and police has evolved from training to a more supervisory role.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 393rd Infantry Regiment, 75th Infantry Division assigned to a U.S.

Army Transition Team do just that in aiding the Iraqi Security Forces. The Soldiers, based out of Fort Sam Houston, Texas, are involved with providing assistance to the higher command of the Iraqi 8th Mechanized Special Police.

“What we are trying to do is get the Iraqi people to come up with Iraqi solutions,” said Sgt. Maj. Leon Fowler, battalion sergeant major. “This is going to [take] longer than 12 months. It is very slow and very deliberate.”

“It’s a slow process however both sides are receptive of what we’re trying to do,” said Maj. Daniel McGee, battalion executive officer.

The transition team based in Taji, made up of senior noncommissioned officers and field grade officers, travels daily to the Iraqi police facility located several miles outside of Taji.

“Our mission is to train, coach, teach, and mentor the 8th Mechanized Iraqi Police on both police and combat operations, allowing them to defend their own country, borders, and cities,” Fowler said. “That is our mission.”

“We’re not there to do it for them; we’re there to advise them,” Fowler said.

The transition team is there to observe the Iraqi Police in solving their own problems, and to step in when they need assistance, said Fowler.

“The main thing is to give them the initiative to do what’s right,” said Sergeant 1st Class Brian Walker, battalion intelligence and communications

noncommissioned officer in charge. “We’re here to show them what right looks like.”

Members of the former Iraqi army, now filling most of the ranks in the new Iraqi police force and military, operated off of command ideals that are currently in the process of being changed by the transition team.

“The history of the Iraqi army is that it is officer driven,” Fowler said. “With the American Army it goes up the chain-of-command and back down; with the Iraqi army, it only goes down.”

“Their NCO’s have been in these units for a long time – for years. If their NCO corps can get permission to act in their commander’s absence, this will speed up the process,” he said.

Although the primary mission of the transition team is to assist the higher command and help restructure the Iraqi military for the better, the American Soldiers are also teaching the Iraqis basic soldiering and common task training.

“We are doing weapons training, first aid, land navigation, combat life saver courses, and maintenance courses,” Walker said.

The struggle to return power to the Iraqi people is important to the

American people, just as much as it is to the Iraqi people.

“It’s important because it’s going to keep us from having our sons and daughters over here and I’m tired of young people dying on these roads here,” said Fowler. “I think in the end, the Iraqi police will be able to defend their borders, their cities, and the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people. I believe that. They are a very proud organization.”

Included in the transition team’s mission statement was a saying of T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) – “Do not try to do too much with your hands,” he wrote. “Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not win it for them.” A passage that must be considered today as it was in 1917.



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

Members of the Civilian Police Assistance Training Team made up of Soldiers from Texas pass out bottled water to Iraqi law enforcers after meeting with members of the Iraqi 8th Mechaized Special Police.

Iraqi National Guard trains on combat logistic patrols

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop, BlackJack Provider Staff

TAJI, Iraq — Troop and cargo movements are essential to any military operation, and now the soldiers of the Iraqi National Guard are learning to drive and transport safely.

“We’re currently training the 1st Iraqi Transportation Regiment,” said 2nd Lt. John S. Roberts, a platoon leader and training organizer with the 137th Transportation Company, 68th Corps Support Battalion, 46th Corps Support Group, based at Camp Taji. “We’re showing them a lot of the methods that were successful for us.”

Iraqi Soldiers of the 1st Iraqi Trans. Rgmt. are currently being taught how to conduct convoy operations safely and ways to defend their trucks, cargo and personnel in the event of an attack.

“We currently have a 45-day training process using the ‘crawl, walk, run’ theory; starting with sand tables, to mounting and dismounting, all the way up to live-fire exercises,” Roberts said.

The course is broken down into several classes that teach convoy maneuvers, formation, defense tactics, and emergency reaction. With the aid of translators, the instructors are able to teach the Iraqi soldiers how to succeed at their mission and survive.

Spc. Amanda Emmorey, an instructor with the 137th Trans. Co., teaches Iraqi soldiers the proper way to maneuver a convoy using sand tables and toy trucks.

“What we’re doing is teaching the first class of



Iraqi National Guard Soldiers of the 1st Motorized Transportation Regiment attach a tow bar to a truck to simulate recovery of a damaged vehicle.



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

Iraqi National Guard Soldiers of the 1st Motorized Transportation Regiment sit back-to-back in the rear of a donated U.S. Army truck while being instructed on how to defend a convoy.

88M’s (truck drivers) so they can do the 88M job,” Emmorey said.

“This regiment has so much experience already. We’re trying to make a back bone for them. We’re trying to get them prepared so they can react medically and how to use their weapons,” Emmorey said.

Rebuilding an army is no easy task. The ranks of the ING are filled with a good mix of former regime veterans as well as new recruits.

“The older Soldiers are so used to the way the old army used to be,” Emmorey said. “They aren’t used to change.”

However, the newly formed regiment is making strides on its path to becoming the life-line of the new Iraqi military.

“A lot of the safety practices have improved,” Roberts said. “The command and control has improved; we’re seeing a lot better unit cohesion.”

A more common, but more easily-controlled problem exists in the language barrier between the American instructors and Iraqi students.

“Soldiers are Soldiers the world over, but Arabic is a very different language,” Roberts said.

Hand gestures and the help of Iraqi and American translators aid in the gap existing between the Soldiers.

“There’s a lot of camaraderie,” Roberts said. “We’re learning just as much from them as they are from us.”

Although the 1st Iraqi Trans. Rgmt. is far from conducting operations on their own, the lessons learned from 137th Trans. Co. will give them a healthy start.

“Most people do their job, and do it honorably, but we can actually say we’re leaving something lasting,” Roberts said. “If we can save one life with the things we’ve taught, then me, and my platoon, can sleep better at night.”

‘Desert Dogs’ keep aircraft flying

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca
1st COSCOM PAO

TALLIL AIR BASE, Iraq— Because of the limited amount of fuel helicopters are able to carry, having fuel points throughout Iraq with personnel ready to conduct refueling operations is critical. A small element within the 1st Corps Support Command recognizes all too well the importance of providing 24-hour refueling operations.

The 110th Quartermaster Company, 119th Corps Support Battalion, 122nd Corps Support Group is an active duty unit from Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Ga. deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Besides running the forward area refuel point on Tallil, the 110th Quartermaster Company also is responsible for running refuel on the move, or ROM, points at four other locations throughout southern Iraq.



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

A fire team Soldier from the 110th Quartermaster Company, 119th Corps Support Battalion, 122nd Corps Support Group gives the arm signal to release the fuel for issue into an Italian A-129 Mangusta attack helicopter, while a second Soldier from the issuing team holds a fuel hose and nozzle in place.

ROM sites here are remote refueling sites that are set up throughout Iraq to provide fuel to ground units passing through an area.

“We refuel many of the coalition forces and U.S. Army aircraft, from the Apache to the Heinz,” said Capt. Lanis Maddox, commander, 110th Quartermaster Company.

The 110th Quartermaster Company is charged with running fuel operations. The 2nd platoon, the “Desert Dogs,” operates and maintains the FARP here.

The platoon established four refuel points, which gives them the capability to fuel four aircraft simultaneously when required.

“On average we refuel eight to ten aircraft in a day,” Maddox said. “However, we have had the opportunity to refuel 24 aircraft and can operate at this maximum capacity.”

The platoon is able to operate at this rate because of the way they have their operation set up. The 2nd platoon is made up of two sections in order to provide 24-hour operations.

“We have a day and a night shift that operates on 12 hour rotations,”

said 1st Lt. Donald Geier, platoon leader.

“Our teams operate and are housed here on site because most of the time we have to dispatch ours guys within one- to one and a half minutes notice,” Geier said.

Having a team on standby in the event a helicopter comes in allows for the operation to run smoothly, he said.

Each shift is made up of four elements: receiving, issuing, spill and fire teams.

The receiving team is responsible for retrieving bulk fuel and pushing it forward to large fuel bags at the FARP where it is maintained. Once the fuel is transferred to these fuel bags, when an aircraft comes in for refueling, the issuing team is there to pump the fuel into the aircraft.

A lot can occur when fueling an aircraft. This is where precautionary measures such as the fire and spill teams come into play.

In the event there is a fire, the fire team is trained to use large fire extinguishers located at each fuel point and other fire distinguishing methods. Air Force firefighters are also on standby should a large-scale fire occur, Geier said.

“Our fire team is the most important team, which is something we fortunately haven’t had to utilize,” Maddox said.

The spill team remains on site until refueling is complete. They are responsible for containing and cleaning up any fuel spillage.

“With this mission, our Soldiers get to fuel and interact with coalition forces while refueling all types of aircraft that we normally do not have the chance to do during peacetime operations,” Geier said. “It’s important what we do; making sure that those helicopters stay in the sky.”



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

An M1078 Light Medium Tactical Vehicle that was involved in a rolling accident was unable to be repaired. As a result, mechanics removed parts for maintenance personnel to use for repairs to other vehicles.

else, and your vehicle is down, if you call us and tell us where you are, we'll come get you," said Capt. Andrew H. Warninghoff, operations officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 17th Corps Support Battalion.

