



SCIMITAR

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Staying fit in the IZ, Page 16

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Operation Iraqi Freedom:

A look at the last two years through photos,

March 2003 to March 2005 Pages 8 - 11



Photo by Staff Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo

Army HH-60 Black Hawk helicopters fly past the setting sun April 2, 2003 at a forward deployed location in southern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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Operation Iraqi Freedom two years later:

Progress continues on all fronts

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Two years ago on March 17, 2003, the clock was ticking on President Bush's ultimatum for Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and his sons to leave Iraq within 48 hours.

On March 19, 2003, March 20 in Iraq, two days after the president's televised ultimatum, coalition forces launched operations to disarm Iraq. "On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war," Bush announced from the White House.

The president said the coalition, which consisted of 35 nations at the time but has since grown to 72, was moving to disarm Saddam and put an end to his bloody regime. "Every



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cherie A. Thurlby

A convoy of U.S. Army tanks and armored vehicles kicks up dust as it crosses the flight line at Baghdad International Airport on April 14, 2003. Baghdad International Airport was initially the main base of operations for U.S. troops, cargo and humanitarian airlift for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

nation in this coalition has chosen to bear the duty and share the honor of sharing in our common defense," he said.

Two years later, Iraq is on a new course. The dictator who held the country with a firm grip for 35 years is behind bars.

More than 8 million Iraqis exercised their right to choose their new government Jan. 30.

And on March 16, Iraq's new Transitional National Assembly was seated. The assembly will write Iraq's new national constitution, to be ratified in October, followed by national elections in December.

Speaking at a White House press briefing earlier this week, Bush called the assembly's seating "a hopeful moment" for Iraq.

U.S. Central Command officials said Iraq's elections marked a milestone in the country's move toward a representative government. "Jan. 30 in Iraq was a galvanizing event," said a senior CENTCOM official on background. "It didn't end the resistance, but it certainly put a light at the end of the tunnel."

Iraq's security forces continue to grow stronger, boosted by success during the elections, when they provided the critical first and second tiers of security around polling stations around the country.

Bush called the progress being made "positive signs that have taken place in the development of the Iraqi security forces," but acknowledged "there's still work to be done," something he said U.S. allies understand.

Also in Iraq, hundreds of reconstruction projects are under way, providing essential services like electricity and water throughout the country that are considered vital not only to quality of life, but to security in Iraq. Currently, Baghdad gets about 13 hours of electricity per day, with the rest of Iraq receiving about that same amount. "And it's getting better every day," said Marine Corps Col. Patrick Kanewske, CENTCOM's chief of current operations.

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Iraqi Soldiers train with U.S. forces despite danger



Staff Sgt. Pete Peters teaches an Iraqi National Guardsman the proper posture during reflexive live fire training March 12.

Story and photo by Pfc. Dan Balda
Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Even as Iraqi Soldiers train with U.S. Soldiers to secure a new future for their country they cannot forget the dangers that lurk in the background.

"There is a list for people who are in the [Iraqi National Guard] that the terrorists want to kill," said an interpreter with the 40th Iraqi Army Brigade. "My name is second on that list. If somebody kills me they will get \$1,000."

The interpreter, speaking on condition of anonymity, discussed differences between Iraqi armies of the past and the present as he participated in reflexive live-fire training given by Task Force Baghdad Soldiers March 12 at Camp Independence.

His U.S. trainers had nothing but praise for the Iraqi forces.

"We are teaching the ING how to do reflexive fire," said Staff Sgt. Pete Peters, Headquarters,

Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment. "It's the same training all the Soldiers in the 3rd Infantry Division receive before they come over here to Iraq. We do this training so that they can go out on the Iraqi streets and do patrols on their own."

Even though 4/64 has been working with this group for a short while, they have been able to focus on more advanced training because the previous American unit, the 1st Cavalry Division, did such a great job with the ING, said Peters, a native of South Portland, Maine. "It's been real easy for us to just jump in and continue their training. 1/9 Cav. did a great job of bringing this group up to where we didn't have to change anything when we took over for them."

Instead of taking an entire battalion of ING Soldiers and training them all at the same time, the U.S. Soldiers use the "train the trainer" method. After learning how to properly apply the training, the assorted Iraqi platoon leaders, pl-

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PERSPECTIVES

From combat to rebuilding: A Soldier's view

Story and photo by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

INTERNATIONAL ZONE, BAGHDAD, Iraq — Two years and a few days ago, Army Spc. Leo Bridgewater and his fellow Soldiers were preparing for the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the coalition's push toward Baghdad, Iraq.

Today, Bridgewater is once again deployed to Iraq — this time in a stabilization and rebuilding role. He said he couldn't be prouder of what's happening in the country he and his fellow service members helped free from 35 years of repression under Saddam Hussein.

"Saddam had them in a box for 35 years," said the Trenton, N.J., native, deployed from Joint Forces Command Naples, Italy. "That's a long time to be in a box."

When he first entered Baghdad two years ago as a signalman attached to the 3rd Infantry Division, Bridgewater said he was struck by the pictures of Saddam posted "all over the place."

"I could see why they were so scared of him," he said. "It felt like he was saying, 'I'm watching you.'"

Two years later, the Saddam pictures are gone. The four huge statues of Saddam that towered above his Baghdad palace have been removed. The massive palace dining facility Saddam used to entertain his senior officers, and sometimes, to stage their executions, now buzzes with U.S. and coalition troops, government workers and contractors focused on helping the Iraqi people build a new Iraq.

