

The Warrior

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May 2005



Rogue and IIF

Focusing on the safety of Iraqis

Saber in Salman Pak

Wolverines

Battlekings in action

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Rogue and IIF on the streets -

1-64 Armor and 1st Bn., IIF, conduct joint patrols in Baghdad, sharing in one, common goal - to ensure the security of Iraq and the safety of its people.

On the cover: Pfc. Michael White, C Co., 1-64 Armor, scans rooftops and windows from the top of his humvee during a patrol in Baghdad April 28.

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1st Lt. James Fulcher, A Btry., 1-9 FA, truck smashes a lock during a raid of houses along the Tigris River in Baghdad, April 26.

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SPARTAN WARRIORS,

We are four months into our TOA from Ironhorse, and you are all probably wondering how are things really going. Here are a few thoughts from my perspective:

The Spartan Team is fast approaching the “run” phase of mission execution competency. You all are executing missions with efficiency, competency, and flexibility. You are making a difference. Although it is still dangerous in zone, your successful mission execution is deterring a lot of terrorist/insurgent attacks.

The terrorists/insurgents have resorted to targeting innocent civilians with VBIEDs, IEDs, and murder. They do not have the will, competence or guts to confront Spartan Warriors head on. We will continue to hunt these cowards down and do what is necessary to eliminate them. The most effective way to hunt is get actionable intelligence from the Iraqi citizens, and we are seeing more citizens coming forth with this valuable information. It can never come quick enough, but I ask you to continue building good relations with the citizens so they become more comfortable bringing us the actionable intelligence.

The fact that the people are giving us more information each day proves that they appreciate your work over here – and that proves that you are making a difference.

You all have proven your ability to successfully perform under fire; your courage does not go unnoticed. Everyone from Marne 6 on down recognizes your incredible courage and ability to maintain mission focus under fire. It is very humbling and inspiring watching Spartan Warriors live our Army Values in combat.

Security and stability missions are arduous tasks that can easily become boring and appear a waste of

time. Just remember, you have neutralized the enemy when you are doing a majority of security and stability missions. Never let your guard down, expect the unexpected, and continue to gain the trust and confidence of the people.

Regardless of what the mission is, it is hard work executing in scorching heat. We are in the high 90s now, and it will be getting up to 115 degrees soon. It is exhausting work operating in environments like this. Keep hydrated and look out for each other.

The Iraqi Security Forces are becoming more active and prominent in our AO. Do not get frustrated with them, they are not designed, equipped, nor trained to perform like Spartan units. Train them to the best of your ability, use their cultural expertise, and show them you have confidence in them. Continue to set the example so they know what right looks like. They will imitate you because they respect Spartan Warriors.

Our Rear Detachments are doing great work. They are holding down rear operations allowing us to focus on our mission. The families are also showing incredible courage, support, and independence. This is the most effective Rear Detachment I have seen in four deployments—we all need to count our blessings.

Finally, as we enter the “run” stage of proficiency, never take anything as “routine.” The minute we adopt a routine mindset, we will overlook the basics and then put ourselves and our comrades at risk.

Maintain the standard of complete understanding of task & purpose, PCIs/PCCs, rehearse, and pause to do risk mitigation before going out on mission. You all are truly inspiring, keep up the great effort.



SEND ME,
Spartan 6



The Warrior

The official magazine of the
Spartan Brigade Combat Team and its Soldiers

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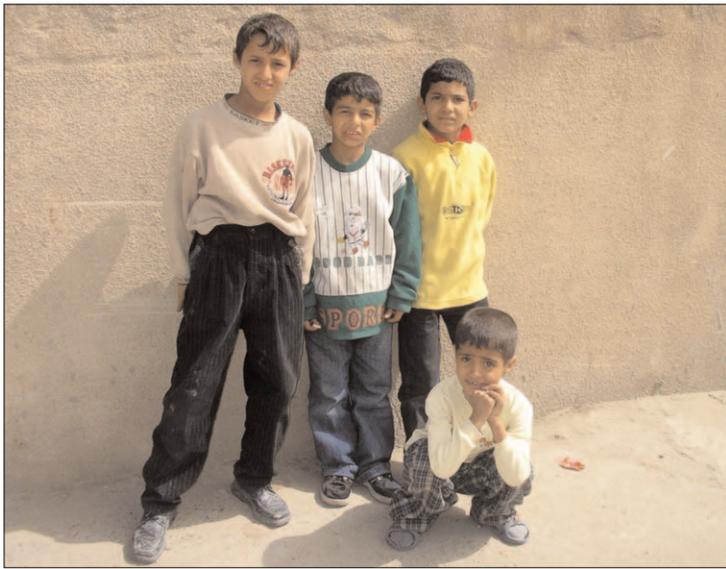
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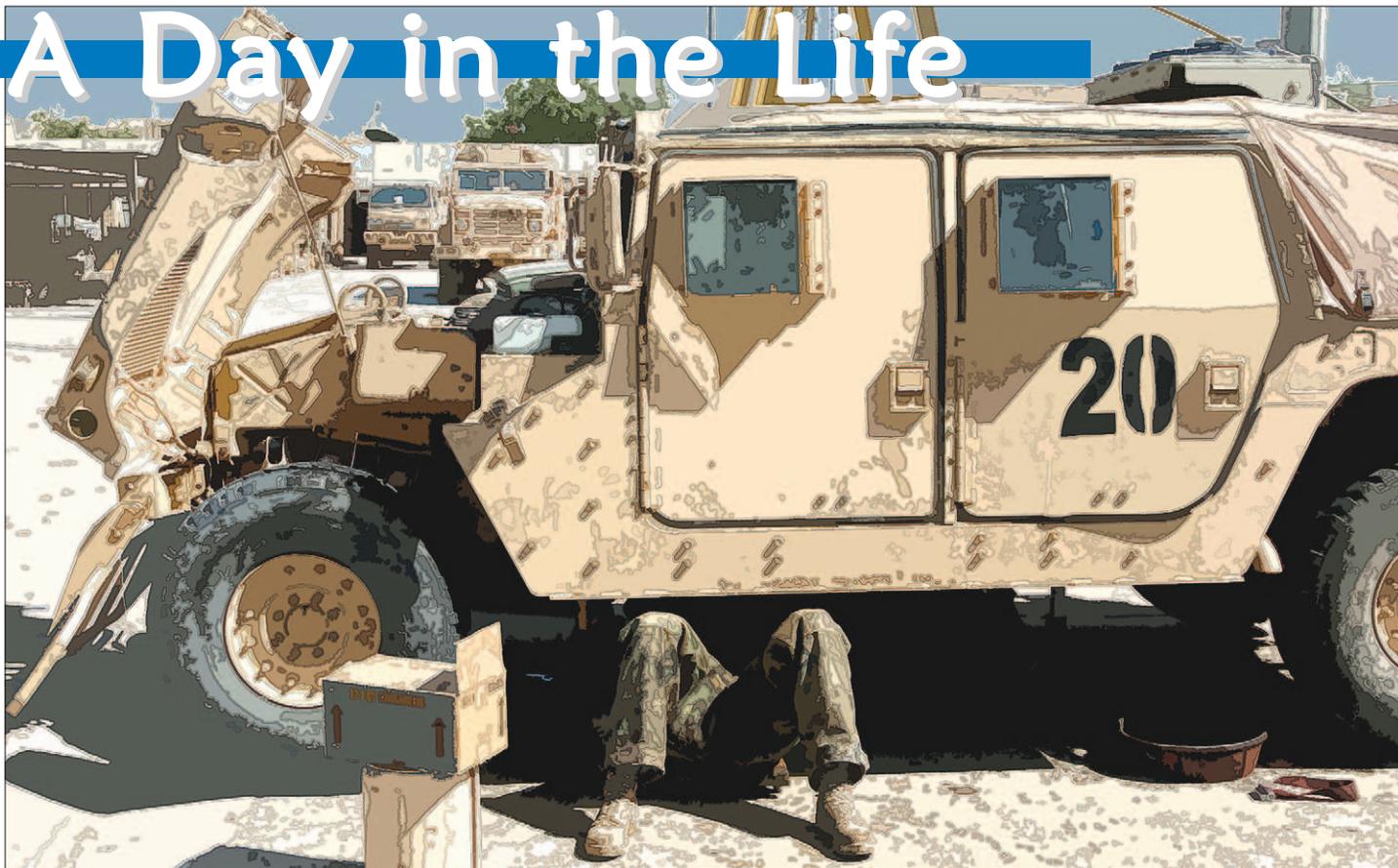
ATTENTION!