The recovery team has the capability to recover military vehicles, which they call "green trucks", and can also recover nonmilitary vehicles, called "white trucks".

When recovering green trucks, the Soldiers operate independently. However, when recovering "white truck", KBR's assistance is required.

"White trucks are pretty large vehicles and we don't have the equipment to recover them, so we'll contact KBR and when they bring

See RECOVERY, page 32

Maintenance team recovers disabled vehicles

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA DIAMONDBACK, MOSUL, Iraq— In a country where thousands of military and civilian vehicles are on the road transporting everything from fuel to oil, it's not difficult to imagine the amount of damage that can be caused to vehicles by accidents or improvised explosive devices and vehicle borne IED's that explode on a daily basis throughout Iraq.

In most cases the vehicles cannot leave the scene under their own volition, due to extensive damage. On initial assessment the teams can determine if the vehicles can be eventually fixed. This is where recovery operations come into play.

The 17th Corps Support Battalion, 917th Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command has the mission to provide recovery of vehicles for corps units as well as multi-nations and contract forces operating in the

Multi-National Brigade-Northwest area of operation.

"It doesn't matter if the unit is a corps unit. If you are just passing through our area to stop somewhere



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Two U.S. Army soldiers from the 536th Maintenance Company, 17th Corps Support Battalion, repair and perform maintenance on a Humvee that was recovered after it was involved in an improvised explosive device incident during a combat logistic patrol.

5-25 campaign increases IED awareness

MultiNational Corps- Iraq Public Affairs

Improvised explosive devices are the number one killers of America's sons and daughters serving in Iraq, and the Joint IED Defeat Task Force at Camp Victory is kicking off an information campaign May 25 in an effort to increase IED awareness and save lives.

The "5-and-25" campaign, as it is called, is designed to increase IED awareness and reduce the effectiveness of the mountain of makeshift bombs being produced by insurgents. Officials say the deceptive devices account for more than half of the coalition deaths that have occurred since the start of the Iraq war in March 2003.

Efforts to date have reduced the IED casualty rate by more than 45 percent during the period of April 2004 through February 2005 – but that is not seen as enough.

"IEDs are our number one killers here," said Eric Eglund, who works at the Iraq headquarters of Joint IED Defeat Task Force at Camp Victory. The task force is responsible for developing innovative ways to rid the country of IEDs.

The deadly devices are considered a highly effective means of killing people because they can quickly be set up anywhere and be set to blow at any time. They have been disguised as virtually everything from tree trunks and dead animals to bicycles and pregnant women. Royal Australian Air Force Group Capt. David Stockdale, deputy chair of the IED Working Group at Multi-National Corps-Iraq, said there is no limit to what insurgents will use for IEDs.

Stockdale, who serves as the equivalent of a colonel in the American Air Force, has been actively working the issue of IEDs and their effects since arriving in Iraq a few months ago.

"The IED is one of the most dangerous threats to coalition forces," Stockdale said. "To mitigate their effects, we wanted to put together an information campaign that would make the IED reaction drill a normal part of daily activities for the coalition forces."

Eglund said several different counter-IED organizations were already delivering good messages and possible solutions out there, but with no real emphasis or impact to the troops who needed it the most. "It wasn't as good as it could be. Some channels just naturally don't flow as well as others," he said.

The working group, deputy-chaired by Stockdale, represents a cross-section of coalition forces formed as a result of this issue.

The group's solution for getting vital information to the forces required three objectives: First, ensure information gets to those troops who need it most; second, develop an effective counter-IED organization that can take the fight to the enemy; third, produce pinpointed products from one organization which can be approved and delivered in a timely fashion.

"IEDs can be any time, anywhere, any shape; the trends change," Stockdale said. "The aim is to get the message to the field. It's dangerous out there."

To push information to the troops anywhere and any time trends change, the working group assembled a

See CAMPAIGN, page 32

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

Confirm : the device

Clear : the area

Call : EOD

Cordon : the perimeter

Control : site access



STAY ALIVE

0035

IEDs KILL

A melting pot of components and specialties

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

FORWARD OPERATION BASE ENDURANCE, Q-WEST, Iraq—The 360th Transportation Company, 1225th Corps Support Battalion, 917th Corps Support Group has a large mission; to provide bulk fuel delivery. Despite major cross leveling with reserve component Soldiers, the company works as a team to get the mission done.

“We have a lot of cross leveled Soldiers and volunteers that came over to help with the deployment of the unit,” said Staff Sgt. Yvonne M. Tillman, operations sergeant.

When deploying, the 360th Trans. Co. was authorized an additional platoon of reserve Soldiers. However, based on a recent change in their modification table of organization and equipment, they lost the platoon all together; but the position remained. As a result, cross leveling occurred and volunteers were gladly welcomed.

“We asked for volunteers and 15 different [military occupational specialties] came to the call of duty,” said Capt. Troy Kirby, commander.

Kirby has been in command of the unit since May 2004, and has watched the company grow as a team.

“There are firefighters, infantrymen, medics and other MOS’s that came from different reserve units across the country to increase our numbers,” he said.

Kirby is referring to increasing the amount of truck drivers the 360th Trans. Co. requires in order to conduct its fuel run mission.

“The different MOS’s operate as truck drivers and security escorts whenever we do our runs,” said Staff Sgt. Alex M. Rodriguez, truck driver.

Rodriguez is one of the reservists cross-leveled into the unit. He works as a mechanic in

“Everybody is out there on the convoys wanting to be a part of the mission,”

-Staff Sgt. Alex M. Rodriguez
360th Trans. Co.

his civilian job. “This works out well since I can fix my own vehicle if it breaks down,” he said.

“Regardless of the different MOS’s and components, we all get along well,” Rodriguez said.

Since late January, when the unit arrived, they have conducted about 70 combat logistic patrols and transported about 4.3 million gallons of fuel. Their mode of transport is the M915 truck.

“We love our trucks. They are built to run and built to last as long as you do proper maintenance,” Rodriguez said.

Many of these cross-leveled Soldiers were unfamiliar with driving the M915 truck and overall transportation operations, so the company took matters into their own hands.

“We developed a drivers’ training program because our drivers aren’t transporters by trade,” Tillman said.

With correspondence and guidance from officials at Fort Leonard Wood, the Maneuver Support Center, the unit was able to put together an effective drivers’ training program, which have paid off huge dividends.

“Our drivers are not only skilled in their original MOS’s but now have transporter skill sets,” Kirby said.

Additional to the transportation missions is the added duty of providing their own security. The unit was able to also remedy this dilemma.

“Many members of the unit were here during OIF I. That coupled with the experience of our cross-leveled combat arms Soldiers helped us to develop a gun truck crew,” Kirby said.

The company has placed a lot of restrictions on the Soldiers participating in the drivers’ and gun truck training program before they are placed on the roads.

Examples of these restrictions include a tough grading criteria and the numbers of hours spent behind the wheels of the vehicle the Soldier is training with.

By placing these restrictions, the company hopes to build their Soldiers’ confidence. So far they have been pretty successful, Tillman said.

“Everybody is out there on the convoys wanting to be a part of the mission,” Rodriguez said.

For a unit that was once a mixture of different components, job skills and personalities, the 360th Trans. Co. has come far since they first deployed.

“I have seen the unit grow and become one,” Kirby said. “They drop what they are doing to help each other out. It makes our time here a bit easier when your Soldiers are that proactive.”



Airborne operation to supply troops

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop
BlackJack Provider Staff

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

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

“Right now we’re loading Meals Ready to Eat for ongoing operations,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Hanrahan, the air operations sergeant for the 623rd QM Co. “The most important thing is we’re taking people off the road by doing this. The key is sustaining the people who are setting up this operation with 15 days worth of food.”

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

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

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

“Once [the unit we’re supplying gets established,”



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop
Pfc. Thomas Hutchinson, parachute rigger, 623rd Quartermaster Company gathers the tops of the cargo net to attach it to the parachute ontop of the load.

Hanrahan said, “we’ll move on to support a different group.”

Since the beginning of their deployment started this past December, the Soldiers of the 623rd QM. Co. had little opportunity to serve as parachute riggers. Much of their time is spent on the roads as convoy gun-truck escorts.

Though their skills are in high demand, the Soldiers are excited

to support the war effort by doing the job they enlisted to do.

“I feel like I’m making a difference,” said Pfc. Thomas Hutchinson, a parachute rigger with the 623rd QM Co. “I think it’s necessary for us to do air drops to move on with the mission of helping the Iraqis take control.”

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

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

“First you get an empty board with ties, along with honeycomb cardboard padding to help dissipate the weight of the cargo,” said Spc. Jameel Miller, a parachute rigger with the 623rd Qm. Co. “Then the cargo net is wrapped around the supplies and from there we tie up the

load to encase it all. Finally we put the parachute on and tie it up and that’s all you need.”

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

“We’re parachute riggers,” Hanrahan said, “this is our job.”

Army Communicators

“First ones in, last ones out”

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq—Communications is the means by which a commander exercises his or her command and control of forces. Without communications, commanders are unable to effectively provide command and control for their forces. Even during primitive times there existed some form of communications, be it through sound, hand gestures and inanimate devices such as flags.

On today’s battlefield, the 1st Corps Support Command provides its Soldiers with the best communication tools available to support their operations throughout the battlefield.