And Bridgewater recognizes that this tiny corner in what's now called the International Zone in Baghdad represents just a microcosm of what's taking place all over Iraq.

"Just look at what's happening. It's just amazing!" he said, noting the March 16 seating of Iraq's Transitional National Assembly. "And the reason that happened is because on Jan. 30, the Iraqi people stood up with one voice and decided to take control of their destiny. That was a beautiful day."

Bridgewater, who lost buddies and fellow Soldiers during combat operations two years ago, said this progress is the posi-



Spc. Leo Bridgewater, who participated in combat operations in Iraq two years ago, is once again deployed to Iraq to support stabilization and rebuilding.

tive proof that shows his buddies did not die in vain. "Jan. 30 showed that it was not for nothing," he said. "It's showing the world that Iraq can be a model that democracy can work in an Arab state."

By playing a part of Iraq's liberation, stabilization and rebuilding, Bridgewater said he's getting a front-row seat to history in the making. "And I'm in the midst of all of it," he said. "That's a pretty amazing opportunity."

In his current mission, providing communications support to NATO as it helps train Iraq's security forces, Bridgewater said he's struck by the common sense of purpose that brings together the coalition members.

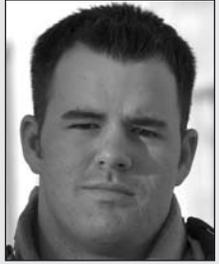
"It's one team, one fight," he said. "You take pride in knowing that you have an important mission ahead of you and that you're contributing to a greater cause."

Scimitar Pulse

How do you feel about the progress of OIF over the past two years?

"I think it is going pretty well."

Army Spc. Jeremy Collins
3153rd Finance Detachment

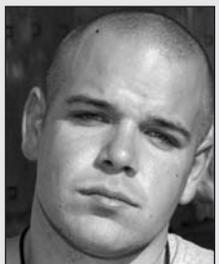


"By talking to the locals here, I think it has been going good."

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Stephen Patterson
Multi-National Force - Iraq

"It's going good. We have a translator who works with us. She doesn't have to worry as much about going out to the red zone to go home."

Army Spc. John Hert
44th Medical Command



"I think we have been slow to progress, but recently we've seen real positive momentum."

Army Capt. Brian Cox
Multi-National Force - Iraq

"I feel it's progressing. There is much to be expected, being the Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi police continue to progress to take full control."

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Paul Hendrix
Joint Combat Camera Maintenance Team



"I think the Iraqi Elections and the National Assembly have proven that historic progress has been made."

Army Maj. Sam Houston
Multi-National Force - Iraq

"I think it's getting better. It's definitely improving."

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Ellaina Knap
Multi-National Force - Iraq



Got a bone, Sir?

An unidentified Iraqi National Guard Soldier plays with a stray puppy in the International Zone, Baghdad, Iraq. The ING is assuming greater responsibility throughout the IZ.



Photo by Pfc. Ferdinand Thomas

Rumsfeld praises troops' 'hard work' on Iraq's 'positive changes'

By Samantha L. Quigley

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — On the eve of the two-year anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld praised those who have made changes in Iraq and, consequently the Middle East, possible.

"The positive changes under way would certainly not have happened ... without the hard work and the dedication of America's men and women in uniform, their families, and indeed, the efforts of all of you who have devoted your lives to our country's defense," he said March 18, at the Pentagon town hall meeting for service members and Defense Department civilians. "I want you to know that we are grateful and your country is grateful to you for your service."

Marine Gen. Peter Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, joined Rumsfeld for the meeting and echoed the secretary's praise.

Rumsfeld noted Iraq's improving economy and rising property values as indicators of progress. He also said refugees are starting to return now that the interim government has replaced Saddam Hussein and his Baathist regime.

"Since the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the coalition has engaged in a test of wills with an enemy determined to derail Iraq's progress," he said. "Their goal was to force the coalition into retreat, but their mission failed. The enemy sought to test America and the Iraqi people's will, and they found it firm."

A strong proof of the Iraqis' firm will was in the millions of Iraqis who showed a great deal of courage providing security, working in the polling places and voting on Jan. 30, Rumsfeld

said. The voters passed graffiti reading "You vote, you die" just to get to the polls.

Iraqis, despite terrorists' attempts to derail the country's progress, are pushing ahead to force a brighter future, he said. That spirit, the secretary added, is setting an example across the region.

"In the last two years from Afghanistan and Iraq to Ukraine and now the streets of Lebanon, we've seen again and again the great sweep of human history is for freedom, and we are on freedom's side," he said. "And the enemy's extremist ideology will meet its end when [the] wider Middle East sheds itself of tyranny and of violence and extremism and carves out a future of tolerance."

That, Rumsfeld said, will continue to be the goal despite changes in the coalition. With rumblings of countries considering withdrawing troops, Rumsfeld said he is not concerned, and that in fact he expects coalition numbers to fluctuate as they have from the beginning.

"Each country has its own circumstances," he said. "It has its own force capability and force-sustainment capability, and it also has its own political circumstance."

While some countries may feel they need to bring troops home, that doesn't necessarily mean that they also are leaving the coalition. Instead, they may feel that they prefer to assist in NATO's train-and-equip effort or another related activity, Rumsfeld noted.

The secretary said that while U.S. troops in Iraq numbered about 152,000 surrounding the elections, that number stands to drop some. "We're dropping down to something like 17 brigades over the coming month, maybe six weeks," he said. In that period, he explained, troop strength should

drop to 135,000 to 140,000.

