

# SCIMITAR

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Illinois Guard works town, Page 9

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Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Robert R. Attebury

Cpl. Jacob West of 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, Company B rides in an Amphibious Assault Vehicle during Operation Khanjar near Thar Thar, Iraq. The 2nd Marine Division and MNF-W conducts counter-insurgency operations with Iraqi Security Forces to neutralize anti-Iraqi forces, to support the development of Iraqi Security Forces and to support Iraqi reconstruction and democratic elections to create a secure government that enables Iraqi self-reliance and self-governance.

## \$300 million marked for Basra reconstruction

By Staff Sgt. Timothy B. Lawn  
Scimitar Staff

**BASRA, Iraq** — At least \$300 million has been earmarked for more than 150 reconstruction projects in Basra. The funding provides the city a major boost of economic revitalization.

The funding breathes life into vital necessities such as water restoration projects and sewage treatment plants, electrical grids, fire stations and courthouses, even train stations; yet, most importantly, these projects are dreamed of, designed, and completed by Iraqi citizens from the Basra area.

“We are putting Iraqis to work, and jump-starting the part of the Iraqi economy that comes from reconstruction,” said Wes Watson, Area Engineer, Gulf Region South, Engineering

District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Watson directs the Project and Contracting Office, Gulf Region South. He manages a developmental fund for an Iraq Task Force that restores Iraqi oil and electricity and all Iraqi relief and reconstruction money.

“I lead and manage about 150 construction projects worth about \$300 million,” said Watson.

To accomplish his mission, Watson has established five resident offices in South Central Iraq, where his employees manage and are responsible for the nine southern provinces of Iraq. Some of the projects they manage are electricity — generation, transmission and distribution. They are also restoring the Basra water distribution and sewage systems along with all school and health care facilities reconstruction. Additional projects include the Basra International Airport, Umm Qasr seaport and security projects, including the Basra courthouse,

police stations, fire stations and all border forts.

Additionally, Watson also presents high dollar unfunded projects to the international donor community. “We are actively seeking Iraqi leadership and input in reconstruction efforts, and we help them figure out what they need and help them prioritize,” said Watson. He said the international community is very engaged with the local Iraqi government.

“In one year alone, reconstruction and relief money helped complete over 300 schools,” said Watson. Although these projects came under separate budgets, they have since been completed.

An example of Iraqi citizens leading the way in creating their own future was present during a brief tour on July 7. Several U.S. Army Corps of Engineer personnel visited some

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**Air Force to use Iraq air base's historical name** Page 4

**Airman recovers, fights his way back to Iraq** Page 12

**Medic survives sniper attack, captures terrorist** Page 14



Engineer Hassam Falih Khat'aa Anwar from the Al-Hujih (construction and engineering) Company supervises his workers as they mix cement for masonry work on the firehouse. They are also finishing a mosque and reception hall for the firemen.

## Basra

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reconstruction projects under way within the city of Basra.

At one of the project sites, the Basra fire station and civil defense headquarters, a beehive of construction was under way. Firemen cleaned vehicles and equipment alongside construction workers who shoveled cement and

applied plaster.

Col. Raad Salman, chief of Civil Defense of Basra, said "We are here to serve all people, the same as the American and British civil defense."

Salman assumed command of Basra's civil defense after the war on April 4, 2003. He manages 14 fire stations and more than 700 fire, safety and security experts.

The fire station was originally completed by the Coalition Provisional Authority and its

equipment primarily came from British forces, said Salman. Critical replacement parts are now provided by Americans in Baghdad.

Supervising the fire station construction was engineer Hassam Falih Khat'aa Anwar from the Al-Hujih (construction and engineering) Company.

Khat'aa and his firm were awarded the contract on the fire station refurbishment. They are also finishing a mosque and reception hall for the firemen. All of this progress is paid with American funds.

"The [fire station] equipment is pretty much primitive. Basra is still lacking basics such as hydrant systems," said Dr. Ghassan Al-Chaar, Project Engineer, Gulf Region South, Engineering District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Al-Chaar is a structural engineer and dual Syrian/U.S. citizen. Though concerned about the slow progress, he added, "slowly but surely, I am very happy and very pleased. It is a wonderful feeling to see the final project."

Al-Chaar completed his fourth tour in Iraq on July 8. He handled all projects inside the city of Basra. This included border forts, police, fire stations, sewer and waste water systems. He was also in charge of restoration and demolition of all of the Basra Ba'ath Party headquarters and surrounding buildings

"We witnessed many projects, renovated two buildings and clinics, and now we turn over projects to Iraqis," said Al-Chaar.

"The work force is 90 percent Iraqi ... I think that is an underestimate," said Watson. "We are trying to do large-scale reconstruction in a country that has had 35 years of destruction."

The challenge of hiring Iraqis is that many

of them lack necessary skills and trades. Though they may lack the necessary skills and trades, Watson admits, they know what they want.

"We engage them in the process because they know more about what they need than we do," Watson said. "It is an enormous success story. We are helping the Iraqis realize they have the power to choose."

## Basra

### Relief and Reconstruction Facts and Figures

In one year, over 300 schools were finished and ready for occupancy.

More than 30 engineers have been on the staff of GRS for more than two years.

More than 90 percent of the work force undertaking projects in and around the Basra area are Iraqi citizens.

Iraqi airlines fly into Basra International Airport more than three times a week. The first flights began in June.

There are more than 150 construction projects totaling \$300 million in Basra and the surrounding communities.

Most of the projects being completed are designed, requested and constructed by Iraqis.

# Iraqi Forces on track to provide Baghdad election security

By U.S. Army Sgt. Sara Wood  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Iraqi Security Forces in and around Baghdad are making progress in their training and will be ready to assume responsibility for security measures for the October elections, the area's top U.S. commander said July 8.

Speaking by satellite from Baghdad in a Pentagon news briefing, Army Maj. Gen. William Webster, commander of Task Force Baghdad and the 3rd Infantry Division, said two Iraqi brigades already are operating on their own in Baghdad, and two more will be operational in about two months. The remaining two brigades that will make up the Iraqi

Army division in Baghdad will be ready by the elections.

The plan is for the Iraqi division, made up of six brigades, along with Iraqi special police and commandos, to plan and conduct security for the elections in Baghdad, with backup from U.S. forces, he said. Iraqi forces are facing difficulties in supporting themselves logistically for long-term operations, he explained, and it will be at least spring before they are fully independent in that capacity.

Iraqi and Coalition Forces have been successful at reducing the number of vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks in Baghdad, largely due to an increased presence of Iraqi forces, Webster said.

"We attribute our success to better-trained

and experienced Iraqi security forces patrolling the streets, talking to the Iraqi people and gathering greater intelligence," he said. "The people are gaining more confidence, and they're providing them lots of information."

Since the beginning of Operation Lightning in May, the number of vehicle-borne IED attacks per week in Baghdad has been cut in half, thousands of suspects have been captured, including 51 foreign fighters, and more than 2,500 traffic-control points have been established, the general said. The insurgency in Baghdad has been suppressed to a point where political and economic progress can continue, and despite continued threats, the terrorists will not maintain a large presence there, he said.

"We don't think the enemy is capable of sustained, long-term operations against us and the Iraqi security forces," he said.

Defeat of the insurgency, however, is a more ambiguous concept, Webster said. The insurgents are highly adaptable enemies who are hard to keep track of, he explained.

"It's very difficult to know it's over until the Iraqi people are comfortable with the level of security that they have around them and they're able to go on with their lives in a normal way," he said.

Iraqi and Coalition Forces are continually improving in their tactics against insurgents, he said, and the strength of the government and confidence of the Iraqi people prove there is hope for the future of Iraq.

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## PERSPECTIVES

# Ranking Iraqi general reflects on year of progress, change

By U.S. Army Capt. Steve Alvarez  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — A little more than a year ago, the 2nd Battalion of the Iraqi Intervention Force made its way through the streets of Baghdad, Iraq, hunting insurgents. It was the fledgling army's first operational military patrol, backed up by a team of Coalition military advisers.

Iraqi Army Maj. Abbas Jassim Jebir, then a company commander with the 2nd Battalion, told Iraqis while he was out on patrol that day, "There are more on the way just like us."

Jebir's comments were prophetic. Today's Iraqi military is not the same as it was a year ago. And as he told the citizens of Baghdad, more like him have come to Iraq's aid.

The Iraqi military is increasingly taking control of security missions throughout Iraq, but it is a process often overshadowed by sensational attacks on civilians in the country.

Coalition officials have pointed out the steady progress of the Iraqi Forces and acknowledged there is still more work to be done before Iraqi Forces accept full responsibility for securing their nation. However, there have been considerable strides made by the Iraqi Army in the past year. Leading that force during its transition from the parade field to the battlefield has been the responsibility of Gen. Babakir Shawkat Zebari, chief of staff of the Iraqi Joint Forces.

"There is no comparison," Babakir told American Forces Press Service via e-mail through a translator. "It is 180 degrees different than it was last year at this time, and there are four basic reasons why."

First, the Iraqi force has grown significantly, he said, adding that mentorship of Iraqi Forces by the Coalition in tactical conditions is helping the military forces mature.

"Our ability to supply the force is keeping pace with our ability to field the force, so far, and perhaps most importantly, we are identifying poor performers, rooting out corruption wherever we can and replacing those personnel accordingly," Babakir said.

In 2004, a small fraction of an Iraqi unit refused to engage the enemy after they were ambushed and later regrouped at an Iraqi training base north of Baghdad. Coalition officials

cited miscommunication and cultural issues as the underlying reasons why some of the Iraqi Soldiers did not fight.

More than a year later, things have changed. Iraqi military forces have participated in many of the major engagements in Iraq. They have conducted operations in Najaf, Fallujah, Baghdad, Mosul and other cities, and many of these operations have been independent missions with Iraqis planning, coordinating and carrying out the mission with no Coalition assistance. The Iraqi Armed Forces now also have a navy and air force.

"When I see us accomplish the task before us with the help of the Iraqi people — ordinary citizens — this is key, in my opinion," Babakir said. "I see a military that is being built that believes in democracy, human rights, the importance of the law, and with a desire to serve the Iraqi people."

Today there are more than 76,000 in the Iraqi Armed Forces. Of that, some 530 are navy and 190 are air force personnel, according to a U.S. State Department report. Last year, there was merely one operational Iraqi Army battalion.

In June, the 5th Brigade, 6th Division, of the Iraqi Army became operational after completing their training. Soon, Iraqi Marines will assume full responsibility for the security of Basrah and Khor al Amaya oil terminals, relieving U.S. sailors. Recently, a company of 100 newly trained Iraqi troops

assisted Coalition Forces during Operation Spear in western Iraq.

Iraqi military forces have been responsible for the capture and killing of insurgent forces throughout Iraq, and they have discovered numerous weapons caches on a weekly basis. They have also helped free hostages throughout the country, including Australian Douglas Wood, who was recently rescued after being held for six weeks. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division found him as the unit conducted cordon-and-search operations in northwestern Baghdad.

But, as the Iraqi military becomes more of a viable military force, their casualty rates have increased. In a speech in June, President Bush stated that more than 2,000 Iraqi security personnel have been killed in Iraq. But the toll, which has surpassed that of U.S. casualties, is not keeping Iraqis from joining the military.

"There are more than enough recruits," Babakir said. Recently he visited a recruiting station and asked personnel there about recruitment. Earlier the recruitment center had announced that an Iraqi Army battalion would be formed and that they were seeking 1,000 applicants. Nearly 23,000 recruits applied, Babakir said.