“A lot of hard work and dedication goes into running this shop. Because of the system that we have, we have to know how to work all of them,”

said Master Sgt. James C. Brown, automations system command and control chief, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Corps Support Command.

“We serve and support over 25,000 clients on LSA Anaconda, and that includes classified and unclassified internet service 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” Brown said.

The G6 element, supervised by Maj. David Mizelle, chief communications officer, also provides technical support for servers for units at Taji (Iraq) and Tallil (Iraq) and provides communications support to over 12 forward operating bases and locations throughout Iraq.

There is a laundry list of other services the element, comprised of about 25 Soldiers and civilian contractors, provides in order for ground commanders to operate throughout Iraq.



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Members of the 1st Corps Support Command G6 are made up of both Soldiers and civilian contractors that work together to operate and maintain the 1st COSCOM communications infrastructure.

“We administrate the SharePoint portal server which is a collaborative software used by personnel on (LSA) Anaconda, for classified and unclassified systems,” said William Moore, USFalcon civilian contractor web administrator.

The collaborative software allows him to help users manage their individual websites.

“So, basically if an individual posts a document on their website the software allows the documents and information to be available for others that require access to it,” Moore said.

Moore and his team also manages and maintains the hardware that runs the portal.

The service that the G6 element provides doesn’t end there. With a team of about six other civilian contractors, they are able to provide a wide range of additional services.

“My team provides audio/ visual maintenance, operation and maintenance of the call manager that regulates the voice over internet protocol, and provide system administrators for the Balad domain and Centrix systems,” said Christopher S. Anelundi, BAE civilian contractor project manager and video teleconferencing specialist.

His team is also responsible for scheduling and maintaining the VTC for all of LSA Anaconda.

Additionally, Anelundi has an Electrician who doubles as an air-condition mechanic to take care of



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Spc. Andrew M. Lui, automation specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Corps Support Command, troubleshoots the Combat service support Automated Information System Interface. The CAISI is a wireless automated networking tool that allows units not centrally located near an internet infrastructure to have unclassified internet access.

With all of the different means to communicate, personnel with automation specialties are a vital commodity to have on hand.

“My job is primarily working with the (Combat service support Automated Information Systems Interface),” said Spc. Andrew M. Lui, automations specialist.

The CAISI is a wireless automated networking tool that allows units not centrally located near an internet infrastructure to have unclassified internet access.

“Some of us [Soldiers] in the shop were fresh out of (advanced individual training). I was one of them,” Lui said.

“When I arrived here, I had to receive a crash course on the CAISI from [our predecessors]. I definitely learned a lot,” he said.

See COMMUNICATORS, page 34

“What I like about this job is that it is very challenging and keeps you on your toes. What we offer helps people do the job that they need to get done.”

**- Master Sgt. James C. Brown
HHC, 1st COSCOM**

minor electrical equipment and air-conditioning not supported by the Directorate of Public Works here.

The G6 element also provides Information Work Space, which is collaboration software that the commander can use to communicate with his subordinate commands for battle update briefings.

“With the use of IWS the commander can have positive command and control of subordinate units scattered throughout the theater,” Brown said.

CROWS keeps gunners out of sight

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop
BlackJack Provider Staff

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Balad, Iraq — The first group of 35 remotely operated weapons for mounting on top of humvees arrived in Iraq recently and the systems were divided among military police, Special Forces, infantry and transportation units.

The Common Remotely Operated Weapon Stations is a variation of the remote-controlled crew-served weapons system used on larger vehicles such as the M1A1 Abrams tank.

This new version gives humvee crews the ability to locate, identify and engage targets with better accuracy and improved range, while keeping the gunner inside, protected by the vehicle's armor.

"We will be fielding, in the next two years, over 300 systems," said Maj. Frank Lozano, the program manager for the CROWS project here.

At LSA Anaconda, four CROWS were issued to 2nd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division at Ar Ramadi and the 155th Brigade Combat Team at Forward Operating Base Kalsu. Prototypes were installed on vehicles belonging to the 42nd Military Police Brigade in December, Lozano said.

Since then, more CROWS have been installed, bringing the total up to nine systems serving troops at LSA Anaconda.

Presently, CROWS is only assembled and fielded at LSA Anaconda. Crews are issued the system here and receive training on

The system incorporates a 15-inch color monitor with live video from cameras in the daytime and thermal imaging cameras in darkness.

Both cameras use a laser range finder, which allows the gunner to zoom on targets, lock onto them and maintain that lock accurately while the vehicle is in motion. The camera and the weapon can be used together or separately.

This allows the gunner to look one way with the weapon pointed another. The feature becomes particularly useful when observing suspicious subjects from a distance, that way people are not scared off

by a weapon pointed at them.

"The weapon is smart enough to know your movement, the Earth's movement and the enemy's movements," said Lozano.

The system keeps gunners like Sgt. Darrin Hill, 98th Cav., 155th BCT, out of the turret where he had spent his days since being deployed in support of OIF.

"I think it's a great system. For one, it gets me out of the turret; it gets (me) out of the kill zone," Hill said. "I feel privileged to be able to learn how to use it."



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

The new CROWS is being fielded to Humvees to add to the combat effectiveness and additional safety measures to protect troops.

how to operate it, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Januchowski, the project's training developer.

The nearly \$200,000 system is designed to replace the turret gunner on humvees to improve combat effectiveness, Lozano said.

CROWS allows Soldiers to operate successfully from within the safety of the Humvee's armor, without being exposed to the threat of improvised explosive devices and small-arms fire.

"The important thing is increased survivability and increased lethality," Lozano said.

SLCR company provides service on the go

**By Sgt. Maj. Joseph Adelizzi
Contributer**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SEITZ, Iraq—Things taken for granted are often missed the most when no longer available. The Soldiers serving under Capt. Mark McGovern of the 259th Field Service Company, 264th Corps Support Battalion, 1st Corps Support Command could not realize how valuable a service they provide unless put into a situation where they couldn't bathe or change clothing for weeks at a time – an unlikely situation for them to experience.

The 259th FSC can provide shower and laundry support to just about any place in theater within 24 hours, and have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to provide those essential services.

“Our reputation has been established by our deeds, not our claims. When they need us to support any operation, they just call us, day or night, and we respond right away. We're the 911 (emergency response) field service company in theater,” McGovern said. A typical unit mission normally involves the use of one or more slicker teams, which normally contain 15 Soldiers each.

A Shower/ Laundry and Clothing Repair or SLCR team can provide at least one shower per day for every Soldier in a brigade-sized unit, and has the capability of washing and drying 3,000 bundles of dirty clothing per week when operating on a seven day, around the clock schedule. The only operational requirements they have are a water supply, a level area to set up their equipment, a site for water to run off, and security at the site to run their operation. Their missions are both unique and varied, and each has differed slightly in duration and situational requirements.

For instance, one of the platoons set up an operation near the City of Fallujah that supported elements of the 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Infantry Division and the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force. They remained there for nearly five months, providing their services, until they were able to rejoin the company at Seitz.

During another mission, another platoon from the company supported Army, Marine and Iraqi National Guard forces at Forward Operating Base Duke, located near the City of Najaf. That operation depended on Marine forces to supply the water required for washing and showering and lasted nearly four months.

McGovern also emphasized the morale and experience of his noncommissioned officers and the unwavering attitude of his enlisted men and women who work hard at what they do in helping Soldiers and other service members with the services they provide.

“They somehow manage to keep things light and not take themselves and each other too seriously. They

know their jobs and perform their duties without complaint, which makes me proud of each and every one of them,” McGovern said. “I've got some outstanding NCO's in the unit who step up and perform duties above their rank without hesitation. My Soldiers have also provided gun-truck escort to convoys on over 20 occasions, whenever it's needed.”

“My NCO's, like Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Wouters, Staff Sgt. Johnnie Ambrose, Staff Sgt. Kevin Phelps and Staff Sgt. Dennis Johnson are sound leaders and part of the reason we (the unit) is held in high regard.

Johnson showed a lot of maturity when he took a SLCR team to FOB Dogwood and supported 500 Soldiers from a Cavalry unit. His Soldiers also pulled guard shifts at the front gate and put up with frequent water shortages but obtained high praise from the supported unit in spite of it, McGovern said. “We clean laundry, and provide hot showers. It's not a fancy job, but we provide one of the most important support assets in theater – a morale boost.”



Photo by Sgt. Maj. Joseph Adelizzi

Soldiers from the 259th Field Service Company set up shower. The 259th FSC can provide shower and laundry support to just about any place in theater within 24 hours.

SHARP SHOOTER



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

(Above) A sandstorm hits at Ali Alsaleem Air Base, Kuwait Apr. 24. Due to the terrain, sandstorms occur frequently in Kuwait and Iraq during the warmer months. When these storms occur aircraft are grounded to avoid safety hazards.



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

(Above) A Soldier from the 536th Maintenance Company, 17th Corps Support Battalion, 917th Corps Support Group welds metal together to be fitted as armor for an Iraqi Vehicle. (Left) A Soldier on the 1st Corps Support Command men's basketball team, "The Ballers", shoots for a three-pointer during the post championship game. (Below) Spc. Dustin Bissell, combat life-saver, 340th Quartermaster Company, with the assistance of a combat medic gives intravenous fluids to a dehydrated third national country truck driver during a truck stop outside Korean Village, Iraq.