Iraqi force numbers are on track to pass the 200,000 mark, he added. With those increases, Rumsfeld said, U.S. troop levels could be adjusted.

And while Pace said the focus should continue to be on warfighting capacity, that capacity includes some nontraditional elements.

"Warfighting capacity includes ... language and cultural education skills. ... It includes satellites," he said. "It includes all the things that not only bring kinetic energy against the enemy, but also allow us to shape the environment before, during and after combat."

Rumsfeld added with America's "can do" spirit, caution should be taken not to do too much. He said a country at some point needs to stop doing and start teaching so that developing countries can provide for themselves.

The secretary called attention to an "America Supports You" lapel pin he was wearing, and urged the audience to check out a DoD Web site (<http://www.americasupportsyouth.mil/>) on the program that illustrates the level of support the American people have for the men and women wearing the uniform of their country.

"If you go to that site, you can find ways that you can participate in supporting the troops," the secretary said. "You can find ways that hundreds of other people across the country are engaged in activities that are worthwhile."

"And I hope you will do it," he continued. "I hope you'll also tell your friends, because we are so fortunate as a country to have such wonderful people put up their hands and say they're willing to serve our country, and to serve it at risk to their lives, and to serve it with such wonderful skill and dedication."

Progress

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Two years into Operation Iraqi Freedom, the coalition remains solid and "is probably healthier and stronger than any other international coalition," according to Marine Corps Col. Kerry Burkholder, deputy chief of coalition operations for U.S. Central Command.

"They are the backbone of everything that has been successful in Iraqi Freedom as well as Enduring Freedom [in Afghanistan]," Air Force Brig. Gen. Doug Raaberg, CENTCOM's deputy director of operations, said last week during a Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service interview at the Pentagon. Their support, Raaberg

said, has been "just tremendous."

CENTCOM officials acknowledged that while progress continues in Iraq on many fronts, there's still work ahead.

When he announced the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom two years ago, Bush stressed that the job would not be finished overnight, and vowed that the United States and coalition would remain in Iraq no longer than absolutely necessary.

"The peace of a troubled world and the hopes of an oppressed people now depend on you," Bush said in announcing Operation Iraqi Freedom. "That trust is well placed. The enemies you confront will soon know your skill and bravery. The people you will liberate will witness the honorable and decent spirit of the American military."



Members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division sit on top of Humvees March 28, 2003, as their convoy arrives at a forward deployed location in southern Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Staff Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo

Odds

from Page 2

toon sergeants and section sergeants go back to their squads and platoons to share what they have learned with their troops, Peters said.

"They have been getting real good since we've got here," Peters said. "They are real quick learners. They want to succeed and to achieve something special. They have a huge desire to learn."

Capt. Mark McClellan, scout platoon

leader for HHC, 4/64, likens their motivation to why people join the U.S. Army, but there is an extra incentive.

"They understand that they are here to take their country back from the insurgents and terrorists, and to make Iraq a better place," he said. "I believe that some of them join up because of the money, just like in the U.S. Army, but most do it because they want to help their fellow Iraqis."

The ING interpreter said he's enjoyed working with the U.S. Army thus far regardless of the danger factor.

"I have been working with the Americans

for two years," he said. "It's been very nice. I get to help people and kill terrorists. I like my job. Before, in Saddam's army, nobody really liked their job. In one month, we made two dollars; now I make \$400 a month. It's very different, now I can eat or go out and have fun with people. I love my job a lot."

McClellan has already seen the fruits of his and the ING's labors.

"I've already seen it on Haifa Street," he said. "People are cleaning up their own streets, putting in their own sewer systems. This ING group is the one that cleaned up Haifa Street. They are the ones taking

grenades and getting shot at, and they have a lot of pride behind what they are doing right now."

McClellan has seen an improvement in their military skills, he said. But the real success is out on the streets.

"You can see how proud they are when they drive around in their trucks with the Iraqi flag flying in the wind, and people in the streets are waving to them," he said. "One time we came back from a patrol, and there were all these children cheering for their troops. You could see the smiles on the Iraqi Soldiers' faces. That's why they do this."

U.S. Soldier reaches out to local 'Golden Child'

Story and photo by
Spc. Erin Robicheaux
 256th Brigade Combat Team
 Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, BAGHDAD, Iraq — Throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom, U.S. Soldiers have seen what war can do to a country and its people. Staff Sgt. Jessica Kelly, from Lafayette, La., is reaching out to one local resident to help make a difference.

"He's never going to walk again, but I just want him to be as comfortable as possible for what time he does have left."

For the past two months Kelly, brigade surgeon assistant, has been working to get help for a 17-year-old boy who was injured at the start of the war. During the United States' initial entrance into Baghdad, planes dropped shells during an air raid and the boy, whose name is Malik, was within range when one exploded. Shrapnel pierced his back and went into his spinal column, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. When Kelly first examined him, he was also suffering from secondary complications to the paralysis.

"On our initial visit we [the medics] found him laying on a clay floor," she said. "He had old bandages that were being washed and reused and he had horrible sores on his legs and hips."

The medics gave Malik intravenous antibiotics, cleaned his sores and changed his bandages. The sores were a result of lying on the hard floor and not being turned frequently enough. Kelly said they were the worst bed sores she has ever seen. Malik had a lot of tissue loss and bone was exposed on each hip. As Kelly and the medics left, she

vowed to get help for him and his family and she promised them that she would be back.

She wrote her report and submitted it to her commanding general, who approved Malik as a "Golden Child" status." This meant that his case would receive special attention.