Babakir noted that potential recruits undergo a vetting process that checks an individual's identity, mental and physical health and literacy, and all recruits must be within the military service age range of 18-35.

"We check their background to ensure they do not have a dirty past from the [Saddam] Hussein era," Babakir said. "They must be willing to serve wherever the armed forces send them."

"Under Saddam's rule, all people feared for their lives, including the members of the armed forces," Babakir said. "They served in the military under coercion and intimidation for the sole purposes of Saddam. Today's military enlists volunteers who want to serve the people of Iraq."

According to Iraqi and Coalition officials, in recent months there has been an increase in civilian cooperation. Tip lines stocked with fresh tips from citizens are leading Iraqi security personnel to terrorist hideouts, weapons caches and supporters.

"We are better able to keep the insurgents on the run, and we must continue to do so," Babakir said.

"This is slow and hard work. [But] if no one can supply the insurgents, if no one can support the insurgents, then the insurgents will find it harder and harder to fight," Babakir said. "We must keep up the pressure on them. We need the help of the local citizens to do this effectively."

The pressure, Coalition officials said, will continue to intensify as Iraqi military forces continue to develop. The Iraqi Navy now has a fleet of patrol and assault boats and an Air Force with fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft that provide theater airlift, reconnaissance and tactical transportation and support. It also has an Army with armor, special operations, and anti-insurgent units that are killing and capturing insurgent forces throughout Iraq.

The quality of the Iraqi force is noteworthy too, Babakir said. The Iraqi military is now better equipped, trained and cared for than Saddam's military. Iraqi Soldiers are expected to meet training standards and achieve proficiency with their equipment, and that takes time, Babakir said.

"Where have you known an armed forces to be built so fast, to do so much, in so little time?" Babakir asked. "None of this would be possible without the help the Coalition, and we are so grateful for that support. We simply could not do any of this without the help we receive."

**"Under Saddam's rule, all people feared for their lives, including the members of the armed forces. ... Today's military enlists volunteers who want to serve the people of Iraq."**

*Iraqi Army Gen. Babakir Shawkat Zebari*

## Scimitar Pulse

How do you stay cool in 100 plus degree weather?

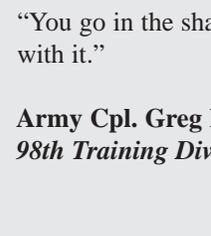
"I stay at work because there is good ventilation."

**Iceland Maj. Börkur Gunnarsson**  
*Icelandic Crisis and Response Unit*



"I stay indoors, and I am not outside more than two minutes."

**Army Spc. Roseanne Addeo**  
*Multi-National Force - Iraq*



"You go in the shade and deal with it."

**Army Cpl. Greg Roark**  
*98th Training Division*



"I work in an air-conditioned building, and I drink lots of water."

**Army Maj. Rita Gruner**  
*Multi-National Force - Iraq*



"I beat the heat by not going outside in the heat of the afternoon."

**Air Force Tech. Sgt. Larry Conger**  
*Multi-National Force - Iraq*



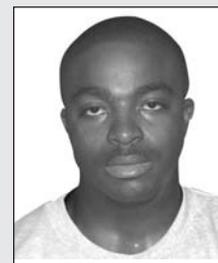
"I drink a lot of water and stand in front of the port-a-cooler."

**Marine Lance Cpl. Aaron Mitzlaff**  
*4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade*



"I go inside as much as possible and drink water."

**Air Force Senior Airman Charles Johnson**  
*Joint Air Support Group*



# Tiger Brigade disables huge bomb in Rusafa area restaurant

By Maj. Russell Goemaere  
2nd Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — The 2nd Iraqi Army (Tiger) Brigade successfully disabled an unexploded 1,000-pound bomb found on the ninth floor of a Turkish restaurant in the Rusafa district of east Baghdad July 6.

The bomb had been there since being dropped in 2003 as part of the initial attack to liberate Baghdad.

Explosive ordnance disposal teams from the Iraqi Army and 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division assessed the danger and found a significant threat to the surrounding community. The 2nd IAB developed a plan to disable the bomb while protecting the population from a possible explosion.

Early in the morning, EOD teams disarmed the bomb while hundreds of IA Soldiers secured the area around the building and ensured all citizens were outside the blast area if the bomb exploded unexpectedly.

“The 2nd IAB planned, coordinated and executed the mission,” said Col. Joseph DiSalvo, commander of Coalition Forces in Rusafa. “This is a testament to their professionalism and high degree of readiness.”

“I am very impressed with my



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army

**This 1,000-pound bomb was found on the ninth floor of a Turkish restaurant in the Rusafa district of east Baghdad July 6. The bomb was dropped there in the initial attack to liberate Baghdad in 2003.**

Soldiers,” said Brig. Gen. Jawad Romee Aldine, 2nd IAB commander. “We are becoming more and more capable every day. My staff did a great job planning the mission to defuse the bomb. The people of Baghdad need to be confident that their Soldiers can, and will, protect them.”

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Wilson, 47th Ordnance Company (EOD) from Fort Hood, Texas, worked with the Iraqi Army to disable the bomb.

“The IA did a great job pushing a cordon out a kilometer away from the device,” Wilson said. “They ensured

that if the device detonated, no civilians would get hurt.”

“We did a basic thermite burn on the device, which was initiated by remote,” Wilson said. “There was a small chance the burn could cause an explosion, so it was important to have the area secured by the IA.”

“It’s a crowded neighborhood, with a busy traffic circle and a big market nearby,” Wilson said. “If the fuse had all of a sudden decided to function, it would have been a nightmare.”

The Tiger Brigade uncased their colors on June 1 in a formal ceremony in Baghdad to celebrate their capability.

The unit was previously headquartered at Baghdad International Airport. Later this summer, Tiger Brigade will assume responsibility for security operations in portions of Rusafa.

“We are dedicated to defeating the insurgents and securing Rusafa,” said Jawad.

“Tiger Brigade was formed six months ago with many young Soldiers,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Namair Mohammed Azzawi, 2nd IAB command sergeant major. “With the experience of our leaders and help from Coalition Forces, we’ve made many good Soldiers.

“The Tiger Brigade is now ready for anything,” he said.

## Hospital opens in Owja, furthers Iraqi progress

By Spc. James Green  
1st Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

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

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

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

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

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

“It was a hospital that had been inactive over the last three

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

The hospital is open, but there are still challenges ahead that face Owja hospital and the Iraqi medical community. “One of the shortages that they have around here is both female nurses and female doctors,” Wood said. “Basically because the old regime stopped the training programs in the schools, which produced the large numbers of nurses and female doctors. Dr. Hassan is concentrating hard on the educational aspect of medical coverage here in this area.”

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

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

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

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

## U.S. Armed Forces recognize historical name of Ali Base

By Capt. David Small  
U.S. Central Command Air Forces Forward Public Affairs

**SOUTHWEST ASIA** — What’s in a name? In the case of Ali Base, years of history.

Ali Base, situated near the city of An Nasiriyah, in south central Iraq, is the main airfield in southern Iraq from which Iraqi, Coalition and U.S. Airmen operate. Until January Coalition Forces called the base Tallil. Now, all use the legacy name: Ali Base.

“Our Iraqi partners have always referred to this installation as Ali Base,” said Col. Dennis Diggett, former 407th Air Expeditionary Group commander at the base.

“It appears that sometime after Operation Desert Storm in the early 1990s, Ali Base was incorrectly labeled ‘Tallil’ on Department of Defense maps,” said Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan III, U.S. Central Command Air Forces commander. “It’s a bit of a mystery. We don’t know why that was done.”

The discrepancy came to light in January at a joint ceremony where Iraqi and Coalition Forces stood up the 23rd Squadron, the new Iraqi Air Force’s C-130 Hercules unit there.

“As part of the 23rd Squadron activation ceremony, Maj. Gen. Kamal Abdul Satar Al-Barazanchi, chief of staff of the Iraqi Air Force, unveiled a new sign: Ali Base. We learned then that the base had always been Ali,” Buchanan said. “In fact, we learned that General Kamal himself had even been the Ali Base commander during part of the Iran-Iraq War.”

Buchanan said he looks on that day as a milestone in the cooperation between the U.S. Air Force and the new Iraqi Air Force.

“It was a great day for our partnership. We assisted Iraq by giving them three C-130s and committing to training Iraqi pilots, navigators and [maintainers] so they can in turn work to secure stability for their own country,” the general said. “I thought it was a great sign of our mutual respect that General Kamal and his staff were willing to tell us about our oversight.”

Buchanan then directed Airmen to call Ali Base by its legacy name.

Because Tallil had become the commonplace name used by Airmen but was never its official name, there was no need to take any official act to rename it Ali Base, CENTAF officials said. Coordination is under way with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency to incorporate the revision into future charts and maps.

“Ali Base has a history that is important to the local Iraqi community, and as Coalition partners, it is important we respect that,” Buchanan said.

Built in the 1970s and serving as the busiest military airfield during Iraq’s war with Iran in the 1980s, it is now home to the 407th Air Expeditionary Group, the Iraqi Air Force’s 23rd Squadron and the U.S. Army’s Logistics Support Areas Cedar and Adder.

When the 1991 Gulf War occurred, the airfield was heavily bombed and virtually destroyed. Ultimately, the base became off-limits to Iraqi Forces while U.S. and British patrols enforced the no-fly zone over southern Iraq.

Airmen in air and space expeditionary force rotations with Ali Base as an endpoint can expect some confusion concerning the name change, officials said. No money will be spent to correct institutional discrepancies between the two names, having erred in calling it Tallil for so long, CENTAF officials said.

Some of these institutional discrepancies include e-mail on the global address list, administrative codes, phone books and directories. Many of these things have already been corrected here, but may be slow to change throughout the rest of the Air Force.

The place to access the latest MNF-I/MNC-I news, information and policies, is online. Check out [www.mnf-iraq.com](http://www.mnf-iraq.com) to stay informed.



A Baghdad Emergency Response Force instructor pulls on the front of the shield demonstrating what a rioter might do during riot control training conducted by military police from the 401st Military Police Battalion from Fort Hood, Texas, in Baghdad.

## Baghdad police get riot training

Story and photo by Spc. Mary Rose  
Multi-National Corps - Iraq Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Iraqi police set up check points, conduct raids in search of insurgents and control civil outbreaks, as well as many other tasks in their war-torn country. The hands-on riot control training U.S. Army military police recently taught the Baghdad police Emergency Response Force will allow them to assist their community during civil unrest and disputes.

The ERF participated in a week-and-a-half long training session — part of a larger training course — conducted by MPs from the 401st Military Police Company, Fort Hood, Texas — which used real-world training tactics to teach the ERF riot control techniques and procedures.

They learned different maneuver and crowd control formations, said Spc. Damien D. Kirby, riot control instructor, 401st MP Co.

Formations are used depending on the situation, and they allow the ERF to approach their subjects without compromising safety. The ERF also learned proper use of batons and shields.

MPs posed as rioters and antagonized the ERF, who were in a sturdy formation guarded by shields and batons. The MPs attacked the formation by throwing rocks, hitting and kicking their shields and attempting to get hold of the ERF police from behind the shields.

“We try to make the training as realistic as possible,” said Staff Sgt. Starsky Smith, as he pointed at bruises on his arms.