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca



Photo by Pfc. Mark B. Matthews, 27th PAD

(Above) A rigger from the 372nd Cargo Transfer Company packs a parachute for an air drop mission. **(Top-right)** Two Soldiers from the 56th Brigade Combat team enjoy a cup of chai tea provider by a sheik at a local village outside of Tallil Air Base, Iraq during a routine patrol. During the visit, members of the 56th BCT partoling unit provided bottled water and meals ready to eat to the children of the village. **(Right)** A photo taken with a night-vision camera of an air drop mission during a nighttime operation. **(Below)** Sgt. Ulric Sanders, shop foreman of the Headquarters Company, 1st Corps Support Command motor pool removes armor plates from a humvee to prep the vehicle for shipment back to the U.S.



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca



Combat Camera

(Below) Members of the 110th Quartermaster Company, 1st Corps Support Command's Public Affairs Office and members of the Italians Army's 48th Aviation Regiment "Pavone", pose in front of the A-129 Mangusta helicopter at Tallil Air Base.



Photo by Master Sgt. Lertchai Mateo, 56 BCT

Top honors are won at 30th Annual Culinary Arts Competition

By Travis Edwards
Fort Lee Strategic Outreach

After two-weeks of bitter lemon-meringue pie and sweet culinary creations the pastries have finally been tallied and the hot food masterpieces counted in the 30th Annual U.S. Army Culinary Arts Competition that was held at Fort Lee, Va. from March 5 -18.

Specialist Carmen Rosario from the Corps Distribution Center, 1st Corps Support Command, earned two individual medals and also earned the overall installation runner-up medal as part of the Fort Bragg Culinary Arts team.

It was the Soldier-chefs from Team Korea who capped the intense competition to earn the coveted title of Installation of the Year for culinary arts team competition.

Team Korea and winners in other categories were recognized at joint awards ceremony held March 18 in the U.S. Army Quartermaster Center and School, "the home of U.S. Army Logistics."

"We worked hard and learned a lot during the competition," said Rosario who earned a gold medal in the Cold Food Buffet Exhibit. "We can take this knowledge back to the Blackjack Café and teach others how to excel."

"As we celebrate the winners of this years competition, we remember that America's most valuable weapon system is the American Soldier, and no one supports them better than our food service professionals you see standing here today," said Brig. Gen. Scott West, U.S. Army Quartermaster Center and School commanding general, the

ceremony's keynote speaker. "More than half of this year's competitors are combat veterans."

Teams must enter 14 separate categories including live cooking, team cold buffet, and culinary knowledge bowl competition. Nine categories are selected from the cold food buffet, but over 60% of the overall team score is evaluated on taste and proper cooking of the food.

"I really enjoy the camaraderie of competition" said Korea team manager Chief Warrant Officer 3 Travis Smith who also won the Distinguished Military Chef of the Year title. "To compete and win as a team for Installation of the Year in the 30th Annual U.S. Army Culinary Arts competition is huge. The competition is something all cooks look forward to each and every year."

Fort Bragg placed second, followed by Team USAREUR, the U.S. Army Europe, who finished third in the Installation of the Year competition.

"These culinary professionals are warriors first and artists second," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 David Longstaff, chief of the craft skills training branch at Fort Lee, noting that many of the competitors have served overseas in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Longstaff added that the competition held annually at Fort Lee is bigger than competitions held by the American Culinary Federation and the Chicago Food Show.

The Fort Lee event is the premier culinary competition in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The competition also serves as an arena for military personnel to try

out for the U.S. Army Culinary Arts Team. There were 28 Soldier-chefs who tried out for USACAT team, and 15 were selected to the team.

The world champion USACAT is recognized by the ACF as the official military team representing the United States in World Association of Cooks Societies sanctioned culinary competitions around the world.

The USACAT competed in the World Culinary Olympics held in Erfurt, Germany in October 2004 bringing home second place overall while capturing 16 gold medals and 17 silver medals for an USACAT high 33 total medals.

Winners of the team competition, Installation of the Year:

1st Place, Team Korea, U.S. Army Korea

2nd Place, Team Bragg, Fort Bragg, N.C.

3rd Place, Team USAREUR, U.S. Army Europe



Photo by Travis Edwards

Spc. Carmen Rosario, Corps Distribution Command, 1st Corp Support Command, Fort Bragg, N.C. earned two medals during the 30th Annual Culinary Arts Competition held at Fort Lee, Va. in March.

Second deployment, different mission

Company deploys a second time to Iraq as truck drivers

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca
1st COSCOM PAO

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – With a steadfast goal and drive to be a democratic society in Iraq, the battle between Iraqis and coalition forces against insurgents continues. U.S. troops continue to rotate through Iraq; some for the second and third time as individuals and others as a unit.

One such company is the 249th Quartermaster Company, 507th Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command, who is currently on their second tour.

The 249th QM Co. first deployed during OIF I and returned home in March 2004. The company and many of its members are now on their way to a second deployment to Iraq. They deployed June 8.

“Our mission is different from when the company first deployed during OIF I,” said Capt. Jason J. Wehrman, commander, 249th QM Co. “Our mission has been changed to a truck company.”

The company, which normally operates the Central Receiving Point at Fort Bragg, will be responsible for driving palletized load systems.

Palletized load systems consist of a prime mover truck with an essential self-loading and off loading capability, a payload trailer, and dismountable cargo beds, also known as flatracks. Without leaving the cab, the driver can load or unload cargo in five minutes or less.

Prior to the deployment, the company had to complete training that they were familiar with, due



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Soldiers from the 249th Quartermaster Company prepare to deploy to Iraq for a second time June 8.

to their previous deployment and new additional training based on their new mission requirement.

“We went through standard convoy life-fire training and virtual combat convoy training,” Wehrman said.

Virtual combat convoy training is a new initiative that the Army has instituted additional to convoy life-fire training that simulate conducting combat logistic patrols in Iraq, Wehrman said.

Although it is important for these Soldiers to deploy, it is equally important that some Soldiers to remain in the rear.

“I wish that I could deploy with my unit,” said 1st Lt. Paul W. Stamp, company executive officer, 249th QM Co. “It is my duty and why I joined the Army.”

Stamp does acknowledge that just because a Soldier remains in the rear it doesn’t mean that they aren’t contributing.

“If I can help take care of Soldiers and their families back here in the rear where it will take [the Soldiers] minds off of their families so that they can focus on the mission, then I know that I am contributing to the fight,” Stamp said.

Additional to running the company’s Family Readiness Group, Stamp will be responsible for handling taskings and signing over and keeping track of transportation assets loaned to units such as the 82nd Airborne Division.

“I am very confident in this company’s ability to accomplish the mission,” Wehrman said. “Even though our mission has drastically changed, there is a wealth of experience and a great challenge that all of the leaders are willing to adapt to and be flexible with.”

Troops run in race half-way around the world

LIFESYLES

By Pfc. Jerome Bishop
BlackJack Provider Staff

TAJI, Iraq – The 46th Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command in conjunction with the 500 Festival of Indianapolis, Ind. hosted a remote version of the OneAmerica 500 Festival Mini-Marathon (13.1 miles) and 10 kilometer race here, May 7 at 5:30 a.m.

The Mini-marathon is a kick-off event for the month-long festival held in Indiana leading up to the Indianapolis 500 race on Memorial Day. This remote version of the race held in Iraq is designed for troops who want to participate but couldn't due to deployment.

The race, which took runners on a morning tour of Taji, gave service members an opportunity for friendly competition and a good work out.

"It was a great opportunity to get out before the weather got too hot, and to get out here with troops from the 3rd Infantry division and 1st COSCOM to do a little esprit-de-corps morale run," said Capt. Kyle Carone, a logistics officer for 46th CSG and race coordinator.

"We had a lot of coordination with the personnel from the OneAmerica 500 festival from Indianapolis," he said. "They actually sent us t-shirts, pin numbers, banners, Gatorade and cups."

"So between that and asking other units to volunteer medics and drivers [in case of] indirect fire and troops for distribution of water, we pulled it all together," Carone said.



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

Soldiers from all over Iraq at the startline waiting for the signal to commence with racing at the remote OneAmerica 500 Festival 13-miler hosted by the 46th Corps Support Group at Taji.

Service members running the 13.1-mile run took off from the starting line in front of the 46th CSG Chapel. The competitors of the 10k run started from the same location sometime shortly after.

"We had 419 originally sign up for the mini marathon race and about 300 showed up and ran the race," Carone said. "We ran into a little issue about two and half hours in."

The base's indirect fire alarm sounded, as a result, for safety precautions, a small portion of the participants didn't get to finish the race, said Carone.

Despite the incident, the majority of the participants in the 13.1 mile race finished and all were finished with the 10K.

"Over 120 were finished with the 13.1 mile so I'd say it was a great turn out," Carone said.

With a time of one hour and 21 minutes, Spc. Benjamin Piercy, a truck driver from the 137th Transportation Company, 68th Corps Support Command, 46th Corps Support Group, was the first one to cross the finish line of the 13.1 mile marathon.