As the report was making its way up through the channels, Kelly did not put the family on the back burner while waiting for the decision. She made several visits to Malik's family, dropping off bandages, sterile water and antibiotics for his wounds.

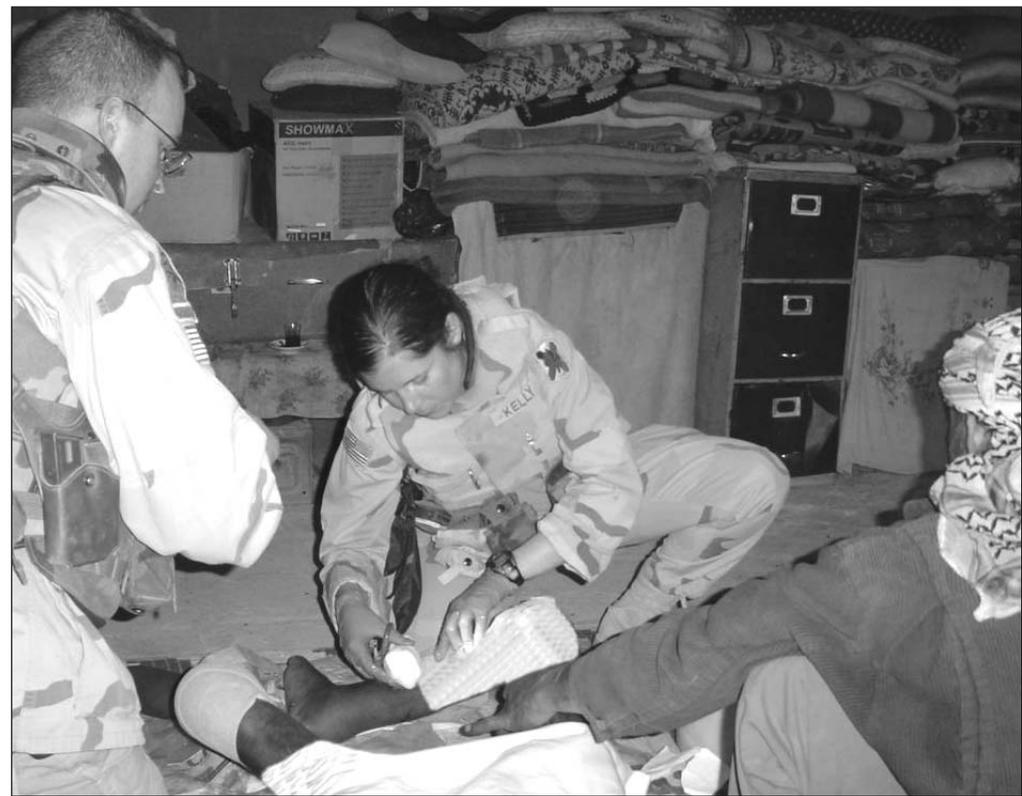
Recently, Kelly got the news that the approval had been granted to give Malik and his family \$2,500. She says that she hopes this will help them. Their home was destroyed during the air raids, so right now they are living in an abandoned school with three or four other families.

"I hope this money will get them out of the school and set up a little bit," Kelly said.

The children's father is elderly and unable to work, and the next son in line is 10 years old. It will be awhile before he is able to bring an income into the house. The money from the 256th may go a long way to keep the family somewhat comfortable until the younger son is able to support them.

A few days ago, Soldiers brought Malik a bed and restraints for his wheelchair to help him sit upright. Kelly also performed wound care and applied new dressings to his injuries.

She said what she is most excited about, though, is that two local physicians are going to actually go to Malik's home, pick him up and take him to the paralysis center in Baghdad. There are many scenarios that could help give him a prolonged and better



Staff Sgt. Jessica Kelly from Lafayette, La., puts new dressings on Malik's wounds. Kelly, a civilian nurse and assistant to the 256th Brigade Surgeon, campaigned to get health care for the 17 year-old Iraqi boy. Malik was paralyzed from the waist down as a result of a shell exploding near him during an air raid.

quality of life. One option is to amputate his leg, which is something that the doctors would obviously like to avoid. Ideally, they would like to do skin grafts and rehabilitation, but it is unknown how successful that will be. They are also unsure of how much time he has left.

"It's hard to say what his life expectancy is," said Kelly. "He could die within the year or live for many more years."

She said that it all depends on the kind of

care that he receives.

Thanks to Kelly, Malik and his family are getting a second chance. She said the gratitude from his mother and sister are more and more evident with each visit and that their reactions let her know that she is making a difference.

"When his mom kisses me and praises Allah that I'm here, I can't think of a more noble cause to be away from my own family, than to be doing this."

JCS chairman visits 3rd ID

Story and photo by **Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft**
 Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, BAGHDAD, Iraq — Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, paid a visit to 3rd Infantry Division headquarters and Soldiers March 14.

2nd Lt. Jeremiah Weiker and other 36th Engineer Group Soldiers gave Myers a demonstration of the Buffalo mine clearing vehicle with Ironclaw and other engineer achievements. Myers got the opportunity to climb inside the vehicle and check it out for himself.

After the demonstration, Myers headed inside the division main headquarters building to swear in three Marine Soldiers who had chosen to re-enlist that evening: Sgt. Brian Tumey, Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion; Spc. Nigel Griffin and Sgt. Erin Debaun, both of Headquarters Support Company, 92nd Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy).

All three of the re-enlisting Soldiers are Operation Iraqi Freedom 1 veterans.