The training also gives a concept of team building, added Smith, the noncommissioned

officer in charge of ERF training, 401st MP Co.

“Since we started training these guys, they have made a 180 degree turn,” Kirby said. “They have grasped many concepts, including teamwork and individual responsibility.”

Conceptual understanding relies heavily on communication, which has been an important factor between the ERF and the MPs during the instruction periods. Smith and his Soldiers have linguists who help translate, but the process of translating is slow, which increases the time spent in training, Smith said.

“Once we get past the language barrier, the training runs smoothly,” Kirby said.

Even with communication barriers, the training will be completed in July. Smith and his team of Soldiers have been training the ERF since early May, teaching them basic rapid response force skills.

Smith’s team will start training the ERF with more in-depth skills beginning shortly after the current training is completed. Some of the ERF troops will go to a special weapons and tactics course, while others will go to a sniper qualification course, Smith said.

The MP training team will also continue to give more comprehensive training on subjects already covered in the past two months.

With all the training the ERF has received, they are becoming a self-sufficient force capable of handling their communities’ needs, Smith said.

“They are some of the best police in Iraq right now. They adapt and overcome to their environment,” Smith said. “With each mission they will go out on, they will work better together. This is a key part in the battle over insurgency.”

## Operation Scimitar continues

By Multi-National Force - Iraq Public Affairs

**CAMP BLUE DIAMOND, Iraq** — Marines from 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team-8, detained 22 suspected terrorists during targeted raid operations near Fallujah.

Operation Scimitar (Qmtia) began July 7th in Zaidon, 30 km southeast of Fallujah. Approximately 100 Iraqi Security Force

Soldiers and 500 2nd Marine Division forces are conducting security operations to deny anti-Iraqi sanctuary for planning, training and storing ammunition.

Operation Qmtia follows a series of counterterrorism operations initiated by Marines in Al Anbar. These operations are designed to disrupt terrorist activity and help end their campaign of fear and intimidation against Iraqi citizens.

The last large-scale Marine Operation Saif (Sword) was conducted in the Hit-Haditha corridor June 28 to July 7.

## Bush praises U.S.-Danish partnership in war on terror

By Gerry J. Gilmore  
American Forces Press Service

**WASHINGTON** — President Bush thanked Denmark July 6, for providing hundreds of its troops to augment U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the Global War on Terrorism.

“Denmark is a close ally and a partner of the United States,” Bush told Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Bush made a stopover in Denmark prior to his attendance at a conference in Scotland of leaders with the Group of Eight nations. The G-8 includes the major industrialized nations: the United States, France, Russia, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada.

With Rasmussen at his side, Bush said he appreciated Denmark’s “steadfast support for freedom and peace in Afghanistan and Iraq” and saluted Danish troops stationed overseas alongside U.S. and other Coalition Forces.

Bush said the United States, Denmark and other nations also have collaborated on the Proliferation Security Initiative, which seeks to interdict the movement of weapons of mass destruction around the world.

The initiative is “an attempt by free countries to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction,” Bush said,

noting that Denmark has “played a leading role” in that endeavor. Denmark also is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Denmark and the United States are longtime friends and allies that “share the same fundamental goals and values,” Rasmussen said. Denmark has sent more than 500 of its troops to Iraq because, “in the struggle between democracy and dictatorship, you cannot stay neutral,” the prime minister said.

Bush noted that he and Rasmussen also discussed the situation at the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Bush emphasized that detainees there receive good treatment.

“The prisoners are well treated in Guantanamo,” Bush declared, noting that the Red Cross can inspect the facility “at any time, any day.”

Many Guantanamo detainees have been released after being interviewed by U.S. officials, Bush said. Detainees still being held there will be subject to “fair and open trials” as soon as the U.S. court system decides whether to employ military tribunals or civilian courts.

The detainees at Guantanamo “are being treated humanely,” Bush reiterated, noting “very few prison systems around the world that have seen such scrutiny as this one.”

## DCU meets ACU: 108th Cav learns from experience

By Spc. Tracy J. Smith  
48th Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs

**CAMP STRYKER, BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Entering the tent, the first impression would lead you to think it was a social mixer. There was casual mixing of traditional desert combat uniform with the new Army Combat Uniform, different groups and different discussions.

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

It has been a year in Iraq for 1st Platoon, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. They have pounded many streets in Iraq and “know the drill.”

Listening to Soldiers talk about fire fights and aggressive driving maneuvers, it is as if friends are talking about a recent sports play-off. The animated faces and hand gestures lend to the play-by-play in detailing their various missions.

But Troop E knows taking over the responsibilities of this group is serious.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Brigade's reenlistments in Iraq exceed expectations

By Army Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick  
3rd ID Division Support Brigade Public Affairs

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** — All leaders should be involved in retention if they believe in the volunteer Army, an Army career counselor stationed here with the 3rd Infantry Division said.

"It's every leader's job," said Sgt. 1st Class José A. Urbáez, of the 87th Corps Support Battalion.

On point with the Army's retention program, Urbáez' Division Support Brigade unit is leading a calculated charge at keeping good Soldiers "in boots" here.

The support brigade is second only to the Aviation Brigade for the most reenlistments in the 3rd Infantry Division for Operation Iraqi Freedom III, said Master Sgt. Robert D. Morris, Division Support Brigade reenlistment noncommissioned officer.

Morris said the unit reenlisted 260 percent of its goal for January to March. The brigade's mission was for 50 Soldiers; they reenlisted 130.

Since April, the unit has retained in excess of 550 Soldiers, said Morris, whose home is in Ludowici, Ga. By the end of their deployment to OIF III, DSB is looking forward to retaining 904 Soldiers to cover their total mission.

But, the 87th CSB, nicknamed "Base Warriors," doesn't seem to be satisfied with just "making mission." Urbáez said his battalion has already made its retention mission in one category and over-produced in another.

The battalion is at 100 percent of its goal for mid-career Soldiers and 114 percent for Soldiers at the career level. Mid-career Soldiers have reenlisted at least once and have 10 or fewer years in service at the end of their current term of service, Morris said. Careerists have served 10 or more years at the end of their current term.

The 87th CSB is at 78 percent of its goal for initial-term Soldier re-enlistments. The 92nd Engineer Battalion, a DSB unit currently detached to the 36th Engineer Group, actually has a better percentage than the 87th, but is on a mission for fewer numbers.

Units get their mission from the Department of the Army based on eligible Soldiers vs. the needs of the Army, Morris said. Everything is on a fair-share basis.

Morris said the Army first calculates what the service's end-strength needs will be at the end of the fiscal year, factoring in possible losses like retirement, and then "back plans" from there. Mission requirements are passed down through each level of command until each commander down to the company level is given a retention mission.

Morris said the strength of the retention program reflects the chain of command. "We have strong chain-of-command support all the way from the colonel and command sergeant major down to the platoon sergeants and platoon leaders," Urbáez said.

Capt. James E. Gannon, commander of the 94th Maintenance Company, recognizes how important the leaders at the platoon and shop level are. "They influence the people who work for them," said the Richland, Wash., native, whose company is at an astounding 400 percent of mission for careerist reenlistments.

"I don't think we have a secret recipe," said Gannon, whose unit is nicknamed the "Hard Chargers."

Gannon said retaining good Soldiers starts with the daily operations of the unit. There's a lot of good going on every day, he said. The supervisors make sure people feel appreciated for their efforts. Gannon has pictures of Soldiers who were selected as "Hard Charger of the Week" posted on his door — just one way of making sure members of his company are recognized.

Urbáez said 104 of 114 Soldiers reenlisting in his unit received a bonus. The bonuses average about \$10,000 and are tax-free when they're awarded in a combat zone.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### U.S. investigates death of Iraqi official's cousin

**WASHINGTON** — U.S. military authorities are investigating the circumstances surrounding the death of an Iraqi man allegedly shot by U.S. Marines June 23, a senior military official announced in Baghdad, Iraq, July 7.

"When the loss of life occurs, every one of those incidents is investigated," Air Force Brig. Gen. C. Donald Alston, a Multi-National Force - Iraq spokesman, told reporters.

The man who was killed was a cousin of the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations. Alston said the allegations "are quite disturbing" to American authorities.

The commander of the U.S. 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force is "aggressively investigating" the allegations to determine the facts, Alston said, noting the investigation is not complete.

Iraqi Ambassador Samir Sumaidaie reportedly had called for the investigation. News reports say Sumaidaie has accused U.S. Marines of shooting his 21-year-old cousin during a house search near a U.S. base at Haditha Dam. (By Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service)

### Operation Muthana Strike nets 100 terrorists

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — At least 100 suspected terrorists were detained during Operation Muthana Strike, launched by Iraqi Army and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers in the early-morning hours of July 4.

The operation, which was based on credible information from local residents' tips, targeted terrorist safe houses in the neighborhoods adjacent to the west side of Baghdad International Airport. Task Force Baghdad officials said the raids involved about 600 Iraqi Soldiers and 250 U.S. Soldiers.

The operation was designed to detain suspected terrorists, seize illegal weapons and gain actionable intelligence in order to disrupt future AIF operations.

Iraqi Army Forces conducted cordon-and-search operations to prevent anti-Iraqi forces from escaping through the secure perimeter Soldiers drew around the area.

"This operation was led by the Iraqi Army," said Lt. Col. Mark London, the 48th Brigade Combat Team operations officer from Gray, Ga. "I was very impressed with the way they got out there and handled their business."

The operation, which concluded around 9:30 a.m. resulted in the detention of more than 100 suspected terrorists, some of whom were foreign fighters, including individuals from Egypt. (By Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs)

### Citizens' tips lead to 5 IEDs being defused

**MOSUL, Iraq** — Soldiers from 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) defused five improvised explosive devices and detained three suspected terrorists thanks to leads provided by Iraqi citizens during operations in northern Iraq July 6.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment had four IEDs defused and detained three individuals suspected of emplacing the IEDs following leads in eastern Mosul. Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment had an IED defused in northern Mosul following another lead. Suspects are in custody with no injuries reported in any of the incidents.

Concerned Iraqi citizens continue to provide valuable information leading to the detention of terrorists. Coordinated efforts of Iraqi Security Forces are leading to the arrest of terrorists and criminals responsible for attacks against innocent Iraqi citizens. Anyone with information on anti-Iraqi insurgent activities should call the Joint Coordination Center's telephone numbers at 513462 or 07701623300.

### Iraqi citizens turn tables on terrorists

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — In two separate incidents July 8 in east Baghdad, Iraqis took a deliberate stand against terror.

In the first incident, a local citizen observed terrorists emplacing a roadside bomb and provided a tip to the Iraqi Police. The IPs responded, cordoned off the area and coordinated with the 720th Military Police Battalion and a Coalition explosive ordnance disposal team to disable the bomb.

EOD safely destroyed the bomb with a controlled detonation. The improvised explosive device consisted of a 125 mm tank round with a remote-controlled device.

The second incident occurred when an Iraqi civilian provided information on an illegal weapons dealer. Elements of 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry

*Continued on next page*

## C-23 Sherpa keeps Soldiers, supplies moving

Story and photo by  
Spc. Kate A. Hoit  
301st Area Support  
Group Public Affairs

**LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq** — No matter how awkward it may look, the C-23 Sherpa airplane has been getting the job done since Operation Desert Storm and has a reason behind why it's so oddly shaped.