"It [feels] great," Piercy said about winning the race. "I've never ran so far in my life. I ran a lot of track and just wanted to see if I could finish."

Although Piercy ran just to test himself, he never knew that the training he had gone through would help him win the race.

"I was into weight lifting and stopped to train (for the race)," said Piercy. "I lost about 15 lbs. in the process."

Even the man behind the scenes trained up and got out to run for

See RACE, page 33

Chaplain's Corner

'When Johnny come marching home again, hurrah, hurrah!'

Ever since becoming involved in redeployment and reunion activities as a chaplain in the United States Army, I've had a new appreciation for this old song from the Civil War era. The song speaks of celebration and welcoming, of parades and admiration, of the sheer joy and happiness that comes with a soldier returning home as a hero. And yet along with the joy the song carries in its very melody a sober note of reflection. The melody, you see, is struck in a minor key. The joy of the words is tempered by the tune.

And the more I think of it, the more appropriate it seems. For you see, when our "Johnny"—or, of course, in today's Army, his female counterpart—our "Janie" comes marching home, there will be challenges. And the challenges come because no one—service member, family member, or friend embraces their loved one on the "green ramp" without embracing at the same time all the changes that have happened in that loved one's life.

Remember that as you anticipate your reunion. Remember that along with the joy and excitement of being together again, adjustment to the new



**Chaplain (Maj.)
John H.G. Rasmussen
507th Corps Support Group**

situation will be "the name of the game" and the key to a happy, successful and fulfilling resumption of your life together. One of the most important missions of your unit leadership is to provide each and every one of you with the tools and resources necessary to help

make the success of your reunion and the resumption of your life together as likely as humanly possible.

While, of course, only you can fill in the specific details of the changes and adjustments you will face, there are nevertheless certain experiences, patterns, and lessons learned from the past that may be helpful to you now. Your unit's redeployment process is designed to help you incorporate these experiences and lessons into your own personal plan. I encourage you to take full advantage of these opportunities. The investment you make here will pay long term dividends for your happiness and the happiness of your loved ones.

Behind each and every welcome home party is the challenge of rebuilding the loving and fulfilling life together that was interrupted by the sacrifice of deployment. My prayer is that you will experience success and fulfillment in both.

From the Mule's Mouth

What is your best experience while being deployed to Iraq?



"As a Stop/Loss retiree, the closer I get to leaving Iraq, the closer I get to retirement."

**Chief Warrant Officer Shane Furlong
CSSAMO Officer in Charge
507th Corps Support Group**



"Convoying from Anaconda to FOB Lima to get away from the monotony."

**-Sgt. 1st Class Eddie T. Banks
Material Management Supervisor
Corps Distribution Command**



"The friendships and camaraderie built here are closer than back home."

**Spc. Damian Quiles
Battalion Commander Driver
HHC, 1st COSCOM**

“Note to a Brother” eases convoy anxiety

Story and photos by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

TAJI, Iraq — “Have faith my brother. I am there with you. During times of craziness, I am with you the most,” are words written in a note by one Soldier to another prior to a combat logistics patrol. For a combat service support unit such as the 1st Corps Support Command, combat logistics patrols are a dime a dozen; and with these missions comes the added danger of improvised explosive devices and enemy ambushes.

These words written from one comrade to another made all the difference, so much of a difference that a song called “Note to a Brother” was created from them.

“The song is about a Soldier struggling with the thoughts of an upcoming [combat logistics patrol] mission and how a fellow Soldier wrote him a note before the mission and left for him to read,” said Spc. Caesar L. Mustelier, nuclear biological and chemical noncommissioned

officer in-charge, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 46th Corps Support Group.

This being his first deployment, Mustelier was prepping for his first combat logistics patrol after arriving in country in early December.

“I was nervous and one of my buddies wrote me a note basically saying to have faith brother, everything is going to be alright,” Mustelier said.

Spc. Jay McKeown, a mailroom and evaluations clerk for the 46th CSG, had already been on many convoys before and got over the initial jitters that many Soldiers experience their first time.

“The day before the [combat logistic patrol] [Mustelier] stopped by my room for no apparent reason. While we were talking, he was notably worried without saying that he was,” McKeown said.

During the visit, they never discussed Mustelier’s concerns.

That evening, McKeown wrote Mustelier a note and placed it into his ballistic helmet.

“I knew that he would definitely find the note there since he had to put the [ballistic helmet] on in the morning,” McKeown said.

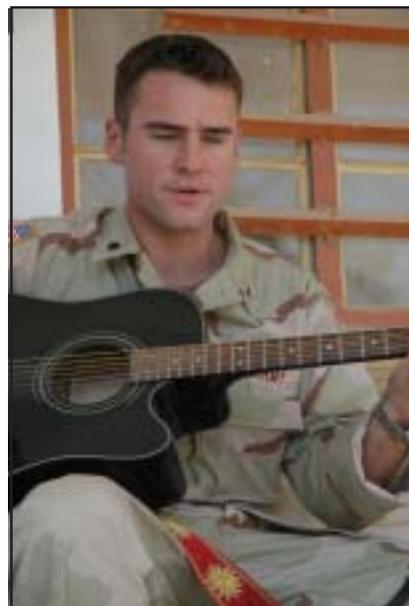
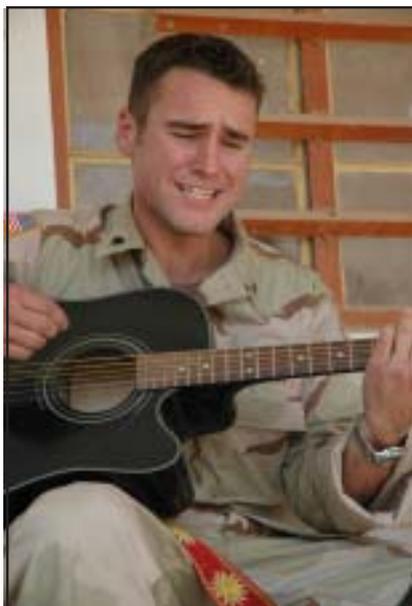
McKeown says that even though he and Mustelier are very close friends, talking about subjects such a death is difficult; as a result, he felt that writing a note would make things easier. His feelings were correct.

The next day Mustelier approached McKeown to let him know how much he appreciated the note.

“When I got back from the convoy, where everything went smooth, I wanted to thank [McKeown] and let him know how much the note he left made me feel. It meant a lot to me,” Mustelier said.

About a week later, Mustelier took the note and played around with a few chords on his guitar

See *BROTHER*, page 33



Spc. Caesar L. Mustelier, nuclear biological and chemical noncommissioned officer in-charge, 46th Corps Support Group. As a musician, in his spare time, Mustelier took a note written to him by a comrade prior to a combat logistics patrol and brought it to life.





Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Soldiers from the 1st Corps Support Command play volleyball during an organizational day May 15.

Organizational day eases stress in combat zone

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca, 1st COSCOM PAO

LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, Iraq—The day began with soaring high temperatures that later transformed into two mild dust storms occurring within half an hour of each other; however, these conditions did not stop one organization from coming together to build esprit de corps.

Members of the Corps Distribution Command, 1st Corps Support Command hosted an organizational day here May 15 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

The organizational day, presented a day full of sport activities, an assortment of food and drinks, and fostering relationships.

The event was one that had been long over due for 1st COSCOM Soldiers.

“Due to deployment prep, we missed having an organizational day last year,” said Col. Ferdinand Samonte, 1st COSCOM support operations officer.

“At [Fort] Bragg, we were going 100 miles an hour to prep for this deployment. Now that we are here [in Iraq] for about six months, the pace is still going. The primary theme is to do something different for our Soldiers outside of the normal duty day; to show that they can relax a bit for a few hours to build camaraderie and esprit de corps,” he said.

Preparation for the event took two weeks and the set up took two days, and this included making arrangement for the guest of honor; a 70-pound pig.

“I got word that Kuwait had about 50 plus pigs for events like this. So we took advantage of this resource,” Samonte said.

“We have all types of food here for the Soldiers, but I think that the highlight is the pork roast,” said Sgt. 1st Class Winsome McFarlane, CDC Food Service noncommissioned officer in charge and event coordinator.

See CDC, page 33



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Sgt. 1st Class Winsome McFarlane, Food Service noncommissioned officer in charge, Corps Distribution Command, 1st Corps Support Command opens up a large grill to see at what stage the pig roasting on the grill it at. The pig roast was one of the main meal attractions held at the CDC organizational day May 15.

Soldiers extend tour in Iraq

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca ,1st COSCOM PAO

TALLIL AIR BASE, Iraq — A touch of enemy aggression, a tablespoon of high temperatures, a dash of 24-hour operations, a spoonful of arduous combat logistic patrols, and on top of all of that, a year spent away from family and friends. Sounds like a recipe to make any Soldier want to hightail it out of a combat zone after their tour is complete.

How often does one come across a Soldier wanting to extend his or her time in Iraq for an additional year? In one particular unit under the 1st Corps Support Command, 15 Soldiers have already extended and five more are in the process of doing the same.

“It’s a good thing that we have Soldiers who want to remain here in Iraq,” said Maj. Mark W. Welch, human resource manager, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 122nd Corps Support Group. “It’s one less Soldier that has to deploy that may have caused a hardship if they did.”