After the swearing-in ceremony, Myers presented Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., Task Force Baghdad and 3ID commanding general, with a plaque as a symbol of his appreciation.

During the visit, Webster also briefed the chairman about some 3rd Inf. Div. accomplishments since



Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, gives Sgt. Brian Tumey, Spc. Nigel Griffin and Sgt. Erin Debaun the oath of reenlistment in the 3rd Infantry Division main headquarters March 14.

arriving back in theater.

On his way out, Myers paused to take a photo with his team in front of the 3rd Inf. Div. mascot, Rocky the bulldog.

"You're doing a good job," he said to Webster. "This is a great division."



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Larry E. Johns

An Iraqi boy holds toys and a soda that was given to him by XVIII Airborne Corps Artillery Soldiers during a convoy to Camp Anaconda, Iraq, March 17.

NEWS BRIEFS

DoD issues confidentiality policy for sexual assault victims

WASHINGTON — The Department of Defense announced March 18 a new policy that establishes Department guidelines for confidential, restricted reporting by victims of sexual assault.

Restricted reporting allows a sexual assault victim, on a confidential basis, to disclose the details of his or her assault to specifically identified individuals and receive medical treatment and counseling, without triggering the official investigative process.

“Through our research, we have learned that providing confidentiality to victims will actually increase the probability that cases will be reported, cases that are currently unknown to us,” said Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David S.C. Chu. “While we want to sustain good order and discipline by holding those who assault their fellow service members accountable for their actions, first and foremost we want victims to come forward for help.”

Many experts claim that sexual assault is the most under-reported violent crime in the nation and in the military. Many victims are unprepared to withstand the rigors of a full-fledged investigation immediately following their assault. Rather than comply with the Department’s former policy of mandatory reporting, some victims did not seek treatment, thereby denying themselves access to needed medical services and support.

Restricted reporting is intended to give a victim additional time and increased control over the release and management of his/her personal information, and to empower him or her to seek relevant information and support to make more informed decisions about participating in a criminal investigation. A victim who receives appropriate care and treatment, and is provided an opportunity to make an informed decision about a criminal investigation, is more likely to develop increased trust that his/her needs are of primary concern to the command and may eventually decide to pursue an investigation.

Even if the victim chooses not to pursue an official investigation, this additional reporting avenue gives commanders a clearer picture of the sexual violence within their command, and enhances a commander’s ability to provide an environment, which is safe and contributes to the well-being and mission-readiness of all of its members.

The Joint Task Force for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (JTF-SAPR), in conjunction with the Military Services, will coordinate specific implementation details. The magnitude of this change requires extensive, in-depth training for all DoD personnel and specialized training for commanders, senior enlisted advisors, investigators, healthcare providers and others involved in sexual assault response.

To ensure consistent application across the military services, the confidentiality policy will become effective 90 days from the date the memorandum to the military departments was issued, which was March 16.

The Office of the Secretary of Defense will be working closely with the military departments to implement the policies in an effective and timely manner. The joint task force will continue to provide oversight of the process.

More than 2,900 Iraqi Soldiers graduate

KIRKUSH, Iraq — More than 2,900 Iraqi Soldiers graduated March 13 as part of the Direct Recruit Replacements program at the Iraqi Training Battalion at Kirkush Military Training Base.

These graduates, who all have prior military service, spent three weeks in basic skills refresher courses with concentrations in traffic control points, local security patrols, and fixed site security.

The Soldiers will be assigned throughout Iraq to fill vacancies.

Iraq Police graduate 144 from basic training course

The Iraq Police Service graduated 144 new police officers from the Al Kut Regional Training Academy on March 16. This

was the third class to complete the eight-week training course from the Al Kut facility.

The basic police training program is designed to provide fundamental and democratic policing skills based on international human rights standards to the students in preparation for assuming police officer responsibilities. The program consists of academic study of general policing topics combined with a strong focus on tactical operational policing skills.

To date, more than 25,000 police recruits have completed the eight-week training course developed for new recruits. An additional 35,000 police officers have completed the three-week Transitional Integration Program course that provides officers with prior experience a condensed version of the longer basic police training course.

Iraqi police graduate 156 from advanced training courses

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The Iraqi Police Service graduated 156 police officers from advanced and specialty courses at the Adnan Training Facility, March 17, as part of the Iraqi government’s ongoing effort to train its security forces.

The courses consist of Basic Criminal Investigations with 21 graduates, Interviews & Interrogations with 22 graduates, Internal Controls with 25 graduates, Violent Crime Investigation with 40 graduates, Kidnapping Investigation with 15 graduates and Critical Incident Management with 33 graduates.

The Basic Criminal Investigation course covers topics such as theft, burglary, arson, robbery, sexual offenses, and homicide investigation. Participants also receive instruction and hands-on training in fingerprinting, photography, tool marks and plaster casting techniques. More than 1,250 police officers have previously completed the Basic Criminal Investigations course.

Interviews & Interrogations covers advanced interview and interrogation techniques and includes instruction on the preservation and protection of human rights, and the importance of ethical behavior during interviews and interrogations. Eighty-eight students have previously completed this course.

Internal Controls provides training on how to deal with personnel complaints and allegations, as well as police conduct in general. Training includes the processing of complaints and conducting follow-up investigations to determine the facts of allegations made against members of the Iraqi Police Service.

More than 400 officers already graduated from this course.

The Violent Crime Investigation course introduces participants to investigative techniques to be used in a variety of situations, but particularly in violent crimes against persons (cases such as armed robbery, rape and murder). Twenty-six students have previously graduated this course.