With the ability to take off and land at short distances, the Sherpa has become quite useful to the Army. Known for its ability to transport up to 30 passengers and palletized cargo, it is typically used for high-altitude and longer distance missions, rather than helicopters or C-130. The Sherpa was designed with specifics in mind. With its box-shaped body, the Sherpa has the ability to ship a variety of items.

The 12 Sherpa airplanes on LSA Anaconda are operated and supervised by 100 Soldiers from three units: the 484th Transportation Battalion, 329th Movement Control Team and Company A, 249th Aviation. They also receive help from Kellogg, Brown and Root contract workers.

"The Sherpa was picked up in the early 90s and was first widely used during Desert Storm," said Maj. Devin Mickenhagen, A Co., 249th Av., commander.



LSA Anaconda is home to several C-23 Sherpas that are responsible for moving materials and personnel throughout Iraq. They have been in country since OIF I.

The Sherpas first landed in country during the end of OIF I. They were flown over the North Atlantic and have been here ever since. The benefits of having this type of plane in country are endless. Compared to the C-130, the Sherpa can be flown for one person if necessary. The crew can also fly people or supplies on extremely short notice if needed.

They usually see six to seven flights leave daily. "This is the safest way to travel, and I wouldn't want it any other way," said Sgt. Chris Self, A Co., 249th Av., flight engineer.

The Soldiers recognize the importance of their mission here and are eager to continue flying personnel and supplies throughout Iraq.

"We all feel we have a great mission," Mickenhagen said. "Everything we fly around country is something that doesn't have to go by convoy and risk being hit by an IED."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Division, responded and captured the weapons dealer who possessed a sniper rifle, a sub-machine gun and three AK-47 rifles. (By 2nd Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs).

### Iraqi citizens march against terrorism

**MOSUL, Iraq** — More than 1,000 citizens and 500 Iraqi police from numerous villages in southern Ninewah Province participated in a historic event July 2. This was the first March Against Terrorism demonstration and was conducted in the town of Qayyarah south of Mosul. This was a strong demonstration that indicated citizens have had enough.

Many influential sheiks, mukhtars and imams took the lead to support and rally together citizens from all backgrounds, including Arabs and a large contingent of Kurds from east of the Tigris.

Following the march, many of the participants rallied together near a school and continued to demonstrate further resolve while organizers participated in post-march interviews. Eighteen media members, both international and Iraqi, covered the march.

The March Against Terrorism concept came from over 500 sheiks, imams and government officials at a regional security meeting. They felt there was a need to demonstrate that the people and leaders of Ninewah are not afraid. The large turnout for this event proved there are many who oppose the terrorists in their communities.

The Iraqi Army and police force took the lead in providing a safe and secure environment, which helped to make the march a success and went off without incident.

Governor Kashmoula has voiced his strong support for such events and encouraged other cities and villages in Ninewah Province to band together and voice their protest against terrorism in a similar manner.

## Cavalry to the rescue

**Spc. Morrie Douglass, a medic for the 98th Cavalry, 4th Platoon cleans the wound of a young boy who had recently stepped on a rusty nail in the backyard of his home in Hasawa, Iraq. Coalition Forces conduct counter-insurgency operations with Iraqi Security Forces to isolate and neutralize anti-Iraqi forces. to support the continued development of Iraqi Security Forces, and to support Iraqi reconstruction and democratic elections in order to create a secure environment that enables Iraqi self-reliance and self-governance.**



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. JonDior Ferrell

### U.S. patrols find weapons caches

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Task Force Baghdad Soldiers on combat patrol found a large explosives cache July 7 around 9 a.m. The cache contained 40 pieces of dynamite and three pounds of C4 explosives.

"In this war, failure is not an option. The more caches we find like this, the more lives we save," said Command Sgt. Maj. Cheyenn Fields, the highest ranking enlisted Soldier in 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, 48th Brigade Combat Team and an Albany, Ga., resident.

"An explosive ordnance disposal team arrived, and the Soldiers on patrol continued with their mission," Fields added.

Another patrol discovered a weapons cache consisting of mortars and mines at 10 p.m. July 6. Four individuals were detained in connection with the illegal munitions.

### Married couple re-ups for another hitch

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** — Wedding vows typically include "for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health."

But for two 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers, maybe they should have included "in reenlistment and duty station."

Spc. Timothy A. Goodell, a light wheel vehicle mechanic with the 94th Maintenance Company, 87th Corps Support

Battalion; and his wife, Spc. Ashely A. Goodell, human resource clerk, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, renewed their commitment to the Army June 18 here.

The two Division Support Brigade Soldiers were reenlisted by Lt. Col. Shawn M. Morrissey, DSB deputy commander.

Both Goodells said they reenlisted to complete their eight-year commitment to the Army on active duty.

"This is what we love to do," said Ashely, who hails from High Point, N.C.

"I wasn't ready to get out," said Timothy, a Sanford, Maine, native. "I still wanted to see some of the world."

The couple signed up for six years with a follow-on assignment to Korea in June 2006. (By Sgt 1st Class Peter Chadwick, Division Support Brigade Public Affairs).

### Operation Muthana strike nets 100 terrorists

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The operation was designed to detain suspected terrorists, seize illegal weapons and gain actionable intelligence in order to disrupt future AIF operations.

IA forces conducted cordon-and-search operations in order to prevent anti-Iraqi forces from escaping through the secure perimeter Soldiers drew around the area.

"This operation was led by the Iraqi Army," said Lt. Col. Mark London, the 48th Brigade Combat Team operations officer from Gray, Ga. "I was very impressed with the way they got out there and handled their business."

The operation, which concluded around 9:30 a.m., resulted in the detention of more than 100 suspected terrorists, some of whom were foreign fighters, including individuals from Egypt.

"The success of the Iraqi Army demonstrates their level of training and high commitment to rid Iraq of terrorists," said Col. Kenneth Roberts, 48th BCT executive officer. (By Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs).

## Find the potential Improvised Explosive Device.



**Answer: E  
All of the above.**



0006

IEDs KILL

## Frequencies



Al Asad	93.3 FM
Ar Ramadi	107.3 FM
Baghdad	92.3 FM
	and 107.7 FM
Balad	107.3 FM
Camp Taji	102.5 FM
Fallujah	105.1 FM
Kirkuk	107.3 FM
Mosul	105.1 FM
Q-West	93.3 FM
Ridgeway	107.1 FM
Sinjar	107.9 FM
Talil AB	107.3 FM
Tikrit	93.3 FM
Taji	107.7 FM

# Airmen teaching C-130 ops to Iraqis

## *Learning about sacrifice*

By Tech. Sgt. Melissa Phillips  
407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

**ALI BASE, Iraq** — When a crew of instructors deployed here to teach Iraqi Airmen the finer points of flying and maintaining C-130 Hercules, they knew they had a monumental task in front of them. But what they found was something unexpected.

Slowly over several months, Iraqi and U.S. Airmen have developed lifelong friendships with the very men they previously called enemies.

“Our instructors are more than just a friend,” said Iraqi Air Force Capt. S (name withheld for security), a maintenance officer with Squadron 23. “We are like brothers.”

The squadron is the first medium airlift postwar Iraqi Air Force flying squadron and is now more than 100 Airmen strong. More than 30 advisory support team instructors, all assigned here to either the 777th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron or 777th Airlift Squadron, teach their Iraqi counterparts in aircrew and logistics specialties.

The team also maintains a few specialized jobs such as maintenance operations center controller, sortie support section, production supervisor, maintenance officer and

superintendent.

Master Sgt. Patrick Shaw, an aerial port instructor deployed from McChord Air Force Base, Wash., said coming here has revealed a new world to him. He teaches students who previously subscribed to a different philosophy on how to get the aerial port mission done.

Before learning the U.S. aerial port processes, the Iraqi students would go straight from the aircraft to the battlefield, Shaw said.

Under the old regime, Iraqi Airmen did not have the same level of accountability over cargo and people. So it has been an interesting process of getting them to understand why the paperwork is so important and will help reduce duplication of effort in the long run, Shaw said.

Most of the Iraqi Airmen have been doing the same job on other transport aircraft for years. Although the Iraqi Air Force has a solid foundation in transport flight processes, it still has not been an easy process to assess their experience.

Master Sgt. Tommy Lee, a flight engineer instructor, and his other teammates have had to find new and inventive ways to bridge the language gap.

“One time I had to explain in six different ways why the instrument panel wasn’t lit up,” said Lee, who is deployed from Little Rock AFB, Ark. “One of the students had skipped a step on the checklist, and it took me 30 minutes to explain what it would have taken less than 30 seconds to explain to a U.S. Airman.”

In the beginning, there were no interpreters. Now the unit has three.

Despite the obstacles, in less than six months the first Iraqi Air Force pilot and co-pilot flew alone without a U.S. pilot in a flight seat position, and the first navigator was fully qualified. Plus, more than 65 Iraqi Air Force mechanics have received their equivalent of a 5-level certification and are now working toward their 7-level.

“These are the best people I’ve ever worked with,” said Tech. Sgt. Aaron Havens, an electrician and environmental instructor deployed from Pope AFB, N.C. “They pay attention, they like to keep everything clean, and with them it’s all about the airplane.”

The students struggle to understand English and different ways of doing things while simultaneously fighting for their lives and worrying about keeping their identities secret to protect themselves and their families from harm by insurgents.

But for them, they say it is worth it because they no longer fight for just one man — they fight for their country.

For Capt. S, who was also an officer during the previous regime, that shift in mentality is priceless.

“I recently went to visit an Iraqi Soldier in the hospital,” he said. “He had lost both his legs, and we went there to comfort him. When we were leaving, we told him, ‘May God be with you.’ He called back out to me, ‘For Iraq, I would give up my whole life, not just my legs.’”

Since Jan. 14, when the squadron was



U.S. Air Force photos by Airman 1st Class Jamie Shultz

**Master Sgt. Tommy Lee reviews instruments on a C-130 Hercules control panel with an Iraqi Air Force student. He is a flight engineer instructor assigned to the 777th EAS, deployed from Little Rock AFB, Ark.**

officially formed, the Airmen have been sneaking in the shadows and many have hid their allegiance to the Iraqi Air Force to family and friends, some even to their own wives.

Captain S’s wife, concerned for her family’s safety, continually pleads with him to quit and has also asked his father to pressure him. But the captain, whose own son does not know he is currently serving, said, “If I don’t do it, who will?”

“I dream that Iraq will someday be safe,” he said. “We will be at peace, and at peace with our neighbors. I wish for a civilized country and a better place for my children.”

Flight Engineer J also fights for the same dream and a chance to build a new Iraqi air force. He has been a flight engineer for 10 years, but until now has never felt able to express concerns to his superiors because of his lower rank.

“I’m impressed at how Americans treat each other as far as rank,” Engineer J said. “They treat each other equally. During the previous regime there was a huge difference between a flight engineer and pilot. Now, we work together.”

“Because of the treatment we’ve experienced from our instructors firsthand and the friendship they’ve shown us, it’s made me change my views on all Americans,” he said. “We understand the true [meaning of] American kindness.”

Both Iraqi Airmen said one of the proudest moments in their lives was during the ceremony when the Department of Defense gave three C-130 Hercules to the squadron, and the Iraqi Air Force placed the Iraqi flag on their own planes. The second was when they saw one of their planes take off and fly for the first time. “We are so proud to be the first unit to fly Iraqi Air Force planes,” Engineer J said.