Reserve-component Soldiers have the opportunity to volunteer to extend tours in Iraq and can accomplish this under the policies and guidance of the Contingency Operation Temporary Tour of Active Duty.

There are many reasons why some Soldiers decide to extend tours in Iraq.

“The first and foremost reason I’ve seen is the money,” Welch said.

Many reserve-component Soldiers are in situations where they aren’t bringing in the same income as they do when placed on

active duty with the Army, Welch said.

One such Soldier is Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Jackson. Jackson’s, the 122nd CSG noncommissioned officer in charge of leaves and passes, primary reason for extending was financial.

“A lot of us do not make a lot of money in our civilian life,” Jackson said.

“It isn’t a disgrace for a Soldier to extend for this reason. Someone has to do it. It is better to have someone who wants to be here voluntarily for the additional year,” Welch said.

Jackson arrived in Iraq in February 2004 with the 357th Corp Support Battalion, a Reserve unit from Athens, Ga. He admits that he also extended his tour because he believes that helping those who live under oppression is the right thing to do.

“I started looking at extending not long after I arrived here,” Jackson said.

Jackson talked to his group’s human resource officer and was informed that he had to wait until he was within 120 days of redeploying in order to apply. The wait period is to ensure that extending is something that the Soldier really wants to do, Jackson said.

“The second reason why Soldiers stay behind is out of patriotism,” Welch said. “We have Soldiers over here enjoying what they do, wanting to serve their country,” he said.

“I stayed because I knew that my assistance was needed,” said Chief Warrant Officer Joseph H.

Marcus, electrical engineer for Tallil Directorate of Public Works.

The Tallil Air Base Directorate of Public Works lost their electrical engineer and the base was right in the middle of an 11K electrical power generation system upgrade. Marcus, who originally deployed with the 197th Field Artillery Brigade from New Hampshire, had the expertise that DPW needed to work through some of the obstacles and new design to include implementing some relay points at major southern camps in Iraq.

“I think that this extension was beneficial to the Army, Air Force and everybody,” Marcus said.

All of the Soldiers who extended agree that there is one key factor in extending during a deployment.

“Having a good family support system is a big help. It makes a difference,” Jackson said.

“Your family and your employer should be a factor or consideration. My family supported my decision because they believed in me,” Marcus said.

“When you have Soldiers that are willing to extend, backed with the support of their families, everyone wins,” Welch said. “The Army, because they won’t have to expend resources; the unit, because they have a ready, willing and experienced Soldier to fill a position; and the Soldier, because he or she is able to better provide for their family while gaining more work experience.”

Early bird gets his worm and a wealth of experience

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca
1st COSCOM PAO

FORWARD OPERATION BASE ENDURANCE, Q-WEST, Iraq—When some teenagers enlist into the military after high school, it is for a variety of reasons such as family tradition, to serves their country or to get an education. While others may volunteer to gain experience and learn a trade. For one member of the 1st Corps Support Command, he not only brings experience to the unit, but also a wealth of knowledge.

Sgt. Matthew Crawford, 818th Maintenance Company, 1225th Corps Support Battalion, 917th Corps Support Group, had obtained the skill of being a machinist and a welder well before he joined the Army Reserves.

“In my junior year in high school I started taking machinist classes which continued on during my senior year,” Crawford said.

Working with metal was something that he knew that he wanted to do and recognized early in life the tools and resources that



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Sgt. Matthew Crawford, machinist and welder, 818th Maintenance Company, uses a plasma tool to cut armor off of a tactical vehicle.



existed to get him to where he wanted to go, the 22 year old said.

During the summer between his junior and senior year in high school, Crawford enlisted into the Army and graduated from basic training under the Army’s split option program. This program allowed Crawford to complete high school and attend Advanced Individual Training there afterwards where he would pick up his military occupational skill. He chose to become a machinist.

Sgt. Matthew Crawford, machinist and welder, 818th Maintenance Company. Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

After completing AIT, Crawford enrolled into Pennsylvania State College of Technology where he was able to complete one semester and began his second, focusing on the machinist trade. During that time he attended drill where he was assigned to a Pennsylvania maintenance company and later involuntarily transferred to a quartermaster company.

“I had to withdraw from my second semester classes because of OIF I,” Crawford said.

The only welder in the unit in which this special skill was not required, his skills had to be set aside temporarily.

See CRAWFORD, page 34

Becoming a couple again

How to create a shared sense of purpose after a deployment

By the Uniformed Service University of the Health Sciences

Coming together as a couple after war deployment isn't always easy or something that happens naturally. It requires effort, and an understanding that each person has grown and changed during the separation. A positive way to think about this is that both of you, service person and spouse, have developed your own sense of purpose coping with new experiences while apart. What's important now is to come together and create a "shared sense of purpose", that is essential for your well being as a couple, that of your children and your life in the community. This won't happen overnight; it will take time, mutual compassion and a desire to do so. Here are four steps to help you create a "shared sense of purpose".

STEP#1: Understand Each Other's Sense of Purpose During Separation

The returning service member's sense of purpose has been shaped by:

- 1) Traumatic events that can be difficult to process and talk about.
- 2) Identification and closeness with their military unit and comrades who have shared similar experiences.
- 3) Regimentation in the form of highly structured and efficient routines.
- 4) Heightened sensory experiences including sights, sounds and smells.
- 5) Expanded self-importance and identity shaped by war.

The spouse's sense of purpose has been shaped by:

- 1) *New roles and responsibilities.* Many spouses have assumed new or more taxing employment, oversight of finances and child rearing.
- 2) *Community support trade-offs.* Some spouses and children left the military base to stay with parents and in-laws for various reasons, but will have experienced loss of connection with their military community, its familiarity and support.
- 3) *Emotional changes.* Some spouses may have experienced growing independence and thrived on it; others may have found this a difficult time leading to depression, anxiety, increased alcohol or substance use and abuse, and other symptoms of stress.

STEP #2: Recognize that the following concerns upon return are common, often shared or felt indirectly, and will require mutual adjustments and time:

1) *Home.* Life at home does not have the edge and adrenaline associated with wartime duty, which often leads to let down, disappointment and difficulty shifting gears.

2) *Children.* Reconnecting with one's children is an anticipated event by service member and spouse. Children react differently depending upon their age, and can be shy, angry, or jealous as new bonds are reestablished. Discipline will now be shared, often resulting in conflicting opinions and styles.

3) *Relationship.* Concern about having grown apart, growing close again without giving up individual growth and viewpoints, issues of fidelity, and being able to discuss these issues without raising more anxiety or anger challenge many couples.

4) *Public.* While there has been widespread support of the service member, the public has mixed views of the war. Protracted deployment and an upcoming election may polarize the public, promoting media coverage that can undermine the pride and purpose military families feel about their involvement.

Know when to seek help. Both service member and spouse have endured a level of stress, uncertainty, worry and lonesomeness that can affect one's health and mental health. If either spouse or service member suspects they may be suffering from a health or mental health problem, it is essential to seek help. Many service members do not want to seek help for mental health problems from the military for fear of damaging their career. However, the consequences of letting a problem linger untreated can be much more damaging. There are excellent treatments including medications that can help people reclaim their lives and enjoy their families, as they should. You owe it to yourself and your family to be in good health.

For the full fact sheet, please go to the Uniformed Service University of the Health Sciences website at: <http://www.usuhs.mil/psy/RFSMC.pdf>

Freedom Calls Foundation keeps Soldiers and families close

By Maj. Andrew Walter, 46th Corps Support Group

TAJI, Iraq – The Freedom Calls Foundation is a non-profit organization that uses donations to set up and maintain the equipment overseas. In the United States, they rely upon universities and corporations who have their own equipment to volunteer their time and donate the use of their facilities for the cause. They hope to have every Army camp in Iraq equipped soon.

“The foundation is transforming a long-standing family communication paradigm in time of war by enabling soldiers in the war zone to attend and participate in milestone family events,” said John Harlow, executive director. “Soldiers are now in a position to keep their commitments to their families at the same time keeping their commitment to their country.”

The long-term vision of the FCF is that troops will be able to come home from a day on the battlefield and virtually be with their families and tuck their children into bed every night, using state-of-the-art technology,” Harlow said.

Just recently, 65 Soldiers residing at Taji received a glimpse of home from one of the FCC’s remote facilities when they participated in a Video Teleconference with family and loved ones during the Father’s Day weekend at the Freedom Call Center here.

“Soldiers are now in a position to keep their commitments to their families at the same time keeping their commitment to their country.”

-John Harlow, FCF executive director

The Father’s Day VTC was one of the FCC’s biggest events since the center was activated on the installation more than a year ago.

Family from 11 states and 15 cities had the opportunity to spend time with their deployed Soldiers due to the FCC program and the Soldiers and civilians that operate and maintain the facility.

Soldiers from the Combat Service Support Automation Management Office, 46th Corps Support Group manage and operate the FCC.

“It takes about 17 people a day to keep the center up and running 24 hours a day,” said Staff Sergeant Renee Foster, the FCC noncommissioned officer in charge.

“We support more than 600 Soldiers using the facility everyday with VTC scheduling requirements, identification checkers, the cleaning crew and the

“It takes about 17 people a day to keep the center up and running 24 hours a day.”