“Shots from the field” is always looking for photos taken by Spartan Brigade Combat Team Soldiers serving in Iraq. If you have a good photo, and we have room, we’ll print it. Email your photos via AKO to: craig.zentkovich@us.army.mil, Subject: Shots from the field. Be sure to include your rank, name, and unit as well as a caption for the photograph that includes the subject of the photograph with names and dates. I look forward to receiving your shots.

Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich
Editor, *The Warrior*



A Day in the Life



Headquarters mechanics keep Spartans mobile

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody

CAMP LOYALTY, Iraq – The sound of cranking ratchets, rumbling engines and shrieking timing belts can almost always be heard in one spot on Camp Loyalty.

At the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, motor pool, 11 mechanics work long, strenuous hours maintaining the brigade's vehicles.

"We're working hard to keep the unit mobile and sustain our combat power," said Staff Sgt. Keith Kerrick, HHC, 2nd BCT, shop foreman. "We keep y'all rolling."

Kerrick, from Washington, D.C., said he often works hand in hand with other Loyalty motor pools to secure needed parts, rather than waiting weeks for orders to be filled.

The motor pool also handles all of the brigade's attached units and their vehicles – units like Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, personal security details and Air Force detachments. All in all, they are currently responsible for about 70 vehicles, and every week, they get more.

Everything from humvees, light medium tactical vehicles, M577 armored personnel carriers, M88 recovery vehicles, M2 Bradleys and generators can be found in various states of disassembly during the day in the motor pool.

"It's a good team, a good set of people, squared away (non-commissioned officers)," said Pvt. Uriah John, HHC, 2nd BCT, generator mechanic. "I'd stay 20 years right here with this team



(Above) Spc. John Lyautey, HHC, 2nd BCT, mechanic, and Staff Sgt. Harry Anderson, motor pool NCOIC, check the condition of a Humvee's oil.

(Left) Spc. Dejuan Bryant works on an exhaust system.

if I could.”

John, from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, said he thinks Fort Stewart and 3rd Infantry Division is a good place for a Soldier to start a career.

“It’s tough here, you get put to the test mentally and physically,” he said. “But the pressure makes you perform at a higher level.”

During a typical day, mechanics upgrade vehicles with armor and other equipment, while performing organizational-level preventative maintenance checks and services, according to Spc. Luis Crespo, HHC, 2nd BCT, motor pool supply specialist.

Crespo, from San Lorenzo, Puerto Rico, has responsibilities that include ordering parts for vehicles and issuing them to mechanics.

A typical day at the motor pool runs until dusk, and judging by the sweat pouring off of the mechanics, the days are demanding. The group usually tackles 4 vehicles per day that are sched-

uled for routine maintenance, then deals with whatever repair issues pop up.

Sometimes the crew performs major repairs on up to ten vehicles a day.

“We have a lot of attachments that we’re responsible for, but the team really comes together and we have a little fun,” said Staff Sgt. Harry Anderson, HHC, 2nd BCT, motor pool NCOIC. “We try to make it a home away from home here and keep a good atmosphere.”

Anderson, from Sumter, S.C., said he believes the key to his team’s unity is good communication – and a good sense of humor. He said his mechanics know when it’s OK to kid around and when it’s time to be serious.

“We have Soldiers risking their lives every day, using vehicles all the time,” John said. “It’s important no one breaks down out there in the combat zone, or gets hurt because of faulty safety equipment.”



Pvt. Uriah John, HHC, 2nd BCT, mechanic, jacks up a Humvee at Camp Loyalty, April 7.



Soldiers from 443rd CA Bn. and 1-9 FA speak with operators of a Salman Pak water treatment facility April 23. During their visit, Soldiers interviewed workers about recent stoppages in the water supply.

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody

SALMAN PAK, Iraq – Responding to reports of water shortages in Salman Pak, Jisr-Diyala and Village Ten, Soldiers from Task Force Baghdad, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, visited four pump stations in affected areas April 23, seeking the source of the problem.

In the Southeastern Baghdad area, water is pumped directly from the grassy banks of the Tigris River, treated at one of several stations, then pumped through above-ground pipes to neighborhoods.

“We found that the treatment plants and pump stations had not been operating for about a week, dramatically reducing the water available to local residents,” said Capt. Mike Brockway, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, Team 6, team leader. “The plant manager

who came with us said his workers were afraid to come to work because of criminals, and that there was not enough fuel for the stations’ generators when the power goes out.”

Brockway, from Orange County, N.Y., and his team, part of the Rhode Island Army Reserves, work to assess essential services in the area. The unit was attached to 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and is currently attached to 2nd BCT at Camp Loyalty.

According to Brockway, the security situation is improving in the area, due to a greatly increased Iraq Police and Iraqi Army presence. Driving between the four stations, the convoy passed numerous IP checkpoints and IA patrols.

At the first stop, a water treatment facility, it was dis-

Capt. Mike Brockway, 443rd CA, team leader, and Capt. James Hock, 1-9 FA, project manager, speak with an operator of a water treatment facility in Southern Baghdad April 23.





(Above) Soldiers from A Btry., 1-9 FA, pull security during a visit to a Salman Pak water pumping station. (Right) Hock speaks with an operator of the Salman Pak Water Treatment Facility.

covered that several key workers had recently been arrested elsewhere during an IA raid. The station's holding pools were nearly empty, which reflected how long the water pumps had been off – about seven days.

A worker at the Salman Pak Water Treatment Plant said his station provides water for 400 residential buildings, as well as numerous businesses, schools and nurseries.

“Our intent on this mission was to turn the pumps back on, but the workers had already done that by the time we arrived,” said Capt. James Hock, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, project manager. “They told us that as long as there is fuel for the generators, the pumps will run.”

Hock took a look at the pumps in each station, and ensured that they were operating properly.

Soldiers in gun trucks from A Battery, 1-9 FA, provided tight security for the mission, conducted in an area that, although improving, is still considered a dangerous part of Baghdad.

Also supporting the mission were troops from 307th Psychological Operations Company, a Missouri Army Reserve unit that is attached to 2nd BCT.

“Our job is to talk to people in the area, tell them what we’re doing here and why,” said Sgt. Clayton Coash, 307th PSYOP, team leader. “It’s important in this area, where people have been without regular water service, to let them know that we’re working to fix the problems.”