The Kidnapping Investigations course provides students with basic theory and practice of crisis negotiation. The course explores the psychological underpinnings of crisis situations and instructs students on law enforcement priorities in a crisis situation. This course has previously graduated 290 students.

Critical Incident Management is designed to provide participants with the understanding of and application skills for managing critical incidents. This is the first offering of this course.

Officers who participated in these courses previously completed either an eight-week basic training course for new recruits or a three-week ‘transitional integration program’ course designed for prior-service officers.

Insurgents take big hit from Security Force operations

MOSUL, Iraq — Multi-National Forces from 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) detained 19 suspected insurgents and confiscated a number of weapons and munitions during operations in northern Iraq March 12.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment detained eight individuals suspected of insurgent activity during cordon and search operations in southwestern Mosul. One of the individuals also led 1-24th Soldiers to locate and seize a number of insurgent weapons. The 1-24th seized over 90 mortar fuses, several hundred rounds of ammunition, mortar systems, several mortar rounds, a rocket propelled grenade launcher, RPG rounds, and 100 feet of detonation cord. During a raid in western Mosul 1-24th Soldiers detained four more individuals suspected of insurgent activity.

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment detained four individuals suspected of insurgent activity during a cordon and search operation in Mosul. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment detained three more suspected insurgents while patrolling in Mosul.



Photo by Maj. Web Wright

Parting the Liberty Sea...

Soldiers from 2-14 Infantry drive through the flooded parking lot near the dining facility on Camp Liberty, Iraq, March 12. Three days of heavy rain left the camp severely flooded, and several parking lots were flooded well over the wheel wells of Humvees.

COMMAND BRIEF



HEADQUARTERS
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE – IRAQ
BAGHDAD, IRAQ
APO AE 09342-1400

MNFI-CG

05 MAR 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Safety Message for All Commanders and Leaders in Multi-National Force - Iraq

1. As we complete our transition to OIF III, I want to address to commanders in the Coalition my concern about safety in combat operations here. A recent spike in non-battle deaths, friendly fire incidents, accidents and injuries should be of great concern to all leaders and commanders here in the theater of operation. Accidents do harm to our formations, and needlessly take off the battlefield our most potent weapon – our great people.
2. As commanders, we must recognize that our operations are inherently dangerous, particularly in this hostile environment. Nonetheless, we must take ownership to reduce these non-battle deaths/injuries, and take active measures to prevent fratricide inside and outside our units across the coalition – and do so immediately! Leaders at all levels must conduct risk assessments for every operation, large and small, and take prudent measures even during ongoing combat operations to mitigate risk, thus preserving the welfare, health and lives of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines throughout the coalition and with our Iraqi comrades in arms. We must learn our lessons and ensure that they are passed to all, especially to our young noncommissioned officers for action. In many cases standards are in place and simply not being followed or enforced. I expect noncommissioned officers to ruthlessly and continually enforce standards and discipline at all levels.
3. Reinforcing established standards and making sure we reinforce discipline in our unit leaders and young men and women will help sustain those standards and go a long way towards achieving that end. Last, as we integrate new teams into our coalition, we must ensure that new units are properly trained on the hazards of the battlefield, trained in all areas, and fully aware of these hazards and their second and third order effects before they take over the battlespace. We need your help to fight complacency every day and win this battle. It is too important to do otherwise.

GEORGE W. CASEY, JR.
General, USA
Commanding

Distribution:
A

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

Seabees change command, continue reconstruction efforts in Iraq

By Chief Petty Officer Suzanne Speight
1st Marine Expeditionary Force
Public Affairs Office

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — The I Marine Expeditionary Force Engineer Group officially stood down Friday and was relieved by the 30th Naval Construction Regiment in a Transfer of Authority ceremony at Camp Fallujah, in western Iraq.

During their six-month deployment, I MEG Seabees, along with the civil engineer corps officers of the Officer in Charge of Construction detachment, made some significant contributions to U.S. military efforts in Iraq.

Working alongside Marines from the 4th Civil Affairs Group, Seabees built relationships with the people of Fallujah, while supporting efforts to improve quality of life in the war-torn city. I MEG engineering assessment teams were in Fallujah soon after days of intense urban combat to assess infrastructure damage and start restoring critical services such as water and power.

Additionally, I MEG task forces participated in construction of polling places and the establishment of the I Marine Expeditionary Force Provisional Security Battalion, manned with over 300 I MEG personnel, in support of the historic Iraq elections; led the Iraqi Construction Apprentice Program; and completed more than \$30 million worth of projects throughout the Al Anbar Province.

U.S. Navy Capt. Michael Blount heads the 30th NCR detachment, and said his Seabees are ready for the challenge of deploying in Iraq. Reconstruction efforts will be a priority for the unit, with Seabees working alongside the Interim Iraqi Government on infrastructure and quality of life improvement projects.

Currently, there are 77 reconstruction projects funded with \$66 million for the city of Fallujah. Another 52 projects have been identified and are under consideration as well.

The 30th NCR will work with the 5th Civil Affairs Group of the I Marine Expeditionary Force to continue economic development and improve the quality of life for Iraqi citizens.