Their pride is contagious. “This is the pinnacle of my career and the most rewarding job I’ve ever had in my Air Force career,” Shaw said. “This job has given me a lot of insight to working outside your comfort zone. You really get a front seat to how other peoples’ actions (affect) organizations across the board. My students will continue to teach new students, and what we started here will allow them to move their forces and security folks to where they’re threatened to secure their nation.

“You get very close to these guys, and you want to see them succeed,” Shaw said. He and the other instructors know their students’ family members by name and take an interest in their daily lives and vice versa.

“We get incredibly close to each other and our families get involved,” Haven said.

“Sometimes it’s overwhelming to know how much of an [effect] you’re making when you’re in the middle of it,” Shaw said. “But then you realize you’re helping specific people — specific people I know by name — and we are helping them to succeed.”

“I don’t know what history will write, but if this is the smallest footnote or biggest chapter in history, I’ll never forget it,” he said.



**Senior Master Sgt. James Baarda teaches an Iraqi Air Force student to operate a bulldog winch used to load rolling stock cargo and equipment. He is part of a crew of more than 30 instructors teaching more than 100 Iraqi Airmen how to fly and maintain C-130s. Baarda is a loadmaster instructor, 777th EAS, deployed from Yokota Air Base, Japan.**

# Illinois Guard keep streets of Abu Ghraib safe

Story and photos by  
Spc. Jeremy D. Crisp

Multi-National Corps - Iraq Public Affairs

**ABU GHRAIB, Iraq** — Every day, Soldiers are putting boots to the ground, patrolling the streets of Iraq in an effort to deter insurgent activity. No mission is ever the same, but for residents of Abu Ghraib, one thing is certain — they are guaranteed to see the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon on patrol, making their presence known.

“We are here so people can see our faces and to let the bad guys know we are here,” said 2nd Lt. Jason C. Royal, platoon leader of the Illinois Army National Guard’s 2nd Plt., 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment.

The platoon conducts a variety of operations in the streets in order to make their presence known. During their 14-hour shifts, the squads may conduct four or five foot patrols, set up a couple observation posts as well as cordon and search operations, Royal said.

“We’ll set up observation posts overlooking major areas to watch for suspected [car bombs] and watch for placement of [improvised explosive devices],” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy “Red” Wenthe, a squad leader from Effingham, Ill. “We set up in the morning and evenings because that is historically when the insurgents will emplace them.”

OPs are created by using a rooftop to observe a particular area. The squad will find an abandoned building and climb to the roof. From there the Soldiers will sit for hours and do what the OP entails, observe.

## Mission preparation

It’s 5 a.m. and the four Humvees were loaded. Weapons were put on the turrets; oil and water levels were checked. A quick safety and intelligence brief ensued, making the Soldiers aware of the



Soldiers from the Illinois Army National Guard’s 2nd Plt., 2nd Bn., 130th Infantry Regt., keep their eyes peeled and weapons up as they clear the second floor of a building June 23 in Abu Ghraib, Iraq.



Staff Sgt. Jeremy A. Wenthe of the Illinois Army National Guard’s 2nd Plt., 2nd Bn., 130th Infantry Regt., keeps an eye out for suspicious activity from a rooftop in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, June 23.

risks and dangers they may face during their patrol.

“All right, let’s do it,” Royal shouted.

As the sun cracked over the horizon, the Soldiers of 2nd Platoon will have already put in an hour’s worth of work patrolling the streets of Abu Ghraib.

## The mission

Before the first OP was set up for the morning, Royal spotted a vehicle that — through knowledge from prior intelligence and reconnaissance — may be loaded down with explosives.

“Let’s check it out,” Royal called into the radio.

The Soldiers set up at an intersection that covered all four avenues of approach with their Humvees. One team stayed with the vehicles; the other headed toward possible danger.

“I hate these [darn] things,” Wenthe said, referring to the possibility of the truck being packed with explosives.

After conversing with a local as to the whereabouts of the vehicle’s owner, nothing turned up. Royal and two of his troops perused the vehicle and found nothing suspicious.

“It was just a truck, but we have to check these things out,” Royal said.

The troops headed back to the Humvees, and Royal put a team on the move to set up an OP.

After a quick sweep-and-clear of a three-story abandoned house, the team moved on to the roof.

“Now we sit and wait,” said Sgt. Ryan L. Perry, from Chatham, Ill.

Perry is on his third deployment as a Guardsman, but this is the first time he has had boots on the ground experience in a combat zone.

“After doing two force protection deployments in Germany and Kuwait, it feels good to get on the ground, where the action is,” Perry said. “We actually feel like we are doing something, and that is pretty nice.”

While Perry, Wenthe and Staff Sgt. Jason M. Thompson, a team leader with 4th Plt., scanned the town from their rooftop vantage point, radio operator Pfc. Brannon L. Cope listened for any information coming over the net from Royal back at the Humvees.

“We got a man on horse in our sector we need to watch out for,” Cope relayed to the sergeants. “He’s wearing a mask and supposedly has some explosives on him.”

“Is that all the [intelligence] we have to go on?” Wenthe shouted.

“Well ... he’s reported to be waiving a

pistol and shouting ‘Hi ho Silver,’” Cope said with a laugh.

A couple of hours later and nothing to report, the Soldiers headed down from the rooftop to be replaced by another team from their squad.

At 1 p.m., and the Soldiers were still in the same spot.

“It’s not our typical day out here,” Royal said. “Normally we’d be out on the streets, talking with the locals and doing some of the humanitarian things right now, like handing out water and candy.”

The Soldiers had been sitting in one sector for longer than normal. The Iraqi Army frequently conducts missions in some of the platoon’s normal areas; therefore keeping the Soldiers in wait until the IA’s mission is complete, Royal said.

“We are waiting for command to give us the OK to head out,” Royal said.

## The search

The Soldiers headed out at 1:45 p.m. to conduct a raid on a suspected terrorist hideout. Due to the delay, the Soldiers were late in conducting the search.

With their interpreter Luis, Royal and a handful of Soldiers headed up to the home’s gate and give a good “boom, boom, boom” on the rusted metal doors.

The female head of household greeted the Soldiers. Royal and his Soldiers were invited in and asked about one of her sons.

“She has two sons in prison for setting IEDs, and one was killed during combat,” Royal said. “Her other son we are looking for is on the run. We just need to talk to him.”

After a thorough search of the house, nothing turned up, including viable information.

“She has given us about four different stories as to his whereabouts, including conflicting stories about the death of her other son,” Royal said.

Royal and his troops left the house after letting the woman know they would be back. The troops were not discouraged.

“People need the creature comforts — food, water and shelter in order to be comfortable. That is why we know he will be back,” Royal said.

## The return to base

The teams headed down the road to continue their mission. Before the day closes, Royal and his Soldiers will set up another OP, were invited to an Iraqi wedding, were gave handfuls of high-fives and candy to local children, and handed out cases of water to locals in need.

As the Humvees headed back through the gates of Camp Liberty, Royal deemed the mission a success. “None of our wives were [life insurance] sweepstakes winners today. It was a good day.”



2nd Lt. Jason C. Royal, right, platoon leader, 2nd Plt., 2nd Bn., 130th Infantry Regt., Illinois Army National Guard, greets an Iraqi while interpreter Luis (last name withheld) translates.

# 'Mustangs' *add firepower* to aviation crews

Story and photo by Staff Sgt.  
Christopher Williams  
27th Public Affairs Detachment

**LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANA-CONDA, BALAD, Iraq** — Since the days of the Vietnam War, Army aviation crews have been showering bad guys with M-60 machine gun fire from the skies above. Thanks in part to a new weapons-fielding program, the Army can continue to wreak havoc on the enemy and do so with greater force.

To enhance their combat capabilities, Soldiers from Company B "Mustangs," 1st Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, 18th Aviation Brigade, recently acquired the new M-240H machine gun system to replace the Vietnam-era M-60D models in their UH-60 Black Hawks and CH-47 Chinooks here.

"The purpose of the M-240H fielding program was to upgrade a weapons system that's been used since the mid-60s," said Sgt. Ronnie W. McCormack, unit armorer for B Co., 1/159th Avn. Regt. "All of our UH-60 and CH-47 air crews are being fielded with the new system, and eventually every aviation unit in the Army will get the system."

The new M-240H is being fielded at a time when there's more of an emphasis being placed on air missions because of the dangers of convoys. Having the new weapon will help increase the effectiveness of the air crew's mission by being able to provide more accurate and lethal protection from the air.

"The 240 is a heavier weapons system, has



Staff Sgt. Howard Payne, door gunner with B Company, 1st Battalion, 159th Aviation Regiment, 18th Aviation Brigade, mounts the new M-240H machine gun to a UH-60 Black Hawk prior to a mission June 30.

a much higher cyclic rate of fire and is a lot more accurate than the 60," said McCormack. "It also has better range. Before, crews would put a few rounds down range and might hit a target, whereas with the 240, there's no doubt you'll hit that target."

Firepower isn't the only benefit of the new M-240H system. It also has some additional bells and whistles to help make the job of the air crew go more smoothly.

"The 240 has a new integrated ammo-can brass-back system, which drops the expended brass through a hole in the bottom of the mount and has a slot on the side of the weapon to catch the ammunition links," McCormack said. "This is really one of the best features in that it prevents the wind from blowing the brass back into the weapon and

causing jams."

The M-240H also has an integrated rail system, which allows for a wide-range of attachments such as a laser system with infrared lighting, he said.

But having the M-240H is just part of the new fielding program. The other half is the task of familiarizing and training Soldiers how to use it. For the past several months, the Mustangs have been doing that.

"Our goal was to give our Soldiers academic training on the new weapon and then some hands-on training to reinforce it," said Staff Sgt. Jose A. Suarez, battalion standardization instructor, B Co., 1/159th. "The training included learning the weapon's capabilities as well as how to operate and maintain it."

Soldiers spent several days learning everything there was to know about their new weapons. Once the familiarization training was complete, they were able to take to the skies and get a feel for the weapon by engaging targets with live rounds.

"We flew our Soldiers out to Mason Range near LSA Anaconda and ran them through a live-fire scenario," Suarez said. "They had the opportunity to engage tanks on the range, and each Soldier was able to fire at least 600 rounds."

"I went through the training, and I love the 240. It's a lot better than the 60," said Spc. Robert A. Hudgens, B Co., 1/159th crew chief. "It's nowhere near as sluggish as the 60, and it has a lot more firepower."

Hudgens' feelings about the new M-240H seem to be echoed throughout the company, with most of the Mustangs' Soldiers preferring the new over the old.

"Our Soldiers are happy as clams," said McCormack. "They would always come in and complain about problems with the M-60 and with the 240. The only thing we hear them complaining about now is not having enough ammo to fire."

Though happy as the motivated Soldiers from B Co. might be about getting some trigger time, there are more important reasons why this is the weapon they would rather have out in combat.

"The primary reason that this weapon is so important to us is that it's extremely more reliable compared to the M-60," McCormack said. "With the M-240H, when you pull that trigger, it will fire and do so with more power and greater accuracy."

# COSCOM

**Keeps eyes on road**

Story and photos by  
Pfc. Mark B. Matthews  
27th Public Affairs Detachment

**LOGISTICS SUPPORT AREA ANA-CONDA, BALAD, Iraq** — When it comes to combat logistic patrols, the Soldiers' ability to communicate with each other and their base of origin is priceless. However, the technology for such communication is not without its price, but that is a price one command saw to be a necessity.