BATTLEKINGS

1-9 FA is joined by Iraqi Security Forces for multiple missions south of Baghdad

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody

Battlekings and Iraqi Security Forces took to the streets of Southern Baghdad every day this month in a massive joint effort to disrupt insurgent activity in the contested area.

As a result, many areas affected by the operations have been upgraded from “Amber Status” to “Green Status,” which denotes a more stable security situation.

Battlekings raid home, enlist K-9 support

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, in coordination with Iraqi Police, conducted a simultaneous raid on four separate sites in Baghdad April 21, netting two suspected insurgents.

One of the men detained is suspected of being a financier for a weapons production operation, and the other is suspected of receiving the weapons and distributing them through the financier to anti-Iraqi forces.

“There’s been an increase in sniper activity in the (3rd Infantry Division) area of operations,” said Maj. Terry Cook, 1-9 FA, executive officer. “We wanted to get these guys, specifically to deny the enemy the ability to conduct sniper operations.”

Two sites thought to hold weapons caches related to the men’s activities were also searched, but no weaponry was found at either.

Iraqi Police were included in every aspect of the mission, and continue to work closely with 1-9. Three IP stations are within 1-9’s area of responsibility.

“IPs will always come out with us on these missions – they become more proficient with every one,” Cook, of Freeport, Fla., said. “They help us with religious sites, and can let the people know what we’re doing and why we’re doing it.”

IPs, Battlekings search riverside homes

Soldiers from A Battery, 1-9 FA, along with Iraqi Police, raided two houses near Salman Pak, April 26, suspected of having been insurgent hideouts.

“We received reports that about 25 insurgents used this house as a hideout,” said 1st Lt. Ed Williams, A Btry., platoon leader. “We’re going through to look for any useful evidence of their presence.”

IPs entered the house with the Soldiers, and secured each room, marking cleared rooms with chemlights.

Once it was clear no residents or enemy forces were present, K-9 handler Sean Quinn and his Dutch shepherd Raker searched the houses for traces of explosives and ammunition.

Quinn, a burly 6-year veteran of the Australian Army, drew stares of awe from Soldiers as he strode through the steady rain, wearing a huge oilskin duster, Raker close by his side.

“It’s good for me to be here, working with Americans and Iraqis – they’re quite professional,” Quinn said. “I’m putting into practice what I’ve done for years.”

He and Raker searched the spacious home while Battlekings pulled security on the street and over the adjacent Tigris River.

While nothing was found in the house, Soldiers made contact with neighborhood residents, and distributed some candy and water to local children.

“Raker is trained to find all of the common explosives here – TNT, nitro, RDX, C-4,” Quinn said. “He hasn’t found anything in the month he’s been with me, but he’s a well-trained working dog.”

Massive joint operation uncovers stash Intel, weapons caches found in abundance

In the largest joint Iraqi-U.S. operation for Spartan Brigade Combat Team to date, Soldiers and Iraqi Police searched homes and farms along the Tigris River in Southeastern



ON THE HUNT



(Above) As Iraqi Police look on, Pfc. Garrett Miller and Sgt. Ricky Reese, A Btry., 1-9 FA, escort a detainee to military transport for interrogation after a raid in Baghdad, April 21. (Left) 1st Lt. Ed Williams, A Btry., 1-9 FA, platoon leader, speaks with Iraqi police after searching an unoccupied house on the Tigris River in Baghdad, April 26. Insurgents are known to use the empty residences to stage attacks.



(Above) Staff Sgt. James Fulcher and Pfc. Loren Wauneka, both of A Btry., 1-9 FA, search a wooded area in Medain, Iraq, May 1. (Right) Iraqi Soldiers from Public Order Brigade confiscate an AK-47 magazine from a man in Medain, Iraq, during a sweep of the area May 1. Residents are allowed to have one AK-47 and one 30-round magazine.



Baghdad May 1, looking for weapons and insurgents.

Soldiers from 2nd BCT's 1-9 FA, and 2nd Public Order Brigade, an Iraqi Police unit, found multiple weapons caches containing hand grenades, rockets and rifle scopes.

"Our mission, with General Sadiq's POB, was to disrupt enemy activity along the Tigris, just south of the Tawatha nuclear power plant," said Lt. Col. Steven Merkel, 1-9 FA, commander. "We did that, but we did more – we demonstrated the proficiency of the 2nd POB to the Iraqi people."

In huge columns of humvees and IP pickup trucks, joint search teams moved from house to house, speaking with residents and looking for weapons.

The area along the Tigris is densely vegetated with palm trees and tall elephant grass, and residents live in homes ranging from mud huts with thatched roofs to opulent mansions with intricate landscaping.

Several times throughout the day, with temperatures reaching 94 degrees, residents brought cold drinks and fresh fruit out to Soldiers and IPs.

While residents mostly seemed to appreciate seeing the Iraqi Police at work, signs were everywhere that the area was, until recently, an insurgent stronghold.

Search teams found several buildings in the forest that appeared to have been used for holding hostages, and an arched tunnel made of reeds appeared to have been designed to hide vehicles from helicopters.

In a small cinder block shed behind a

large house, soldiers from A Battery, 1-9 FA, and 2nd POB discovered clothing, personal effects and identification papers belonging to Margaret Hassan, an aid worker who was kidnapped last October.

Hassan, who held British, Iraqi and Irish citizenship, is presumed dead after al-Jazeera reported receiving a grainy videotape of a woman being shot. The video was never broadcast.

Security and intelligence forces from the British consulate arrived and eventually took custody of four suspects, who are reported to have provided valuable information on Hassan's kidnappers.

In one home searched, IPs found a shoebox full of AK-47 ammunition and armor-piercing Dragunov ammunition. With the assistance of an interpreter and Soldiers from 2nd BCT's tactical human intelligence team, it was determined the box dated back to Saddam's regime. The box was confiscated without an arrest.

General Sadiq was involved the mission planning starting two days before the operation, which is a break from normal joint mission planning. His early inclusion reflects an increased level of trust in the Iraqi Police to keep secret the details of an upcoming raid.

"In the past, we haven't told the IPs anything until we were actually en route to the objective," Merkel, from Fort Wayne, Ind., said. "It's clear that no one knew we were coming, which reflects the increased professionalism of the 2nd POB."

After the 12-hour mission, 1-9 FA Soldiers said they were happy with the



day's results.

"My team found about 75 hollow point AK-47 rounds, and some larger armor piercing bullets," said Sgt. 1st Class Johnny "Smoke" Gibson, A Btry., platoon sergeant. "The most important part is that everyone got back safe – nobody was hurt."

Two days after the raid, Merkel revisited the neighborhood, and said he saw positive results of the operation.

"People's attitudes there are positive – residents were coming up to us and the IPs with additional information on insurgents in the area," Merkel said. "Tawatha and Salman Pak were once areas of support and even sanctuary for the insurgency, but no longer."

(Above) Spc. Dave Detweiler, A Btry., 1-9 FA, and POB officers move through a Medain, Iraq, neighborhood, searching for illegal weapons May 1.

(Below) Sean Quinn, a K-9 handler working with 2nd BCT, and Raker, a Dutch shepherd, search a Baghdad house for explosives April 26.



The concrete shed in Medain, Iraq, where the POB and Soldiers from A Btry., 1-9 FA, found Margaret Hassan's personal effects, May 1.