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

Worship and Prayer Schedule for the International Zone

Sunday

- 9:30 a.m. — Choir Rehearsal
- 10 a.m. — Catholic Mass (3rd BTC)
- 10:30 a.m. — General Christian
- Noon — Episcopal/Lutheran/Anglican
- 2 p.m. — Latter Day Saints
- 4 p.m. — Catholic Confession
- 4:30 p.m. — Catholic Mass
- 6 p.m. — Contemporary Protestant

Monday-Friday

- Noon — Catholic Mass (Mon.-Thurs.)
- Noon — Catholic Communion Service (Tues.)
- 5:30 p.m. — Catholic Mass (Fri. at Camp Steel Dragon)
- 6 p.m. — Jewish Shabbat Services (Fri.)
- 7:30 p.m. — Prayer Service (Tue.)
- 8 p.m. — Bible Study (Thurs. at Senior Advisors Conf. Rm.)
- 8:30 p.m. — Bible Study (Wed. at Ambassadors Conf. Rm.)

Saturday

- 11:30 a.m. — Catholic Mass (Camp Headhunter)
- 12:30 p.m. — Buddhist Worship
- 4 p.m. — Catholic Confession
- 4:30 p.m. — Catholic Mass

Daily Islamic Prayer

For more information, call DSN 318- 239-8659.



U.S. Army Airborne Soldiers, U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Controllers and an Air Force Contingency Response Group wait to board a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III and prepare to move forward from an air base in Europe in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on March 26, 2003.

U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Stephen Faulisi

Operation Iraqi Freedom:

Coalition ends ruthless ruler's reign, plants seed for democracy, prosperity



Airmen from the 728th Air Control Squadron, Eglin AFB, Fla., take a break in front of a huge painting of Sadaam Hussein at Baghdad International Airport on May 17, 2003. The 728th was responsible for building and maintaining a Control Reporting Center (CRC) at Baghdad Air Base, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cherie A. Thurby



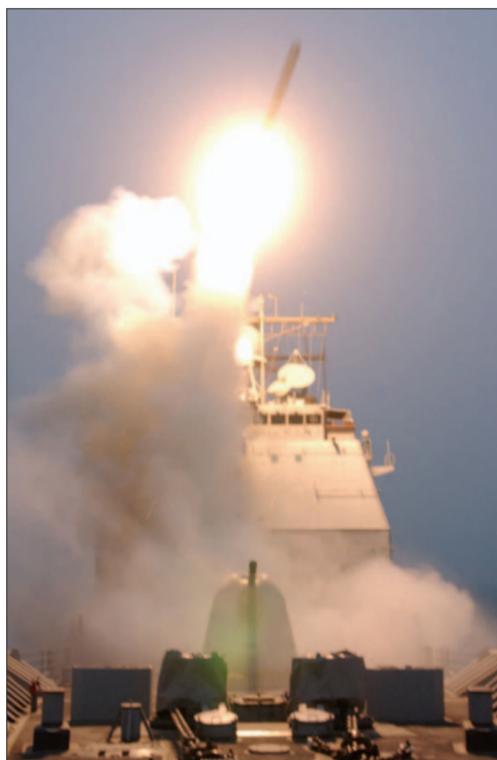
Iraqis prepare to take down a statue of Saddam Hussein standing on a building in the Ministry of Industry and Military Industrialization complex in downtown Baghdad, Iraq, May 17, 2003.

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin P. Bell



A Civil Affairs Soldier unloads medical supplies at Yarmuk hospital on the west side of Baghdad, Iraq, April 27, 2003. Medical assistance is part of the humanitarian aid effort administered in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. D. Myles Cullen



The first Tomahawk missile to be fired into Iraq is launched from USS BUNKER HILL (CG 52) at 5:25 a.m. on March 20, 2003.

U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class (AW) Richard Moore



Soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) watch as a TOW missile strikes the side of a building that is suspected of harboring Uday and Qusay Hussein in Mosul, Iraq, July 22, 2003. Qusay and Uday were killed in a gun battle as they resisted efforts by coalition forces to apprehend and detain them.

U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Curtis Hargrave



A convoy of Free Iraqi Forces Soldiers drives by on their way to join U.S. and coalition troops in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom on April 11, 2003.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton T. Burris



U.S. Soldiers inspect a weapons cache found near the Presidential Palace in Baghdad, Iraq, April 29, 2003.

U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Cherie A. Thurby



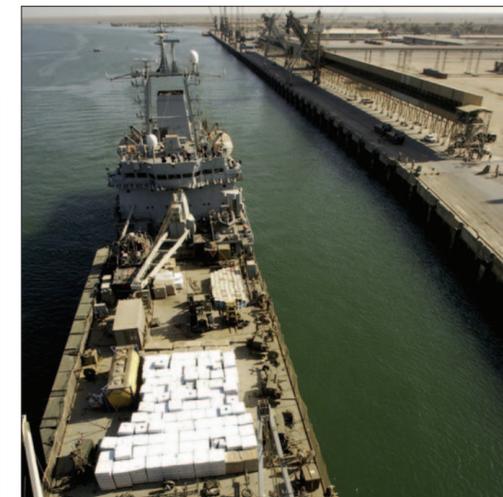
Soldiers from the U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Division dismantle a Bradley Fighting Vehicle and begin a reconnaissance security patrol as members from the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion and Joint Task Force 4 survey and assess damage done by looting at Yarmuk Hospital in Baghdad. Coalition Civil Affairs and medical teams have provided much-needed assistance throughout Iraq in support of OIF.

U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Jeremy T. Lock



Marines of 2nd Battalion, 6th Marines, fire a Javelin AntiTank Missile at Blair Airfield, Iraq, May 2, 2003.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Mauricio Campino



The British ship HMAS Sir Galahad (L 3005) arrives in Umm Qsar, Iraq, March 28, 2003, delivering the first shipment of humanitarian aid from coalition forces.