1st Corps Support Command has recently begun a new computer-based system, which will allow COSCOM to keep a set of eyes on their patrols in real time.

The Deployment Asset Visibility System uses radio frequency tags to identify trucks, containers and cargo. These RF tags also give information on the combat logistic patrol, such as the convoy commander's name, number of trucks in the patrol and the location of the patrol, said Pfc. Marguerite Hunter, 519th Movement Control Team.

Although the RF tags carry all the information, they still need a way to get that information back to the 17 DAVS computer cases throughout theater.

As combat logistic patrols move outside the exit control



Staff Sgt. Rhona Parra, 519th Transport Control Detachment, scans a Humvee's radio frequency tag with an interrogator, which will allow information to be tracked throughout theater.

point, the trucks' and containers' RF tags are scanned by a small hand-held computer called an interrogator. That information is then sent into space, via computer, to a satellite

be seeing a big change for the better when it comes to the movement of combat logistic patrols.

where the information can then be sent back down to the DAVS computers, Hunter said.

The information sent down goes to computers that can map out where logistic patrols are and where they are going. It can give the convoy commanders information in case the patrol's mission needs to change.

"One advantage to DAVS is that it actually allows military leaders to link the cargo that a convoy is carrying with MTS systems," said Maj. Sherb Sentell, the movement control team hub commander. "Now we can actually tell, with the click of a few buttons, what a convoy is carrying."

"I am proud that my unit is on the cutting edge of implementing this new technology on the modern battlefield," Sentell said.

The system is new to theater and currently 1st COSCOM is the only command using the technology. However, anytime U.S. Forces can have an upper hand in a combat situation, the safety of U.S. Soldiers is boosted and the mission is completed more effectively. As the system becomes more widely used Soldiers could

# Reserve Soldiers go from Ground Zero to Iraq

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Julie Nicolov  
Multi-National Corps - Iraq Public Affairs

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE BERNSTEIN, Iraq** — He bounced out of the gunner's hatch of his armored Humvee, removed his helmet to assess the desert landscape of FOB Bernstein, here, and made his observation.

"Man, I would love to plant some tomatoes out here," said Spc. James Letohic, scout, 42nd Infantry Division Command Group Personal Security Detail. "They'd get as big as basketballs!"

Six months ago, Letohic was back on Staten Island preparing his garden, his personal affairs and himself for his deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, but for Letohic and the rest of his teammates from New York City, the war began long before they set foot on desert sand. Their reserve unit, 101st Cavalry, 42nd ID, was tasked with clean-up and security details at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.

"It wasn't New York City that day," said Spc. Gary Gaudioso, tanker, 42nd ID command group PSD. "I was standing there looking around, and I said, 'This is hell.'"

On Sept. 11, 2001, the reserve Soldiers were starting another workday at their respective civilian jobs in the tri-state area. As soon as they saw the footage on the news, each of them jumped in his car and headed to unit headquarters.

"My boss gave me a hard time," Letohic said of leaving work early that day. "I didn't care. I knew I was needed."

Most of the unit's Soldiers were at the headquarters before an official recall was given through the contact roster.

New Yorkers worked together, regardless of their background or affiliation, in order to clean up the wreckage.

"I saw a guy with his gang colors out, and I asked him about it," said Gaudioso, a New York City lifeguard. "He took his flag and put it away and said, 'We're all brothers here.'"

Those who weren't able to join the cleanup crew helped in any way they could.

"This one guy tried to give me money, saying, 'Here, go get some lunch on me,' but I couldn't take the cash on the job," Letohic said in a thick, Staten Island accent. "So this guy went over to the Chinese restaurant across the street and gave the guy in there 75 bucks and said, 'Feed those guys.'"

Other neighbors brought sodas, plates of homemade cookies and even bags of dog food for the volunteers and their search dogs. Letohic said the streets were lined with donated items.

"Everyone who was there that day helped the best they could," Letohic said.

The danger didn't end when the towers fell. The wreckage



**Spc. James Letohic, scout, 42nd Inf. Div. command group personal security detail, shows a fireman's pin and pictures of friends who died in the line of duty at the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001.**

landed in precarious positions, threatening to crumble at any moment.

"They'd run the sirens, thinking a building was going to fall," Gaudioso said. "You'd have to drop whatever you were doing and run."

The Soldiers endured long hours, muscle-wrenching labor and dangerous situations. The most difficult job was finding proof of life that ended in the rubble.

"The thing that killed me the most was seeing a kid's teddy bear," Gaudioso said. "I have two little girls. You know that had to belong to someone."

Whenever human remains were found, the Soldiers stopped what they were doing and paid respect to those who lost their lives.

"We'd all stand at attention when they brought ... the litter out," Letohic said. "You couldn't see what was on there; you didn't want to see."

People who lived near the towers were not allowed to go back to their homes for two weeks. Once it was safe for them to return, Gaudioso escorted people into their apartments.

"Walking people up there and seeing them break down because their cat or dog was lying there dead and their whole apartment was covered in white soot —" he said, unable to finish his sentence for the emotions the thought still evoked.

When U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001, Letohic was chomping at the bit to go with them.

"When Afghanistan jumped off, I thought, 'God, what am I doing here?'" he said. "A Soldier never wants a war, but if there's a war, he wants to be there."

As 42nd ID prepared to deploy to Iraq last winter, many of their firemen and policemen friends wanted to go with them.

"I remember firemen saying to me, 'Can we trade uniforms?'" Letohic said.

Instead, they passed on the torch.

"I remember the cartoon where they showed the fireman handing the American flag to the Soldier," Gaudioso said.

"The Soldier was saying, 'We'll take it from here.' There's no way you didn't want to be [in Iraq]."

Letohic and Gaudioso are proud to serve their country and represent their city in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The city has shown its pride in them as well.

"They've got the 42nd ID flag hanging in Yankee Stadium," Gaudioso said.

Several of Letohic's friends were killed in the Sept. 11 attack. He carries the photos of Gary Geidel, a fireman with Rescue 1 Staten Island, and Paul Beyer, a fireman with Engine 6 Staten Island, in his ID pouch that hangs around his neck. He also wears a World Trade Towers pin in memory of his friend Pat Byrne, a fireman with Ladder Company 101 Brooklyn, on the button placket of his uniform blouse. He keeps them with him everywhere he goes in Iraq as a reminder of why he serves.

"I knew these guys; I knew their kids, their families," Letohic said. "It still really gets to me."

Letohic and Gaudioso travel in convoys throughout Iraq with 42nd ID, Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Fearnside. The work is exhausting in the hot, dusty desert, but their focus never waives.

"Sure we miss home, but when you think of the guys in World Wars I and II when they did a long tour of three, four or five years, we can't complain," Letohic said. "I mean, we're lucky. We have showers and hot food. I mean, come on."

After seeing the effects of terrorism on their hometown, the men of 42nd ID's command group personal security detail are honored to defend their country in any way they can, no matter how small the detail might seem.

"I wish I could do more," Letohic said. "We're one little grain of sand on the whole beach."

## 'IED Alley' goes from Mean Street to Main Street

By 2nd Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Each day, Coalition Forces throughout Baghdad travel along key road arteries on a variety of missions, and each day, these patrols risk attack by improvised explosive devices and small-arms fire.

Recently, one such route notorious for IED attacks and hijackings in southeast Baghdad has seen a dramatic turn for the better.

It was in early June that Bulldog Battery, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division received the mission of securing one of the key avenues of approach into Baghdad.

"During May, the route had 32 IED attacks

and was nicknamed 'IED Alley' by the Soldiers who frequented the dangerous stretch of road," said Capt. Roy Beeson, battery commander. "By June, we had reduced the number of attacks to just two."

The battalion commander praised the efforts of the battery.

"The security improvements along the route are due to the extraordinary efforts of the Soldiers of Bulldog and their commander," said Lt. Col. Steven Merkel. "I gave them a tough mission with an issue to solve. I wanted the route secure, and that is exactly what they have done," he said.

Bulldog employed various techniques to improve the security of the route.

"To combat these deadly attacks, we employed a number of patrolling tactics, techniques and procedures to counter the various anti-Iraqi forces methods for emplacing

and observing IEDs," Beeson said.

But the key to their success was placing an emphasis on building strong relationships with the residents and workers in the area.

"We spend a lot of time talking to the people who live and work here. In less than a month, our patrol leaders knew the names of all the home and business owners in the area," he said.

Maj. John G. Clement, battalion executive officer, said, "Bulldog has gotten the job done because they gained the support of the local nationals, who now serve as just another set of eyes and ears helping to keep the road clear."

"It is long days of physically demanding work walking and driving the routes, but in this case, it is great that our Soldiers can directly see the positive impact they are having on the safety of a community," Beeson

said.

1st Lt. Scott Alpaugh, a platoon leader in Bulldog and a native of Rochester, N.Y., agreed. "It's hard work — out for long hours each day — but it's worth it when we have Iraqis approach us with IED locations or tell us where insurgents are hiding. Every day, we help someone; it compounds the amount of trust and confidence that the citizens of Iraq have in our abilities."

While Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces are the visible personification of change in Iraq, it is the Iraqi people who are making change possible.

"The Soldiers of B Battery know that each friendship gained through trust and respect is another weight added to the side of safety and security along their stretch of road — a road now traveled with assurance instead of fear," Merkel said.

## CHAPLAIN'S TALK

*Here to Serve*

By Chaplain (Col.) Lilton J. Marks  
Multi-National Force - Iraq Command Chaplain

It was Father's Day and the whole gang was home: my daughter, two sons, and the oldest grandchild. These parents were accompanied by their children, my seven other grandchildren and a great-grandson. Oh yes, there was also the adopted family with parents and two children. Twenty-two in all filled the house — what a day, what a weekend and what a time!

This was truly an active time, and there were moments that I would sneak off and get some quiet time to myself. This gathering served as our annual time together as a family. But this gathering was different than the others, because everyone came to bid me farewell as I prepared to deploy to Iraq.

The flight from Norfolk, Va., to Baltimore, Md., to meet the Air Mobility Command flight was uneventful, until I tried to recover my bags and discovered that my civilian duffel bag was missing. The airline had damaged my duffel and had transferred some of the contents to another duffel bag and put it on the turnstile, which I only discovered after a frantic look through all pieces of luggage left on the turnstile. Well, the rest of this story is — after an hour or more of dealing with the airline agents — I emerged with a meager compensation, wet and heavily soiled clothes, and missing and damaged items. I had missed the time to report to the AMC desk by 30 minutes and just could not deal with the airlines any longer (I now think they knew this, so they were slow in serving me, waiting for me to give up and leave).

Off to the AMC desk to find a line a mile long (well, so much for hurrying up). My first thought was to go back to the airline and get my fair share for the damages they had done. Ah! It is not worth the effort. So, I settled down and proceeded to check in like everyone else.

The flight to Kuwait City via Frankfurt, Germany, and Aviano, Italy was long and lonely. Oh, there were the lounges to retreat to, but they only added to the loneliness, and I preferred to hang out with the rest of the lonely passengers. Finally, I landed in Kuwait City on June 28 at 1:30 a.m., 95 degrees, pitch dark, and totally disoriented. We were put on buses and moved to a holding area, where we joined with 500 other military and civilians waiting, waiting and waiting. After about an hour and a half, the Kuwaiti police showed up to escort us to Camp Doha for in-processing.