Rogue the

1st Lt. Weston Cramer, C Co., 1-64 Armor, platoon leader, patrols the streets of Central Baghdad April 27. Cramer's platoon conducts daily joint patrols with 1st Bn., Iraqi Intervention Forces, Soldiers.

and IIF meet, n hit the road

1st Bn., 64th Armor, and 1st Bn., Iraqi Intervention Force, jointly secure the streets of Baghdad

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich

For most 2nd Brigade Combat Team units in Baghdad, joint patrols and combat missions with Iraqi forces are commonplace.

Since the Spartans arrived in country, a working relationship has been forged with all Iraqi Security Forces - Iraqi Police, Public Order Brigade, IP Commandos, Iraqi Army and Iraqi Intervention Forces.

The partnership has one goal - to secure Iraq and its people.

Meet and Greet

Leadership from 1st Battalion, 64th Armor and 1st Battalion, Iraqi Intervention Forces, met for the first time April 17 at the camp.

About 25 officers and senior noncommissioned officers from each unit met for an introductory lunch at the camp's dining facility, followed by briefs from the respective battalions at the Rogue classroom, and a visit to the 1st Bn., IIF, Soldiers' quarters.

Lt. Col. Ali Naem Jabar, 1st Bn., IIF, commander, looks forward to the new relationship.

"We've worked with many American units," he said, referring to his battalion's joint missions in the Fallujah and Sadr City offensives. "We've learned a lot from them, and we know they, like us, are interested in building the new Iraq."

Jabar noted that during the inception of 1st Bn., IIF, in Aug. 2003, his Soldiers were apprehensive and scared.

"They're no longer scared. Every mission we go on - they're motivated." Jabar added, "We have 40 new recruits who aren't joining for the money; they're joining because they're patriots."

First battalion's 1st Company first sergeant is one of those patriots.

"I have received messages from terrorists telling me to leave the Army," 1st Sgt. Hassan Karim Gassim said. "In spite of that, I won't leave."

"My family supports me in this because they know I am one of thousands of Iraqis helping to change this country."

The commander of 1st Battalion's counterparts is well aware of his battalion's role in making that hap-



(Above) Company commanders from 1st Bn., IIF, attend a briefing held by 1-64 Armor at Camp Rustimiyah, April 17, while (right) Lt. Col. Kevin Farrell, 1-64 Armor, commander, is joined by 1st Bn., IIF, commander, Lt. Col. Ali Naem Jabar during his visit to Rustimiyah.



pen.

“We’re putting Iraq’s future in the hands of Iraqis,” Lt. Col. Kevin Farrell, 1-64 Armor, commander, said. “Our overall mission is to assist and support the Iraqi forces in maintaining the security and stability of the country.”

The companies from the respective battalions have trained and patrolled together since March. The battal-

ion-level staffs, however, are just now embarking on the joint mission; one that Farrell said will be a great partnership.

“We have experience, manpower and firepower,” the Harrison, N.Y., native, said. “They have combat experience, and knowledge of the culture and language.

“Together, the total is greater than the sum of its parts.”

On Patrol

On April 27, B Company, 1-64 Armor’s infantry platoon, attached to C Co., 1-64 Armor, took to the streets with 1st Company, 1st Bn., IIF to conduct security patrols in and around Baghdad.



(Above) A company commander in 1st Bn., IIF, gives a Soldier instructions, and later (Right), the commander receives feedback from Cramer.





Their mission was to provide additional security outside Camp Volunteer, which was hosting a 930-officer Iraqi Police graduation.

While the platoon's humvees were out front during the patrols, 1st Company's Soldiers were the only dismounts pounding pavement. According to 1st Lt. Weston Cramer, this is the way it should be.

"With IIF Soldiers at the front, more people come up and give us information about suspicious activity in the area.," Cramer, the Iowa native, said.

Cramer said his platoon's overall mission is to work side-by-side with the IIF Soldiers and give them the necessary support to complete their mission.

His humvee gunner pointed out that it isn't always smooth sailing.

"There's a lot of times we have difficulty understanding each other, which slows down the process," Pfc. Michael White, C Co., 1-64 Armor, said, but was quick to add, "with the Iraqis being (on patrols with us), they can help us communicate better with the local Iraqis and point things out in the area that we, as Americans, don't see."

The IIF's desire to secure and safeguard the Iraqi people is evident in how frequent and long they train.

"We work very hard with the hopes of building a very strong army," a squad leader in 1st Co., through an interpreter, said. "We hope to satisfy the Iraqi people, and I want to defend my family, my honor and my home."

Cramer is confident that the time for 1st Bn., IIF, to secure Iraq on with other Iraqi Security Forces will be sooner than later.

"The (IIF) platoon and company I'm working with, I truly believe, can secure this area by themselves, today."



(Top) Cramer walks alongside his humvee while his platoon conducts a joint patrol with IIF. (Above) Soldiers from Iraq's 1st Bn., IIF provide security for a nearby IP graduation.

Saber in Salman Pak

3rd Sqdn., 7th Cav., hits the outskirts of Southern Baghdad with Iraqi Security Forces and uncover numerous weapons and IED-manufacturing caches

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich and Spc. Ben Brody

When 2nd Brigade Combat Team took control of Eastern Baghdad, there were very few missions and even fewer Iraqi Security Forces that patrolled outside of Baghdad proper.

It was reported shortly after the Spartan's arrival that Salman Pak, an affluent town located ten miles south of the city, was a nesting ground for insurgent activity and veritable ammunition depot for Anti Iraqi Forces.

Following careful planning, the Spartans and 3rd

Squadron, 7th Cavalry, took action.

Initial Entry

Following an early-morning cordon and search of Salman Pak, Iraqi security forces, supported by 3rd Squadron, 7th Cav., discovered weapons caches at two separate locations in the town Monday.

Prior to Monday's search, the town had, for months, been recognized as a terrorist and insurgent staging ground for various improvised explosive device attacks against Iraqi and U.S. forces.

Among the items discovered, then destroyed by 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, explosive ordinance disposal team, were more than 50 - 82mm mortar shells, rocket-propelled grenades and launchers, rockets, high-explosive artillery shells, and a pair of 250 lb. Russian-made bombs. Additionally, dozens of rigged IED initiation devices and spools of wire were found in a nearby shack. An SUV at the site contained three - 155mm artillery shells wired and packed with additional explosives. Iraqi and U.S. forces provided security of the sites while EOD removed the threat.

"The mission was very successful," Lt. Col. Michael Johnson, 3-7 Cav., commander, said. "The (Iraqi forces)



Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich

(Above) Iraqi security forces celebrate following the reoccupation of the Salman Pak police station April 18. The Iraqi planned and executed mission yielded the discovery of a weapons cache used for improvised explosive device manufacturing. (Right) Lt. Col. Michael Johnson, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, commander, speaks with an Iraqi Army general following the assault. 3-7 Cav. served as a quick reaction force for the mission.





Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich

(Left) IED initiation devices and wire were amongst the items found in Salman Pak. (Above) Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Wilson, 62nd EOD Detachment, team leader, pours water into a charge case before destroying an IED-laden sport utility vehicle April 18. (Right) Two-250 lb. Russian bombs found near the IED and weapons caches.



were able to secure Salman Pak ... and find a large weapons cache where IED vehicle bombs were being manufactured.”

In the town center, Iraqi security forces, numbering in the hundreds, celebrated after reclaiming a police station that had not been occupied by Iraqi Police personnel for months.