-Staff Sgt. Renee Foster, 46th CSG

ongoing technical requirements. So our Soldiers stay busy.”

When Soldiers use the VTC system, for the most part, they think that the process is simple. All they have to do is look at the camera and talk. However there is a lot more that goes into running a VTC.

“There is a huge amount of coordination between us, the Family Readiness Groups, business owners that contribute use of their VTC suites back in the states, the Freedom Calls Foundation and Soldiers’ units,” said Major Andrew Walter, CSSAMO and FCC officer in charge. “Father’s Day is one of the many events we have been able to give families the opportunity to spend with their Soldiers. The CSSAMO Soldiers put their heart and soul into providing the service men and women a chance to see and hear their loved ones. I commend them.”

“The reactions of the families makes all the coordination worthwhile,” said Ed Bukstel, the foundation’s director of operations.

Bukstel travels around the country, setting up video calls, displaying photos from the most memorable moments.

“This is a time to reflect and honor the sacrifices and service of our Soldiers and their families,” said Ed Bukstel, “It is especially important that all Americans support our soldiers during their time away defending this great nation of ours.”

European pastime hits Middle East

By Capt. Sonise Lumbaca ,1st COSCOM PAO

TAQADDUM, Iraq — With a little networking between the Army and Marine forces on a small installation out west, one sport favored among the Europeans has achieved popularity with Americans and is on the rise in Iraq.

The sport is Rugby- Touch Rugby to be exact.

The groups here play touch rugby rather than the full-contact version because of the turf that is available to them, which is made up of a combination of sand, gravel, various-sized rocks and foreign debris.

“This game is ideal for members of the military because it requires fitness, a lot of thinking and it is a very inexpensive sport,”

-Maj. John A. Larowe
620th CSB

“Players can get seriously hurt playing on this type of ground if engaged in full-contact rugby,” said Maj. John A. Larowe, executive officer, 620th Corps Support Battalion, 561st Corps Support Group, 1st Corps Support Command.

To limit injuries, the players play touch rugby in a similar manner that flag football is played, he said.

“Even during touch rugby players can get scrapes and bruises,” Larowe said.

Touch rugby is very similar to playing rugby. Instead of being

tackled by the opponent, the player on the opposing team is tagged instead. The player is then required to stop and touch the football-shaped ball to his or her foot and then pass it to a teammate. It’s faster than regular rugby and requires more running and passing skills, Larowe said.

Marine Col. Bob DeStafney brought the sport to the installation in early March.

“I never go anywhere without my ball and shoes,” DeStafney said. “I’ve brought them with me on every deployment.”

DeStafney put the word out that the sport was coming to Taqaddum. Through flyers placed on community bulletin boards, Larowe, also an avid player,

answered the call and brought a few Army comrades along.

“I’ve played in the past and was excited when I saw that there were others interested. I brought a few other Soldiers on board who never knew how to play until they arrived here in Iraq, and they have since excelled,” Larowe said.

“This game is ideal for members of the military because it requires fitness, a lot of thinking and it is a very inexpensive sport,” Larowe said. “Above all its fun and something that builds esprit de corps.”

“On (Taqaddum), there’s really nothing to do here after the duty day is completed and I like to be

See *RUGBY*, page 35

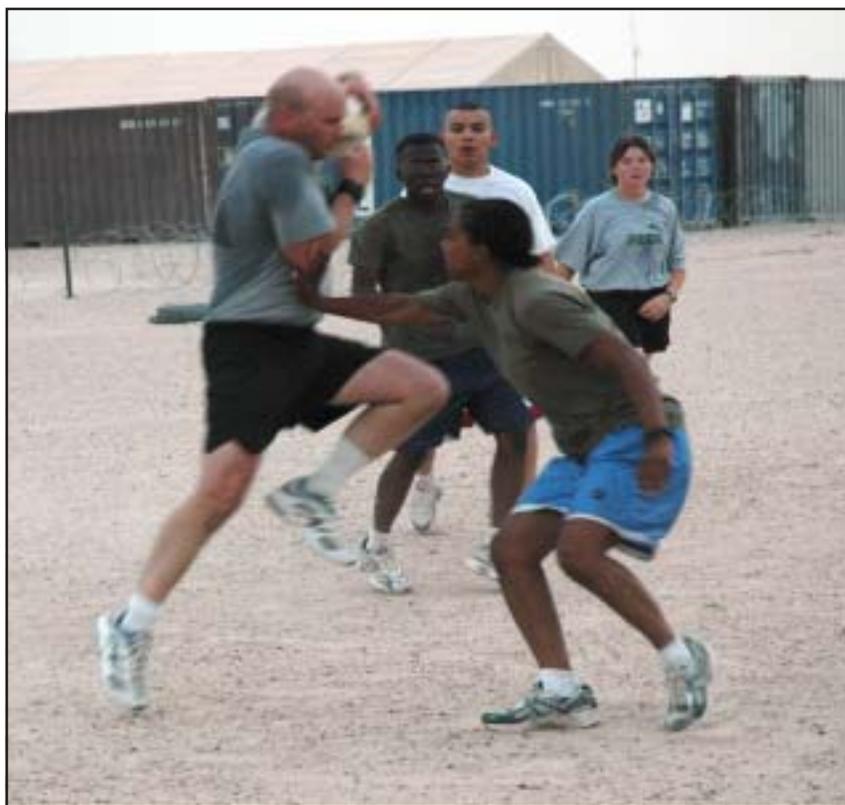


Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca
Maj. John A. Larowe is tagged by a Marine on the opposing team during a touch rugby game held July 5 at Taqaddum, Iraq.

RECOVERY, from page 10

in their cranes, our recovery teams provides security for them.

To date, over 100 green and white trucks have been recovered by the 17th CSB.

“Some of these vehicles have had to be recovered because of IED and (vehicle borne explosive devices) attacks, accidents and maintenance problems,” Warninghoff said.

The task organized recovery team is made up of about 20 Soldiers. They have a certain amount of time upon notification to be ready to exit the installation and be on their way to the recovery sight. Within that time an initial assessment of the overall situation is conducted.

“We treat the recovery as if it were a (medical evacuation) for the vehicles and the people that are involved,” Warninghoff said. “Our teams move with a sense of urgency.”

Once on site, each Soldier is responsible for executing their role of the recovery.

“You have to work quickly in your assigned task when out on recovery missions because you never know where the enemy may be,” said Sgt. Rusty D. Weaver, inspector and wrecker operator, 536th Maintenance Company.

Weaver is responsible for inspecting green trucks for damages and the type of repair required to fix it. He also determines whether or not the vehicle can be fixed.

Weaver and the other inspectors in his team also have the dual duty of wrecker operator. Once they determine the severity of the damage, they haul the vehicle to where further assessments can be made.

“I handle the job of fixing the green trucks we pull in from our recovery missions depending how

bad the damage is,” said Sgt. Steven E. Wentz, shop foreman, 536th Maint. Co.

Wentz biggest repair was repairing a vehicle that had serious engine and radiator damage, loss of three tires, and the transmission shot. He and his team were able to repair this vehicle, however, this isn’t always the case.

“If we are unable to fix it here, then we prep the vehicle and send it off to a location where it can be fixed,” Wentz said.

In the event vehicles are irreparable, functional parts are removed and set aside to use on vehicles that require the parts, Wentz said.

“We are the Triple A of the northwest,” Warninghoff said.

“I enjoy this job. I know that when a vehicle goes down for whatever reason, those drivers are counting on us to get them out of there,” Weaver said.

The 17th CSB is an active duty unit from Schofield Barracks, HI, deployed in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom.

CAMPAIGN, from page 11

small team of designers to brainstorm effective ways to get the word out. The first idea also seemed the most obvious one to start the campaign — military publications.

Task force members agreed they needed some common thread to tie all the messages together – like a logo.

“The [designers] suggested we needed to have [a logo] that everybody recognizes,” said Lt. Col. Theodore Martin, field team leader, Joint IED Defeat Task Force-Iraq. “5-and-25” became that logo. “The most important thing coalition forces can accomplish is situational awareness when they’re outside the wire; it is the most basic [tactic] that you have to master.”

“This seemed appropriate because 5-and-25 means awareness,” said Master Sgt. William Johnson, one of three designers. “5-and-25 means checking the area around you for a threat. Every time you stop outside a secure area, you always should check. Not checking could get you killed.”

More specifically, 5-and-25 requires that troops look for anything out of the ordinary within a five-meter radius of their vehicles, according to counter-IED policies. If halted long enough, forces should then exit their vehicles and conduct a 25-meter sweep around their position. Halting for as little as four minutes can prove costly.

“Evidence shows that [many] Soldiers, who are at a short halt [for as little as] four to five minutes, are getting hit by IEDs near their vehicles,” Martin said.

Besides the recognizable 5-and-25 logo getting printed in military publications, the campaign will also produce messages to other outlets that could potentially reach as far away as the Department of Defense and Afghanistan.

“This time it’s [newspaper ads], next time it will be commercials on TV and radio,” Martin said. “After that, we’re looking at expanding it. The sky is the limit.”

Included in the laundry list of ideas are bumper stickers, flash screens on Web sites, stress balls and even Frisbees, according to Martin.