There was only one flight to Baghdad on June 28 and, needing to draw RFI equipment, I missed that flight. I checked around (like an industrious Soldier would) and attempted to get on a flight to Balad with the intent of hitchhiking a ride on a MEDEVAC chopper to the 86th Combat Support Hospital and then on to Camp Victory. The old Soldier in me said you are here now, so get to work, therefore I needed to get to Camp Victory ASAP. The liaisons found out about my intentions and became very nervous, being afraid that they would lose the new MNF-I Command Chaplain. They insisted that I not go to Balad. I thought better of my plans and waited for the next day's flight to Baghdad.

Boom! I am in Baghdad, I am in Camp Victory, and I am in the heat and dust. But most importantly as I look around, I see Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and civilians everywhere. I see ministry!

Why am I talking about my journey to Baghdad since it was not much different than anyone else's trip who has journeyed here? Everyone experiences a certain level of loneliness and stress on the long flight over. Camp Doha does not remedy those feelings. And, as for Camp Victory, Baghdad, the heat and the dust ... well, we are all in it together!

So, why the story? Am I complaining and wimping out?

After over 40 years with the Army (active and reserve time) including 21 years as an Army Chaplain, this story affirms my call to ministry. Since 1984, God has been instrumental in placing me where He needed me for His service. I know that this is more than just another assignment; instead, it is a call to support ministry to men and women who serve for the freedom and dignity of the Iraqi people and to honor their commitment to their nation.

As the MNF-I Command Chaplain, I am committed to quality pastoral care for the women and men (military and civilians) serving in Iraq and to advising and assisting the command in realizing its strategic goals of bringing peace and stability to Iraq, and enabling the Iraqi people to become self-reliant.

I look forward to the next 12 months with great optimism and confidence. I am here to serve!

May God bless and keep us all in His care as we struggle for peace, dignity and freedom for humanity.



Chaplain Marks

*Airman fights his way back*

By Senior Airman Shaun Emery  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing  
Public Affairs

**BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq** — Although a rocket attack cut his time short on his first deployment, an Airman with the 64th Helicopter Maintenance Unit here pledged to himself that he would endure whatever pain was necessary to get back in the fight.

Following a year-and-a-half recovery from serious injuries to his hand that could have ended his Air Force career, Senior Airman Douglas Batchelder, an armament systems journeyman, is back in Iraq.

In November 2003, he arrived at Baghdad International Airport to begin his first deployment. After a couple hours of inprocessing and a welcomed nap, Batchelder reported to duty. His four hours on station would be all he would see of his rotation.

"My commander had given me a handful of keys, and I stuck them in my pocket," said Batchelder, recalling the day's event. "When I took them out of my pocket, some fell to the ground."

The events that would follow still linger in Batchelder's mind. Just as he bent over to pick up the fallen keys, a 122 mm rocket tore through his tent, careened off his back, hit the ground and exploded.

"I blinked as the rocket exploded, so all I remember is a bright flash through my eyelids," Batchelder said.

The concussion ruptured his eardrums. He described the feeling as being enveloped in "silent chaos." Pieces of debris were flying everywhere and fire engulfed his tent.

Batchelder suffered numerous injuries from shrapnel, the most serious to his right hand. Pararescue staff on site quickly provided aid, and he was whisked away to the hospital where fortune smiled on him.

"The doctor [who] saw me when I got to the



**Senior Airman Douglas Batchelder suffered numerous injuries from flying shrapnel from a rocket explosion in his tent in Baghdad in 2003. After five hand surgeries, he is back in Iraq with the 64th Helicopter Maintenance Unit in Balad.**

hospital said he had also just arrived," he said, "and as luck would have it, he was a hand surgeon."

Batchelder received his first surgery in Baghdad. He was taken to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, where he received his second surgery.

After returning to the U.S., Batchelder would have to make the decision that would ultimately shape his career — separate from the Air Force or stay in. He decided that getting out was not an option.

"I was too young to stop doing something that I really love," he said. "The therapy was difficult, but I stayed positive because I wanted a chance to get back to the desert to do my job."

Batchelder has had five surgeries on his hand, which has 17 screws, metal plates and pins holding it together.

Airman Batchelder said he is excited to be back in Iraq contributing to the Air Force mission.

"I know my loved ones back home are concerned for me, but this was something I really wanted to do," he said.



U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman Tim Beckham

**Senior Airman Douglas Batchelder times the ammunition feeder on an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter machine gun. In November 2003, Batchelder suffered numerous injuries from flying shrapnel of a rocket that exploded in his tent in Baghdad. After five hand surgeries, he is back in Iraq with the 64th Helicopter Maintenance Unit at Balad Air Base.**

# Scimitar Slapstick

**Downrange**

What do you mean you've lost my clothes??

Come back next week.

KBR LAUNDRY

Next week?? What am I suppose to wear in the meantime?

I'll just give you someone else's clothes till we find yours. We do it all the time.

Someone else's clothes? Are you crazy?!

Fine. Go Naked. See if I care.

Later, back at the tent.....

Does this make me look fat??

WWW.DOWNRANGEWEB.COM  
7/15/05 © 2005 Jeffery Hall

Art by Jeffery Hall

SURE, MEDIA ARE EASY- THEY HERD LIKE CATS...

YEAH, BUT CATS DON'T CARRY AK-47'S!!!

IRAQ NEWS

PRESS

POPEE

T.B. LAWN 2005

Art by Staff Sgt. Timothy B. Lawn

**BUSTER'S Baghdad**

SO, WHY DOES SHE CALL YOU "JOHN" IF YOUR NAME IS BEAKER?

COMPUTER TACTICALS & EA.

Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree

**OUT OF THE PATCH**

Yeah right! I guess it gets mighty hot in the Division Main. Maybe K.B.R's Management should come visit me and my squad when we are doing convoy operations, cordon and searches, and roving traffic control check points in 110 degree weather.

Only Two Drinks Per Customer  
K.B.R. INC. MGT.

GREEN U.S. ARMY

Mark J. Hart 2005

Art by Chief Warrant Officer Mark J. Hart

# Soldier survives sniper attack, nabs terrorist

By Spc. Chris Foster

256th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

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

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

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

Pfc. Stephen Tschiderer, a native of Mendon, N.Y., and a medic with Troop E, 101st “Saber” Cavalry Division, was shot in the chest by an enemy sniper, during a routine patrol in west Baghdad.

While Tschiderer, attached to 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, was relaying infor-

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

Tschiderer was knocked to the ground from the sudden impact of the sniper’s bullet. The bullet only seemed to have fazed this Soldier as, adrenaline pumping, he sprang right back up in order to take cover and locate the enemy’s position.

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

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

“The shot came from my 12 o’clock position from a silver

van parked across an intersection about 75 meters from my location,” Tschiderer said.

He alerted his fellow Soldiers about the enemy location, and they immediately began to pursue the terrorists.

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

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

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

## Soldiers surprise families in July 4th parade reunion



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Bryce S. Dubee

**Spc. Brent Goolsby says hello to his son Jonathan Aiden Goolsby for the first time during a Fourth of July reunion in Atlanta. Goolsby is home on leave from serving in Iraq.**

By Spc. Bryce S. Dubee  
Army News Service

**ATLANTA** — Four Soldiers serving in Iraq returned to surprise their families with a reunion at the opening ceremony of the Atlanta Fourth of July Parade.

Organizers for the parade contacted the Army and found four Soldiers eligible to take leave for rest and recuperation and arranged to reunite them with their families in Georgia.

Arriving on July 3, the Soldiers had a day to relax, get cleaned up and enjoy a dinner with Miss America. The next morning, they waited, hidden on a hotel shuttle bus for the parade to begin, while their wives sat in the grandstands, clueless to the fact that their husbands were less than 200 yards away.

In the bus, the Soldiers grew nervous, excited with the anticipation of seeing their families.

“Do you think my daughter will remember me?” Staff Sgt. Terrence Alford asked 2nd Lt. Stephen Lucas and the other two returning fathers on the bus, who reassured him that she definitely would.

Spc. Brent Goolsby was not only reuniting with his wife Arianna — whom he hadn’t seen in half a year — but seeing a member of his family who he had never met, Jonathan Aiden Goolsby, his newborn son.

“I just want to meet my son,” said Goolsby. “I’m a father, but I’m not really yet a father.”

The four wives and their children were called out to the starting line of the parade as honorary grand marshals where Miss America performed a song for them. During the song, from around the corner, the shuttle bus slowly pulled out into the street in front of where the families stood. As the song ended, the doors opened, and out leapt the four Soldiers with bouquets and smiles, to the total shock of their wives.

The emotional reunion in the middle of Peachtree Street in downtown Atlanta created many a teary eye among the spectators. After the ceremony, the families, now whole, took their seats back in the grandstands to watch the rest of the parade before heading home to enjoy the rest of their leave.

“I’m still in a state of shock, I mean I really can’t believe he’s here,” said Jo Anne Griffen, wife of Sgt. Robert Griffen.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Alex Licea

**Sgt. Robert Griffen gives his wife Jennifer and daughter Kayleigh flowers during the surprise family reunion during the Fourth of July Parade.**

“This is a great experience, I feel so lucky to be here,” Sgt. Griffen said. “My only wish is that we could have brought more people back with us.”

Sitting with his son in the stands, Goolsby looked up with a smile from ear to ear, “This feels good, this feels really, really good.”

## AAFES’ Patriot Family Connection sends messages of support to deployed troops

**DALLAS** — When U.S. forces deploy to remote locations around the world, the Army & Air Force Exchange Service is right there with them, delivering a bit of home through products and services as well as outreach programs such as the Patriot Family Connection.

The most recent “Connection” effort allows family and friends to send messages of encouragement and support to troops deployed in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

Launched in April, the “We All Have a Hand in Securing Our Freedom” initiative uses banners that are displayed at exchanges worldwide to coordinate communication between the home front and front lines. The banners, displayed in stores until May 14, gave military families and AAFES associates an opportunity to trace their hands and write messages of love and support to troops overseas.

Today, the banners are displayed in AAFES BX/PXs throughout Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

While most of the banners were sent directly to an exchange overseas, there were banners that follow more unconventional travel routes to reach troops. One banner has traveled via military convoy, Chinook helicopter and C-17 airplane with Kurt Curtis, AAFES’ exchange safety and security manager at Selfridge ANG. Curtis’ banner has already traveled to Camp Eggers, Camp Phoenix, Kabul and Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. Future stops include Uzbekistan, Kuwait and Iraq.

Curtis’ duties while deployed with AAFES give him the ability to travel to sites in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom that do not have established AAFES facilities. This enables him to bring the messages of support to troops who might oth-

erwise not see one. “I conduct Personal Service Support Runs, which are support missions to forward operating bases that have no BX/PXs,” said Curtis. “We conduct one-day sales for the troops, and I take that opportunity to hang the banner.”

AAFES’ latest campaign, “Back to the Homefront,” mirrors the “We All Have a Hand in Securing Our Freedom” program, just in reverse. Troops stationed in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom recently wrote messages of thanks and love to friends and family back in the United States on banners designed specifically for troops to sign. Just as the banners were sent overseas after being signed by fellow Americans, these signed by the troops will return to tour bases in the U.S. at the end of July.

For more on the AAFES Patriot Family, visit the Patriot Family link on [aafes.com](http://aafes.com). (By AAFES Public Affairs)



Photos by Staff Sgt. Brett B. McMillan

Service members from 18 countries serving with NATO in Iraq received the NATO Training Mission in Iraq Medal July 7. The medals were presented to them during a visit by Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, Gen. Sir John Reith in a ceremony at the NATO facility here.