“The U.S. forces had a very small part in the operation,” Johnson said. “(3-7 Cav.) served as a quick reaction force, if necessary ... this was an all Iraqi-planned and executed mission.”

A Big Score

On April 24, 3-7 Cav. and 4th Bn., Iraqi Intervention Forces, unearthed the largest insurgent weapons cache to date.

The cache consisted of 503 mortar rounds, wrapped in plastic and buried, ranging in diameter from 60mm to 120mm.

The cache was discovered after local residents tipped off the IIF troops.

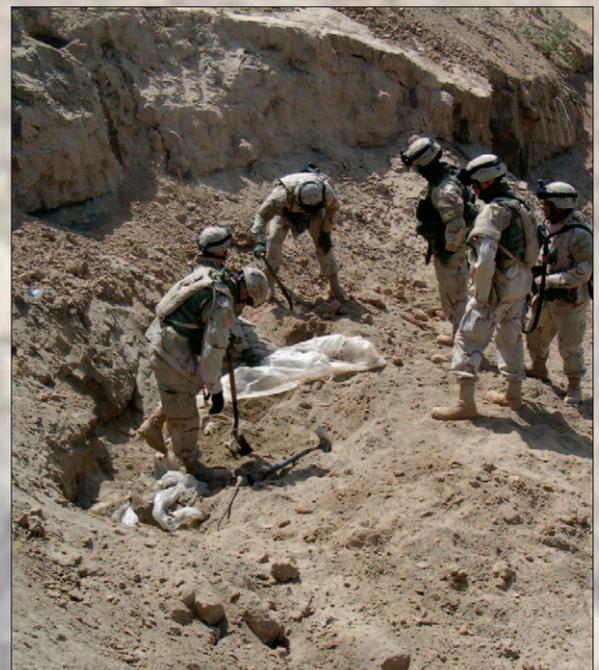
“This cache will significantly disrupt enemy activity in our area of operations,” said Maj. Dan Cormier, 2nd BCT, operations officer. “The enemy appears to be on the run – we’ve neutralized anti-Iraqi forces’ capabilities for using Salman Pak as a staging area. The scope of our operation demonstrates the significant and increasing capabilities of the Iraqi security forces.”

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team Explosive Ordnance Disposal and engineers from E Company, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry, directed a controlled detonation of the cache.



3-7 Cav.

(Right) Soldiers dig up a cache of mortar rounds in Salman Pak, Iraq, April 24. More than 500 rounds (above) were found and destroyed by Iraqi and U.S. forces.



WOLVERINE:

Training one IP at a time

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody



BAGHDAD, Iraq – Although they are an artillery unit, C Company, 1st Battalion, 182nd Field Artillery, of the Michigan National Guard, acts as a Military Police unit, training Iraqi Police in and around Baghdad.

“It’s our job to train and mentor Iraqi Police at 30 IP stations around Baghdad,” said Capt. Scott Meyers, C Co., 1-182 FA, commander. “Many of our Soldiers are police officers back in the states, so it makes us uniquely qualified to do this work.”

A squad from the Wolverines visited two IP stations April 30 to meet with senior leaders and impart some training to the patrolmen.

Both stations, the New Baghdad Police Station and the Qanat Station, have been renovated recently, and IPs drive brand-new pickup trucks and SUVs.

With the aid of Iraqi Police liaison officers, Department of Defense contractors with years of policing experience in the U.S., Soldiers went over basic tactical

skills and physical training with the IPs.

IPLO Lawrence Blackwood, of Colombia, S.C., is an experienced state trooper who said he came to train IPs for the adventure and to help Iraqis take charge of their cities.

“I give the station commanders someone to talk to and get advice from,” Blackwood said. “I also make sure stations have the supplies they need, and help requisition supplies from the Ministry of the Interior, which handles IP affairs. They’re used to asking the U.S. troops for stuff they need, like diesel fuel, but they need to rely on their government now.”

As Blackwood led a short class with one group of IPs, another Wolverine squad prepared to leave on a joint patrol with another group of IPs from New Baghdad Station.

“The joint patrols are a crucial part of all the training we’ve conducted with the IPs,” said Staff Sgt. Michael



Iraqi Police and Soldiers from 1-182 FA get ready to roll out on a joint patrol at New Baghdad Police Station in Baghdad, April 30.



Dubbs, C Co., squad leader. “The presence of the IPs has a great effect on the communities, and the warm reception gives (the IPs) confidence they didn’t have before. They’re taking the authority they should be – more and more every day.”

Dubbs, of Detroit, Mich., is a deputy sheriff in Detroit, and said his familiarity with metropolitan policing has prepared him well for Baghdad.

“Working in Detroit at night comes with some of the dangers of Baghdad – gunshots, robberies, drug deals,” Dubbs said. “Sometimes when you clear the criminal element from an area, someone else just moves right in. The community here is definitely tired of the violence, and the IPs have a lot of support (in New Baghdad.)”

The patrols always end with a detailed critique from Dubbs’ squad and the IPs, which he said gets the most training value out of the time the two units spend together.

“It’s a slow process, of course, but the IPs are getting there,” Dubbs said. “Every day they take more initiative and come to us with missions they feel are important.”

At Qanat Station, Wolverines described daily training blocks with IPs, including handcuff procedures, vehicle searches, weapons tactics and community relations.

“Today we’re teaching them about apprehending drivers safely – the basic concepts that will keep them safe on the street,” said Spc. Brad Schreier, C Co., gunner. “We try and give a two-hour class every day or so. The classes work the best with 10-14 people – any more and it gets chaotic.”

After Qanat IPs conducted warm-up exercises, Schreier, of Russell, Minn., helped them practice disarming an attacker holding a pistol to their back, an important skill in a city plagued by kidnappings.



(Top Left) Capt. Scott Myers, C Co., 1-182 FA, commander, speaks with an Iraqi Police lieutenant at New Baghdad Police Station.

(Above) Spc. Brad Schreier, 1-182 FA, gunner, shows IPs how to disarm an attacker at Qanat Police Station in Baghdad, April 30.

“The more times the IPs do these missions with us, the more likely they are to do it on their own,” Myers, of St. Johns, Mich., said. “We don’t do their job, but it gives them confidence having our .50 calibers behind them.”

According to Myers, about 400 IPs now graduate every month from the eight-week training course at Camp Volunteer, but that number is being increased to 1,000 graduates every two weeks.

The increase is in response to expanded capabilities at the Baghdad Police Academy and elevated demand for IPs in Sadr City and Salman Pak.

“The community here is definitely tired of the violence.”

Never forget...

Days of Remembrance observed in shadow of infamous Iraqi prison

Spc. Ben Brody

2nd Lt. Kate Vogel-Mishoe, 1-9 FA, assistant operations officer, discusses the Nuremberg Laws during the Days of Remembrance observance at Camp Loyalty, April 27.

Story by Maj. Russ Goemaere

CAMP LOYALTY, Iraq - Between 1941 and 1945 an estimated 6 million lives were lost in an atrocity aimed at ridding the world of Jews, the handicapped, homosexuals, gypsies and other people deemed undesirable by the Third Reich. By May of 1945, two out of every three Jews in Europe had been killed.

The Army sets aside an opportunity every year, normally in April, for Soldiers to join together and contemplate the Holocaust. This year, Spartan Brigade Combat Team paid their somber tribute during a "Days of Remembrance" ceremony at Camp Loyalty, April 27.