Whatever the means, Stockdale said the message must stay focused with one purpose: to save lives.

“There’s no predicting exactly where, when or how you’re going to meet an IED when you’re driving around,” Stockdale said. “Practicing those basic methods and regularly using them significantly enhances your chances of survival.”



BROTHER, from page 24

and everything just came together, he said.

The words in the note became the chorus of the song.

“On Christmas Eve, an hour before church [Mustelier] came to me because he wanted me to hear a song that he intended to play at the Christmas Eve church service. When I heard the song, I was surprised. It really blew me away,” McKeown said. “He took the note and brought it to life. It was his way of saying ‘thank you’.”

Just recently Mustelier performed the song during a Soldiers’ talent show, an event hosted monthly by the Taji Morale, Welfare and Recreation center.

“I thought that it was words that every Soldier here should hear,” Mustelier said.

The song, which was a hit for the audience at the show, won first place.

CDC, from page 26

“We had help from the folks at KBR in prepping the roast and additional food and drinks, and we couldn’t have done it without their support,” she said.

Additional to the pig roast, rotisserie chicken, pork ribs, hamburger and hotdogs, potato salad, corn, and assortment of cookies and pies were served.

“There was a lot of preparation that we put into this, but seeing the Soldiers enjoy themselves has paid off,” McFarlane said.

The display of camaraderie and team building was prevalent throughout the day, a goal the command was looking to reach. The command achieved this by making games available, which included volleyball, horseshoes, touch football and card games.

“We wanted to foster personal and professional relationships while we are here that will last a lifetime. We handle the professional side on a day to day basis with daily operation,” Samonte said.

The organizational day is a tool that can develop the personal relationship side, he said.

Although the CDC hosted the event, all units on LSA Anaconda were invited.

Mustelier is hoping that many Soldiers will have the opportunity to hear the song, which is one reason why he performs at the installation’s monthly talent show when he has the opportunity.

“Hopefully the song will open people’s eyes and help them to understand that there are people out there caring about them. Sometimes [a Soldier] forgets that those people are there when they are in the thick of it,” Mustelier said. “This song will remind them and hopefully help get them through any situation, and not just ones concerning the Army.”

RACE, from page 22

the marathon, making it all worth while.

“My run went well, my goal was to finish in an hour and 35 minutes,” Carone said. “I came in at an hour and 35 minutes and 17 seconds so I obtained my goal. We had a great group that trained on Sundays and it was a good time.”



Photo by Spc. Jerome Bishop

A Soldier crosses the finish line after running 13.1 miles during the OneAmerica 500 race hosted by the 46th Corps Support Group May 7 at Taji, Iraq.

The Mini-marathon gave troops more than just the opportunity to go out for an early morning run. It gave them a chance to take part in festivities going on half way around the world, and the feeling of a little piece of home.

“The CDC opened this event to everyone because we touch everyone,” Samonte said.

“There’s not a Soldier, Marine, Sailor or Airman that we do not operationally touch,” he said.

“This [event] isn’t something I expected to happen while deployed,” said Spc. Korilynn Palmer, 484th Movement Control Battalion.

“I think it was pretty cool that they are giving [Soldiers] a chance to unwind a bit,” she said.

“This is a good thing because it shows the Soldiers that the leadership isn’t only about business and there is a time to try to relax,” said Staff Sgt. David E. Florendo. “It also shows Soldiers that the command recognizes how hard they work and that they are appreciated.”

In a time where many troops will be separated from family and friends for extended periods of time due to deployments, esprit de corps is the one thing they have to get them through it. Organizational days are clearly one tool to do this.

It’s all about taking care of the Soldiers,” Samonte said.

CRAWFORD, from page 28

“During OIF I worked convoy escort missions and security details,” Crawford said.

This change in assignment didn’t disappoint him because he saw it as more experience gained, he said.

Crawford participated in over 100 convoy escort missions during his tenure.

Deployments can take a lot out of a person physically. Once he redeployed, Crawford took some time off and took some elective college courses. However, once he completed these courses, he was back at Pennsylvania State College of Technology, this time to take his skills and apply it to a larger field; civil engineering.

“I was already skilled in being a machinist and welder. These skills tie into civil engineering. My goal is to now become a civil engineer,” he said.

They say that lightning never strikes twice, however it did for Crawford. Crawford was called to duty yet again for OIF III.

“It was hard to [deploy to Iraq], but not like the first time. This time was a little harder to let go of family. They had already seen me go the first time,” Crawford said.

He was sent to work at an up-armor facility at Camp Virginia, Kuwait, and later transferred here, when the mission there was completed.

“[Up-armor] made me feel important because I knew that I was helping to keep Soldiers safe,” Crawford said.

Crawford admits that it doesn’t bother him to be in Iraq a second time. His time here, like the first, will give him experience, he said.

“The things that I have learned are people in different fields can teach you what they know, while giving you the skill of how to multi-task. This widens the field of knowledge that one day you may need,” he said.

Crawford also believes in trying to work well with everyone; a practice well noted by his supervisors.

“Crawford is highly respected by his peers, subordinates and leaders,” said Chief Warrant Officer Charles A. Russell, allied trades technician and supervisor.

“He has a ‘can do’ attitude and is willing to accept challenges with a creative and open mind,” Russell said.

“From what I see and know of him, Crawford could probably run the shop on his own,” said Capt. James H. Pope, commander, 818th Maintenance Company.

“[Crawford is a highly motivated and dedicated Soldier with outstanding leadership traits. I talked to him about putting in a warrant officer packet. He is definitely warrant officer material,” Russell said.

For Crawford, deciding what he wanted to do early on in life has not only developed him into a model Soldier, but has also paved the way for a bright future.

“I took machinist and welding classes in college and in the Army because I want to become a civil engineer. One day I would like to own my own business. Right now I am doing what I love to do and the Army is helping me to get there,” Crawford said.

COMMUNICATORS, from page 34

Lui also provide systems troubleshooting on automation systems, tactical and commercial telephone systems and audio/ visual systems.

Lui, along with Moore, were two of the members of the G6 element that arrived in country early to stand up the 1st COSCOM’s communications infrastructure.

The G6 element also supervises the communication requirements, develop plans and policies that govern the use of cellular and satellite telephones, develop the distribution plan for all automation systems and manages the signal network, which involves assigning frequencies for subordinates units to communicate internally to their units within the 1st COSCOM.

There were a few challenges, especially for an element whose responsibility covers a myriad of communication requirements.

The G6 element’s biggest obstacles were setting up the communications infrastructure and standing up the IWS server.

“For the amount of systems we have to operate and maintain, we are undermanned for that military occupational specialty. Of the 14 Soldiers assigned to this section, we have four of them working out of their MOS,” Brown said.

“However, we were able to cross train those Soldiers, activate the system within a couple of weeks and get these Soldiers to where they are today,” he said.

All members of the element agree that they could not operate effectively and efficiently without each other.

“The civilian contractors have had many years of experience and never hesitate to show us how to operate and troubleshoot equipment and the easier way to do things,” Lui said.

Message to my Soldier

Master Sgt. Willie L. Hemphill
HHC, 46th CSG (ABN)
Negron, we miss you and love you. Even though you can not be here, you're the "Bestest Dad" in the world. Love Rosie, Shonda, Willie J and the hairy crew!

•••••

Spc. Sean Wheeler
659th Maintenance Company
Goose, I love you so much! You are my hero, and I'm so proud of you! Be careful, and hurry home safely to me! Snuggles, Forever and Always, Your Princess

1st Sgt. John Seelhorst
TSB, 1st COSCOM
Counting down the days until you are home. Take care and stay safe. I'm so very proud of you. And the answer is YES!!!!
Love Christy



MAJ Taylor, Stewart
HHC, 1st COSCOM
We love and miss you very much! Please take care of yourself and the other soldiers.
XOXOXO, Debbie, Asia, Aspen, Athens, Ayden and Emery

•••••

SUBMISSIONS: If you have a deployed 1st COSCOM Soldier and would like to submit a message, email their rank, full name and unit with no more than a 30 word message to sonise.lumbaca@us.army.mil. Messages more than 30 words will be cut off at the 30 word mark or last sentence previous to it in order to allow everyone the opportunity to submit. Please ensure that message do not contain information too personal in nature or inappropriate content.

RUGBY, from page 31

active," said Sgt. Tung Li, 620th CSB.

Li has been involved with the sport since June.

"Just playing this game does a lot for me. It keeps me fit. I am playing on a team with others in my unit and I get to meet new people like the Marines who I might not have under different circumstances," Li said.

The group of 10 to 25 Soldiers and Marines participate in the game every Sunday and Thursday.

They are currently trying to put together matches where they can compete against other installations in Iraq.

"We know that there are other groups out there involved in the sport and would like the chance to play against them. However, the mission, which is why we are here in the first place, takes priority," DeStafney said.

"Rugby is a game that you have either played and loved or not played and don't understand. In either case it gives the new guys something they can take back home with them," Larowe said. "The best thing about this sport is that it is an outlet for us."



Photo by Capt. Sonise Lumbaca

Soldiers and Marines engage in a game of rugby at Taqaddum, Iraq on an open sand field. Players tag their opponents instead of tackling them due to rough terrain and foreign debris on the ground.



AIRBORNE