## Deputy Supreme Allied Commander pins NATO medals on troops in Iraq

By NATO Training Mission - Iraq  
Public Affairs

**INTERNATIONAL ZONE, BAGHDAD, Iraq** — Service members from 18 countries serving with NATO in Iraq received the NATO Training Mission in Iraq Medal July 7, presented to them by Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, Gen. Sir John Reith KCB CBE in a ceremony at the NATO facility here.

The DSACE first presented the commander of the NTM-I, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, and the deputy commander, Danish Army Maj. Gen. Agner Rokos, with the NTMI medals.

Then the three generals pinned the medals on the individuals in three different groups of the organization's formation.

Early in 2004 NATO accepted a request from the Iraqi Interim Government to help rebuild the Iraqi Armed Forces. The alliance arrived in Baghdad last August.

This non-combat operation is a training mission that focuses on two areas: First, on training and advising; and secondly, on providing assistance with equipment.

NATO is training Iraqi Armed Forces in the English language and computer skills. But it is also providing advice to selected groups of military headquarters personnel and is assisting in setting up a military academy, a center of excellence, a Training, Education and Doctrine Centre, and a Staff College that will be in place at Ar Rustimiyah this fall.

In the first four months of the year 2005, NATO trained more than 500 Iraqi students in Iraq. The alliance has also taken students out of Iraq and trained them in NATO schools in various European cities. The number of those students has already surpassed 200.

The organization has also been shipping into Baghdad equipment in stag-



The NATO Training Mission in Iraq Medal

gering numbers. In the first four months of 2005, NATO equipped the Iraqi Armed Forces with equipment worth up to \$25 million, among them 25,400 AK-47 rifles and over 10,000 helmets for the armed forces. Various NATO countries, including Estonia, Denmark, Slovenia, Hungary and Latvia have donated this equipment.

NATO is in Iraq at the request of the Iraqi authorities. NATO's efforts in training and advising and its assistance in providing equipment to the Iraqi Armed Forces is done at the request of the Iraqi authorities.

NATO forces will not operate in combat operations; however, they are authorized to defend themselves and their students if required.

The NATO training mission in Iraq is a distinct mission, but works closely with Multi-National Force - Iraq. The Alliance will continue to train and advise Iraqi personnel and will expand this assistance as necessary.

NATO's mission is to keep on playing a valuable role in helping the Iraqi government to develop the capacity to provide for its own security.



Military members from 18 countries working with NATO in Iraq wait in formation to be pinned with the NATO Training Mission in Iraq Medal at the NATO headquarters in Baghdad.

## Coalition Corner

... highlighting countries serving with MNF-Iraq



## Albania

Local name: *Albania*

The Republic of Albania is located in southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, Greece, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. Size-wise, it is slightly smaller than Maryland and has a population of almost 3.6 million. Albanian is the official language spoken here, but Greek, Vlach, Romani and various Slavic dialects are also spoken throughout the country. Albania is not part of the European Union; therefore it uses its own currency, the Lek. It is also not a member of NATO; however, it is a NATO partner through membership in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

Although relatively small in size, Albania is packed with historical and recreational sites. The capital city of Tirana has architecture influenced by Rome, Istanbul and even Russia. The National Museum of History, considered the largest and most regarded museum in Albania, and the 15-story Tirana International Hotel, the country's tallest building, are also found in Tirana.

The city Butrint has ancient ruins from early Greek, Roman and Illyrians settlements, including a 3rd century B.C. theatre. Durrës is another ancient city founded around 627 B.C. by the Greeks, although it also has Roman ruins and Byzantine fortifications. Shkodra boasts the title of one of the oldest cities in Europe as well as the center of Gheg cultural region.

The Albanian diet is well-balanced, although dairy products and fruits and vegetables tend to be daily favorites. Albanian cuisine has a flair of Turkish influence with dishes such as shishqebap, romstek, which are beef patties, and qofte, a grilled version of meatballs. Another favorite is bourek, tasty layers of pastry stuffed with a combination cheese, meat or vegetables. What's a meal without a good dessert like baklava, a syrup-covered pastry filled with walnuts with a nice cup of Turkish coffee and raki, grape brandy.

Albania — yet another piece of the Multi-National Force - Iraq puzzle, dedicated to rebuilding Iraq.

References: [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov), [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com), <http://europa.eu.int>, [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int), [www.albanian-tourism.com](http://www.albanian-tourism.com), <http://cp.settlement.org>.

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# Service members, civilians 'hash' it out

Story and photo by  
Senior Airman Chawntain Sloan  
Multi-National Corps - Iraq Public Affairs

**CAMP VICTORY, BAGHDAD, Iraq** – The chase is on, and the hounds are hot on the hare's trail. But this isn't an ordinary scavenger hunt led by the Easter Bunny. This conniving hare will do almost anything to throw even the most skilled hound off track.

It's a challenge that about 35 service members, Department of Defense employees and contract civilians who are part of the Lost Lake Hash House Harriers at Camp Victory, Iraq, welcome every Sunday starting at 7 p.m.

While the Lost Lake hashers have been pursuing the hare for about three months, the world-wide tradition of hashing, as the running sport is commonly known, stems back a couple centuries. During times and in locations where hunting game was sparse, men were substituted for hares and hunted by their peers in a non-lethal game called Hares and Hounds or Paper Chase. Since a man's sense of smell is not as keen as a hound dog's, the hare would lay a trail for the hunters to follow using scrap paper.

"It's a running game, but you don't realize you're actually running," said 1st Lt. David Dixon, the Lost Lake Hash House Harriers' master of ceremonies, or songmeister, as fellow hashers call him. "You're running hard, trying to catch the hare, or if you are the hare, you're running to try to not be caught, but you're having fun doing it, so you don't really realize the workout you are getting."

In 1938, Albert Stephen Ignatius Gispert recreated the age-old Paper Chase game with his fraternity, which met weekly at the Selangor Club Chambers in Malaysia. Because of its bland food, the club became known as the Hash House, and the Hash House Harriers were born.

Currently, about 1,500 other groups, including the Lost Lake Hash House Harriers, are listed in the World Hash House Harriers Database maintained online by Global Trash, the world hash publisher, at [www.gthhh.com](http://www.gthhh.com).

"There is a hash in just about every major city in the world," said Dixon, who has been a participant in several hash groups stateside and overseas since 1996. "Each hash has different ways of doing things, but essentially,

there are traditions, not rules."

While some groups may only meet on a monthly basis or to commemorate special holidays, the Lost Lake Hash House Harriers attempt to recreate the social camaraderie founded with the original non-competitive sport every week.

"We meet up at a different location each week, which is usually disclosed at the previous hash," said Dixon.

The Lost Lake hashers start each hash by introducing who they are, where they are from and what hash group they belong to.

Most people who have hashed with other groups have nicknames that were given to them based on the stories they shared with their group. Those who don't already have nicknames are usually given a name by the Lost Lake hashers after their fifth time hashing, Dixon said.

"Some of the names and songs are not politically correct, but it's all in jest, and people have to have a thick skin and a sense of humor, or they are not going to enjoy what we do," he said.

Once everyone has been formally introduced, the hare is blessed with a traditional song and sent on his or her way.

"The hare usually gets a 10- to 15-minute head start, during which we socialize, sing a few songs and stretch out," Dixon said. "When I determine that it has been 10 to 15 minutes, I announce 'On on!' and everyone breaks the circle and starts following the trail."

Using flour in place of scrap paper, like the traditional game, the hare maps out the trail along with several detours designed to confuse the hounds.

"The hare's goal is to not get caught but still lay a trail that is easily followed by the pack," said Dixon. "One dot of flour marks the trail until there is an intersection. Once they reach the intersection, the runners are left to their own devices to try and figure out which is the right trail to follow. The pack usually breaks up a little bit at this point, which helps the hare get further ahead."

The runners work as a group to decipher the meaning of the different markings and try to snare the hare before reaching the end of the trail.

"Trying to finding the right trail is my favorite part because it's like a big mystery," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Cheryl Migas, who recently joined the group. "You have to fol-



Service members and DoD and contract civilians who are part of the Lost Lake Hash House Harriers at Camp Victory, Iraq, spend their Sunday evenings pursuing the hare. Hashing is a world-wide tradition that stems back a couple centuries to a time when Paper Chase and Hares and Hounds were popular games.

low it to figure it out."

"Depending on the hare, the trail can be anywhere from a half mile to as long as four miles," said Dixon. To ensure that the hashers don't get dehydrated, there are beverage checkpoints along the way.

"The preferred beverage of hashers is beer," said Dixon. "Here, we are a dry hash, but we have a variety of nonalcoholic beers and Gatorade available."

The beer checks, as they are called, also serve as a means for the hare to get further ahead. They usually slow everyone down for about five to 10 minutes because people start to socialize and don't realize how much time they are wasting, said Dixon.

"Eventually, the trail will come to an end, and it's usually never at the same place it starts," Dixon said. "It's usually at an undisclosed location that nobody knows about except the hare. That way, no one runs straight to the end, and if the hare decides to run back to the start, no one will be there waiting for him or her. The objective is not to win the hash, it's to find the right trail and catch the hare."

At the conclusion of the hash, just as at the start, the songmeister takes accountability to ensure no one went missing along the way.

"We then circle back up, and I initiate punishment or reward," said Dixon. "We bring people in the circle and sing songs to

embarrass them for things like missing a couple of hashes in a row, being the first or last person to finish and shortcutting the trail."

"Hashes all have different aspects, so you never know what's going to be a violation," said Migas, who started hashing in 1997 with Osan Bulgogi Hash House Harriers at Osan Air Base, Korea. "But, it's all in fun. You don't have to do anything you don't want to do. If you don't like it, you can always walk away."

For more information about the Lost Lake Hash House Harriers, log onto their homepage at [www.sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/lostlakeh3/](http://www.sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/lostlakeh3/) or contact Dixon at 822-1662. For more information about the history of hashing or other hash groups, log onto Global Trash at [www.gthhh.com](http://www.gthhh.com).

The Lost Lake Hash House Harriers will continue the chase with a new hare and a new trail this Sunday at 7 p.m. at the parking lot next to Sports Oasis Dining Facility Stage. "I don't want to discourage anyone from joining, but if you're easily offended, this is not the group for you," said Dixon. "If you're not a runner, that doesn't matter. It's not a race, so it's not about winning."

"It's a good way to spend a Sunday afternoon because it not only gets you out, but you also get to see another side of people and meet people you would probably never meet," said Migas.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mary Rose

## U.S. Team One takes soccer tourney

U.S. Team One poses for a group shot in after the final game in the Mini World Cup put together by people from many nations in a consolidated effort to make friends.

First row from left to right: Maj. Arthur Maruri, team captain; Capt. Naren Prasad; Sgt. 1st Class Kirk Foster Mitchell Antunovich, civilian contractor. Bottom row from left to right: Spc. Trevor Kasa, Sgt. John Fuoco, Spc. Gustavo Sanchez and Sgt. Heber Rodriguez. Coalition Forces and con-

tractors all took part in the first Coalition soccer tournament on Camp Victory, Iraq recently.

When the final whistle blew, the score was at 4-1, making U.S. Team One the champion of the first Coalition soccer tournament in Iraq.

The United Nations team came in second and U.S. Team Two came in third.

Maj. Arthur Maruri, soccer coordinator, said they plan to have another tournament within the next month.