The program offered a slide show, poetry readings, a short story and a keynote address by Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Brzezinski.

The emcee, Capt. Nicole Zuena, 2nd BCT, preventative medicine, provided historical context for the Holocaust and explained that the word is from the Greek, meaning "sacrifice by fire."

This was Zuena's first time working on a project about the Holocaust.

"I read The Diary of Ann Frank when I was in high school but working on this

project really brought the absolute horror of the event home to me," she explained.

Zuena, from Cranston, R.I., has never visited a concentration camp, but hopes to pay her respects at one some day. She said she has an acute interest in history and is convinced that if humankind does not learn from the past, we are doomed to repeat it.

Brzezinski echoed those thoughts in his keynote address. Brzezinski, who was born and raised in a Polish neighborhood in Connecticut, said he had two uncles who were liberated by U.S. forces at Dachau. They had resisted the Nazis in Poland and had been incarcerated as slave labor for most of the war, he explained.

During his address, he tied the Holocaust to what has happened here in Iraq and especially on Camp Loyalty. Loyalty was the site of a prison for political detainees, which was notorious for terrible human rights violations.

"We must study this event. Only informed people will stop it from happening again. Saddam committed a holocaust against the Kurds; he imprisoned people here for doing nothing but disagreeing with him," he said. "It is not just remem-

bering (the Holocaust) that is important, we have to be vigilant to make sure it does not happen again."

"In Iraq more and more reports show that Saddam was ruthless in his pursuit of power and killed and imprisoned thousands of innocent people," Zuena said.

1st Lt. Ruth Levy, 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, deputy mayor, read a short story to the audience about Auschwitz. She is from Miami, Fla.

"The story she read really brought the tragedy of the Holocaust home to me," said Spc. Adam Musil, from Austin, Tex., "We have to make sure we pay attention to what is happening in the world to ensure this never happens again."

2nd Lt. Leslie Waddle directed the entire presentation.

She encouraged Soldiers to take time this month to learn more about the Holocaust. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, www.ushmm.org, has more information.

"Those who could not make it today lost a great opportunity to learn about the Holocaust and hear how it still affects people today," Zuena said. "It happened; it is still in peoples hearts."

Baghdad public works update

Story by Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich

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

The new Iraqi Government, in coordination with Coalition Forces, award contacts for projects to local Iraqi contractors. The local contractors, in turn, are required to hire local laborers from the neighborhoods from which the projects take place.

A number of sources fund the contracts, and include the Interim Iraqi Government Fund, Commanders Emergency Relief, U.S. Agency for International Development and seized funds from the former regime.

The Spartan BCT area of operations, which includes Sadr City, Zafaraniya, Tissa Nissan and Rusafa, was in need of infrastructure repairs well before the fall of the former regime, according to Lt. Col. Jamie Gayton, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Brigade Troops Battalion, commander.

“The progress now, today, is significant,” he said on May 3, following a UH-60 Blackhawk flyover assessment he made on project progress, adding, “Especially in Sadr City; surface cleaning efforts and completed sewer projects are evident.

“I’ve also noticed the people who have clean streets are modifying their behavior to keep the streets that way – instead of throwing their trash out the door, they carry it the street dumpsters.”

In Sadr City, \$6.8 million was spent on road paving, storm sewer cleaning and line repair, and pothole repair in 44 of the area’s 85 sectors. In total, 1.8 of the 2.5 million residents in the area are affected by the improvements. The six month project had an average labor force of 163 workers per day. A separate project in the area consisted of the repair and cleaning of the main Zebelin line; a sewage main that runs south from Sadr City to the Rustimiyah North Sewage Treatment Plant in southern Tissa Nissan. The \$5.5 million project, completed on April 14, affected all residents from the once volatile region, employing 192 locals per day.

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

In an area of South Tissa Nissan – Al Ameen, a sewer and road project was recently completed at a cost of \$2.7 million dollars. On average, 33 laborers per day installed the sewer network that replaced what was originally an open trench system. The network serves 70,000 people in the area.

A number of sewer projects south of Baghdad, in Zafaraniya, are under way. The projects, totaling \$25.8 million, will provide 130,000 residents of the town with functional sewage service. Work includes the installation of a sewer main that will extend from the town, east to the Rustimiyah Sewage Treatment Plant, as well as provide the seven villages in the town with a functional, potable, running water network. Three of the seven villages are complete. Barring any major escalation of violence in the area, Gayton said the remaining villages are expected to be completed by Sept. 1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



2-3 BTB

Iraqis continue construction on the Zafaraniya sewer main in Southern Baghdad in April.

Get a no-interest loan with...

Advance pay for deployment

Sgt. Christian Stephenson

2nd Brigade Finance NCOIC

Under the FY '05 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 108-375, Section 606, Soldiers are now authorized advancement of one month basic pay for deployment. You must be under orders for one year or more to a hostile fire/imminent danger pay area. E-5 and above may sign their own request, E-4 and below must have a commander's approval. This advanced pay is intended for those with dependants, but is not limited as such. All Soldiers are eligible and may request an advance for deployment hardship. The advance will be paid back in 12 monthly installments, automatically deducted from your pay.

This program is intended to help with the hardship of a long term deployment overseas. However, there are

many other ways you could use this advance (loan). For example, you could use it to pay off a credit card that you're currently paying interest on, and then pay back the advance with no interest. Or, put the entire amount into your Savings Deposit Program account or another investment of your choice. Simply, this is an interest free loan from the government.

Requesting this advance is easy. Just fill out a DD Form 2560. Leave the total blank unless you wish to receive less than your max amount, i.e. your base pay minus your deductions not to include FICA or allotments. E-4 and below must have part 5 of the form filled out and signed by their commander. Then just bring it by the Finance shop in Brigade S-1 with a copy of your deployment orders. That's it, in 3-5 days you will have your cash! Any questions can be directed to Sgt. Stephenson in the Finance Office at VOIP 242-7203.



Effective communication

From the Chaplain

Chaplain (Capt.) James Lee

1st Bn., 9th Field Artillery, Chaplain

Because of the current deployment, separation creates stress for all the Soldiers, spouses, children, and family members. No one likes to be separated from the one they love and care for.

According to Army statistics, 30 percent of all spouses believe deployments harm their marriages and almost half of E-5 and below wives have lowered their positive attitude about military life.

So, what should we do? Don't give up. There is hope. Think positive.

Separation is a stressor: It is like the sun on a plant. Under the sun, some plants shrivel and die. Other plants grow stronger and larger. The key is this: If the plant in the sun receives water and food, it grows under the sun's heat!

In the same way, when you separate for a military deployment, your relationship is going under the sun. If you water it and feed it, your family can grow under this pressure.

Communication skills are very important during separation, especially when you are stressed.

A lot of Soldiers want to talk to their families when they feel stress. They want to hear the encouragement, appreciation, thanks, and praise from family members, but family doesn't fulfill Soldiers' needs and expectations. The stressed soldiers receive more stress and anger during the conversation. Then what should we do? Should we not communicate with family? No.

We need communication. During the deployment we all need communication with family, but we need effective communication skills.

Effective communication takes practice. It does not just happen. You have to work at it. Be careful what you say and what you hear when you talk on the phone or in an e-mail.

Remember, there are so many different ways to communicate with one another; body language, eye contact, facial expression, writing and verbal.

But here we have only two methods; phone and email.

We miss all the body language, feelings, facial expressions, etc. – so I would like to introduce the Speaker/Listener Technique from The Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP), Christian PREP, Inc.

The Speaker/Listener Technique is helpful for the soldiers when they are talking to spouses and children on the phone.

The Speaker/Listener Technique

Rules for Speaker:

1. Speak for yourself. Don't mind read! (Try to say what YOU think and feel, not what your partner thinks and feels. Don't be a psycho-pest!!!!)

2. Don't go on and on.

3. Stop and let the listener paraphrase.

Rules for Listener:

1. Paraphrase what you hear.

2. Don't rebut. Focus on what the speaker is saying.

Rules for Both:

1. The speaker has the floor.

2. Speaker keeps the floor while the listener paraphrases.

3. Share the floor.



When we are having trouble communicating we should engage the Speaker/Listener Technique.

Put James 1:19 into practice... "Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry" (NIV)

Force Protection...

Disease and Non-Battle Injuries

Maj. Robert Meadows

2nd Brigade Combat Team Surgeon

Force protection. Everyone has heard that term used and it conjures up images of armor and firepower. I want to talk about some more subtle aspects of force protection.

In the first 110 days of this deployment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team has evacuated 42 soldiers from theater, 14 Wounded in Action (WIA) and 28 Disease and Non-Battle Injuries (DNBI). Simply said, twice as many soldiers have been lost to non-combat related issues.

Dozens more have lost duty time through visits to sick call, the Combat Support Hospital, and profiles without being evacuated. There are several things that you can do you prevent becoming a DNBI casualty.

Keeping your hands washed is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of viral and bacterial gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses.

Soap and water are most effective, but antibacterial hand sanitizers are an acceptable alternative.

Wash your hands as often as necessary, especially prior to eating. On an average day 30 soldiers (1%) of the brigade are ill and lose duty time with these preventable illnesses.

Wear your glasses and/or goggles. Protective eyewear offers protection against more than combat projectiles.

There have been 45 soldiers transported to the CSH with DNBI eye and/or vision complaints since deployment. Do not wear contact lenses - they are prohibited in a combat zone, in accordance with AR 40-5.

In case you originally doubted that there are biting insects in Iraq, I am sure you have changed your thinking by now. While there is no Malaria (a parasitic disease spread by the bite of an infected mosquito) in the Baghdad area, mosquito bites are not fun.

Sandfly bites are responsible for spreading the parasite that causes Leishmaniasis, of which there have been over 1500 cases involving Coalition troops. Sandflies also spread "Sandfly Fever", a disease characterized by high fevers.

These biting insects can be deterred by treating your uniforms and bednets with Permethrin and the application of a DEET-containing insect repellent to exposed skin.

In the last month, over 20 soldiers have reported to sick call for "insect bites" or skin abscesses, possibly the result of insect bites, and many more are self treating or scratching on their own.

Vaccines are simple, fairly painless, and extremely important in preventing several common illnesses. Your unit medics are compiling lists of those due vaccines so,

when your name comes up just head to the aid station and roll up your sleeves.

The following vaccines need to be up to date. Tetanus every 10 years protects against a fatal infection in the event of an injury. Typhoid every 2 years prevents infection with this common gastrointestinal infection.

Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B (2 or 3 shot series) protects against these common incurable liver diseases. Influenza every year (available in October) protects against this common viral respiratory disease.

Smallpox every 10 years prevents against infection from this deadly potential biological agent. Hepatitis A and Typhoid are prevalent throughout Iraq.

And, in the event that your records are "screwed up", there are no adverse effects of receiving additional vaccines - they can only help your immune system.

Finally, if you have not heard yet, Anthrax vaccines have been restarted, details to follow.

Just in case you have not noticed, it is starting to get a little warm. During OIF I, 36 soldiers suffered Heat Stroke and 6 died as a result. There were scores of lesser heat injuries that took soldiers out of the fight.

The Army uses the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) to determine the heat category. The wearing of body armor adds 5 degrees to the WBGT.

Each unit should be monitoring the WBGT but if not, the information is available at brigade medical operations. In general, regardless of what the heat category, soldiers performing any sustained activity should be drinking $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 bottle of water each hour.

Periods of work/rest are important, but mission dependent. Keep a close eye on your buddies to prevent heat injuries.

Sprained ankles, knee pain, back pain, shoulder pain, neck pain. Soldiers can and do hurt just about every joint in their bodies. Some injuries occur in the heat of battle, but far more occur during routine activities on the FOBs.

Take that extra moment to climb down rather than jump, watch where you are walking or running, handle that knife properly, and be aware of your surroundings.

There have been over 200 initial visits to sick call for non-combat related musculoskeletal injuries, which include recreational sports injuries, since our arrival in Baghdad.

Routine annual dental examinations are now available by appointment at FOB Rustamiyah. Sign up in person or call the clinic for details. Take care of your teeth before they become a problem.

The bottom line is this - take the time to take care of yourself and don't become a DNBI casualty.



Stateside

Lifting the Lid: Pope tops list of earnings excuses

Corporate America delivered a smorgasbord of excuses for missing earnings and revenue forecasts in the first quarter — everything from the stale, to the odd, to the downright gross.

Among the more interesting: a leap year, a finger topped bowl of chili and the death of Pope John Paul II.

Bad weather, good weather and higher oil and gas prices also took their usual places on the roster.

“I wish companies were as creative with coming out with new products as they are in explaining why their earnings are off,” said Nell Minow, editor of the Corporate Library, a Portland, Maine-based independent research firm specializing in corporate governance.

“The thing I love is that, when things are going well, it’s always because of the unique vision and leadership qualities of the CEO,” Minow said. “But when things are bad, it’s because of some rain storm in Bhopal, or the fact that the Yankees lost the World Series.”

The weather is always one of the more popular excuses.

Harley-Davidson Inc. cut its 2005 production and earnings targets on April 13 and blamed bad spring weather for a 1 percent dip in the first-quarter U.S. retail sales of its motorcycles.

The weather may be a prosaic excuse, but the death of a pontiff is sublime to say the least. The sickness and death of Pope John Paul II was blamed as possibly contributing to Overstock.com’s sluggish start in April.

Without doubt the most bizarre reason in recent memory came from Wendy’s International Inc.

Wendy’s, the No. 3 U.S. burger chain, said first-quarter profit dipped, hurt by higher beef costs and lost sales after a woman claimed she found a human finger in a bowl of its chili.

Anna Ayala of Las Vegas filed a complaint about biting into a human finger after spooning up a mouthful of chili at the San Jose Wendy’s on March 22. She was arrested a month later after California police determined it was a hoax. Ayala, who denies she planted the finger, has been charged with attempted grand theft for the millions of dollars Wendy’s lost due to the bad publicity.

And if the floating finger was not enough, Wendy’s also blamed the old standby, unfavorable weather, for slow sales.

Army announces Combat Action Badge

A Combat Action Badge will soon be available to all Soldiers who engage the enemy in battle.

Although the Close Combat Badge was once considered an option, Army leadership created the CAB instead to recognize all Soldiers who are in combat. They said the decision was based on input from leaders and Soldiers in the field.

“Warfare is still a human endeavor,” said Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker, Army chief of staff. “Our intent is to recognize Soldiers who demonstrate and live the Warrior

Ethos.”

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

Commanders at the rank of major general will have award authority the CAB.

The CAB is distinct from other combat badges, officials said. The Combat Infantryman’s Badge, or CIB, and Combat Medical Badge will remain unchanged, they said.

The Army will release an administrative message outlining exact rules and regulations for the CAB in the near future, officials said.

Although the final design of the CAB has not yet been released, officials said the award should be available this summer through unit supply and for purchase in military clothing sales stores.

Game of chicken’s tragic end

NEW YORK - A dangerous game of chicken involving a dirt bike and an all-terrain vehicle on Randalls Island left a 24-year-old man dead and a teen battling for his life, a police source said yesterday.

The fatal wreck late Sunday occurred in Icahn Stadium’s parking lot F, a wide-open paved space notorious for high-speed horseplay.

Just before 11 p.m., Gerardo Sanchez was perched on a friend’s dirt bike. Wesley Lluberes, 15, was on an ATV. The riders, who weren’t wearing helmets, had a brief stare-down before they raced toward each other.

“They struck head-on,” said Sanchez’s aunt Hilda Perez as relatives wailed in grief at the dead man’s upper East Side apartment.

Doctors at North General Hospital tried to save Sanchez, but the head injuries were too severe, Perez said.

Wesley, of Washington Heights, was taken to Harlem Hospital, where he was listed in critical condition yesterday.

Relatives said Sanchez, a bodega worker, and the teen were longtime friends.

Under state law, riders must be at least 16 to drive an ATV without adult supervision. And use of the popular vehicles is banned in the parking lot.

Less than 100 feet from the wreck site a sign posted on a concrete column reads: “Dirt bikes and ATVs strictly prohibited.”

Last year, Andelvi Paulino, 19, was killed while riding an ATV in the same parking lot. Paulino wasn’t wearing a helmet.

Relatives said that before Sunday’s fatal wreck, they had warned Sanchez to wear a helmet.

“I told him to be careful and to protect his head,” Perez said. “But, he just smiled. He always smiled.”

Around the world

Jail for 'Robin Hoods' who cost Microsoft millions

LONDON - Four Britons were jailed on Friday for being part of a global gang described as "Robin Hoods" who stole expensive software from rich companies and gave it away for free over the Internet.

The group, described by prosecutors as "sad individuals" who spent their lives in front of computers, were said to have cost firms such as Microsoft Corp. millions of dollars in profit and enraged its chairman, Bill Gates.

Prosecutors told London's Old Bailey criminal court that the four men, motivated by a hatred of software companies, were the key players in an international ring called DrinkorDie.com, said to be one of the world's most sophisticated Web piracy groups.

The gang allowed Internet surfers to download new software for free, often before it came on the market, including the Windows 95 operating system two weeks before it was released.

"They think of themselves like latter day Robin Hoods or sea pirates like Johnny Depp in the film 'Pirates of the Caribbean'," said prosecuting lawyer Bruce Houlder.

Often using moles in large corporations, the group cracked security codes for Norton Antivirus, Microsoft's Word and Excel products, and also pirated games and design programs.

"The cost of their activities run into very many millions in lost profit ... the losses are incalculable," Houlder said.

"But they also caused people to lose their jobs. They were not motivated by profit but by a dislike of the software industry and the kudos they received by being the first to offer new programs for free."

On Friday, London banker Alex Bell, 29, of Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, was jailed for two-and-a-half years and Steven Dowd, 39, was given a two-year prison sentence.

"They see themselves as stars, night time tappers of keyboards," Houlder told the court. "You might feel that their lives are rather sad, living as they do for very large parts of their days and nights in a virtual world, in front of a computer monitor, cocooned from existence."

U.S. bid wins Pope's old VW after frenzied auction

BERLIN - A second-hand Volkswagen Golf once owned by Pope Benedict sold for 188,938 euros (\$244,800) to a U.S. buyer in frenzied online bidding, a spokeswoman for eBay in Germany said Thursday.

A bidder registered as "Golden Palace Casino" but known to eBay got the gray metallic 1999 Volkswagen Golf when the online auction ended at 7:30 p.m., eBay spokeswoman Daphne Rauch said.

"The winning bidder is someone who has often purchased unusual items in the past," said Rauch, adding the bidder was from Austin, Texas.

The price doubled in the last 24 hours, she said. There were 8.4 million visits to the Web site during the 10-day auction.

Bidding was frenzied in the final minutes Thursday —

the Christian holiday of Ascension.

"I've never seen anything like it," said Rauch, who added the buyer must appear in person to pick up the car.

The seller is Benjamin Halbe, 21, from the town of Olpe in western Germany. He bought the car from a local dealer in January for 10,000 euros. The minimum bid was 9,999 euros. Earlier bids as high as 1 million euros were not serious.

The manual car has 75,000 kms (47,000 miles) on the clock, air conditioning, anti-theft equipment and alarms.

It was first registered in March 1999 to Joseph Ratzinger, a Cardinal from Germany before becoming Pope Benedict even though it is unclear whether Ratzinger ever had a driver's license.

Ratzinger's private secretary sold the car in January to a car dealer, who then sold the car to Halbe without going into details about the previous owner.

Halbe has been quoted in newspapers as saying the dealer told him the car had a "heavenly ride." He later looked at the registration papers and saw it had belonged to Ratzinger, who until last month was a name not many Germans had heard of.

Halbe included a copy of the registration in the auction that showed the car belonged to "Josef Kardinal Ratzinger" and had registration plate: "CD 140 XG." The address was listed as "Citta del Vaticano."

Crocodiles put rangers on high alert

SYDNEY - A record number of crocodiles in Australia's famous Kakadu National Park, and larger more aggressive saltwater crocodiles, have put rangers on high alert as the giant animals attack boats and bite outboard motors.

Crocodiles have been a protected species in the Northern Territory since 1971 and their number has now grown to around 70,000 saltwater crocodiles, up from 3,000 some 30 years ago.

A 56-year-old fisherman was attacked in Kakadu in March when a four-meter (13-ft) crocodile jumped onto his boat and bit him on the head, park rangers said. The man survived with grazes and puncture wounds to his left arm and head.

"The number of crocodile incidents has increased," Kakadu National Park Ranger Garry Lindner told Reuters Thursday.

Lindner said there had been reports of crocodiles attacking "boats, bumping them, biting the outboard, or coming up and biting the landing nets out of people's hands."

There have been only two recorded fatal crocodile attacks in Kakadu, 250 km (155 miles) east of the tropical city of Darwin. In 2002 a German tourist was killed while swimming in a waterhole. The other fatal attack was in 1987.

Each year more than 170,000 people, many foreign tourists, visit Kakadu National Park, a 20,000 square kms (7,700 square miles) world heritage listed park famous for its wetlands, crocodiles and ancient aboriginal culture.

To Our Fallen Warriors

Soldier's Creed

I am an American Soldier.

I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert and I am a professional. I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.

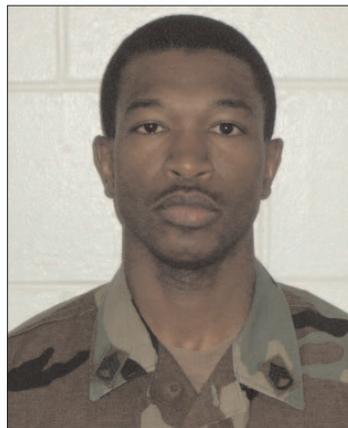


Spc. Gary Walters

1-9 FA

Killed in action

April 24



Staff Sgt. William Brooks

1-64 Armor

Killed in action

May 3



Pfc. Kenneth Zeigler

1-64 Armor

Killed in action

May 12