U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brien Aho



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ronald Mitchell

UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters prepare to pick up Pfc. McQueen and the rest of the Soldiers from B Co. 2/327 BCT on June 4, 2003. B Co. was to enter the town of Hatra, Iraq, to stop a major weapons and stolen cars black market. Using the Black Hawks raises the surprise factor and helps expose the maximum ring leaders.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton T. Burris

Members of the 407th Explosives Ordnance Disposal Squadron and Marine Wing Support Squadron 371, from Yuma, Ariz., unload 305 mortar rounds, found near an Iraqi school south of An Nasiriyah, at an ammunition storage point, May 5, 2003.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Shane A. Cuomo

Members of the Army 86th Combat Support Hospital attend to a patient April 5, 2003, at a forward deployed location in southern Iraq.



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Arlo K. Abrahamson

Polish Special Operations Forces (GROM) during boarding operations in the port of Umm Qasr. GROM joined efforts to clear southern Iraqi waterways of mines and rogue vessels to make way for the arrival of humanitarian relief shipments March 28, 2003.

Staff Sgt. Chad Reemtsma, a military working dog handler deployed from the 18th Security Forces Squadron, Kadena Air Base, Japan to the 363rd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, praises Hero, his military working dog prior to a mobile security patrol April 8, 2003. The 363rd ESFS search crew worked around the clock searching for weapons and explosive devices.



U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Matthew Hannen



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Tammy L. Grider

Iraqis in the town of Basrah greet a passing military convoy with cheers and smiles as they pass during the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom on April 12, 2003.



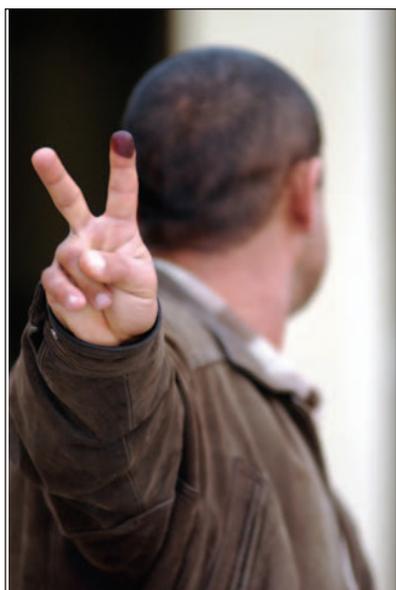
U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. D. Myles Cullen

An Apache AH-64 with the Army's 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, Hunter Army Airfield, Ga. lands to rearm after destroying numerous surface to air threats that were located in Baghdad, Iraq, April 11, 2003. Coalition aircraft primarily searched for surface-to-air threats as well as ammunition depots while patrolling Iraqi skies.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Quinton T. Burris

Young Iraqi kids in a small village north of An Nasariyah, show their appreciation to U.S. Soldiers as they leave their village April 14, 2003.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt Dave Ahlschwede



U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Stephanie Addison

Iraqi citizens proudly display the ink on their right forefingers Jan. 30, 2005 after voting in their nation's first democratic election in decades. Iraqi voters were marked with ink to ensure they could only cast one vote. More than 8 million citizens turned out to vote.

Iraqi Freedom timeline

2003

March 20 (Baghdad time) – Operation Iraqi Freedom begins

April 9 – Baghdad falls

May 1– Major combat operations declared complete

July 13 – Iraqi Governing Council established

Dec. 13 – Saddam Hussein captured

2004

March 8 – Transitional Administrative Law signed

June 1 – Iraqi Interim Government formed

May 24 – President Bush outlines Five

Step Plan for Freedom, Democracy in Iraq

May 31 – Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq established

June 15 – Multi-National Force – Iraq established

June 28 – Transfer of Sovereignty to Interim Iraqi Government

Aug. 15 – National Conference convenes; selects Interim National Council

Dec. 16 – Iraqi election campaign begins.

2005

Jan. 30 – Iraqi Elections (8 million Iraqis vote)

March 16 – Transitional National Assembly seated.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Michael Nasworthy

On Jan. 28, 2005 Soldiers from F Troop, 9th Cavalry and the 1452nd Transportation Company escort the first Iraqi Army Mechanized unit since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The 1-1 Mech. Bde. of the Iraqi Army received two T-55 tanks and 16 MTLV fighting vehicles rebuilt at Taji, Iraq.

Searching for IEDs:

1/13 Armor finds deadly explosives

Story and photos by Spc. Matthew Wester
100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — A group of Soldiers moves slowly along the side of a Baghdad road. They are alert as their eyes scan the sandy ground and dense undergrowth.

"We got wires!" a voice yells out, and the other troops quickly move to their armored vehicles.

They just found the biggest killer of American troops in

Iraq — an improvised explosive device.

These Soldiers are members of the 1st Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment and 70th Engineers, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division. They conducted an IED sweep March 7 along a stretch of highway known for being riddled with explosives.

"We protect this road because insurgents put out IEDs and try to get the convoys coming through," said Capt. Greg Spencer, commander of Company A, 1/13 Armor.

Spencer said four explosive devices were found on the road in the previous seven days.

At the beginning of the sweep, the troops dismounted from their M-113 armored personnel carriers and immediately searched the wreckage of a car bomb previously detonated by insurgents. Gunners manned their turret-mounted M-240 B machine guns as they watched for any sign of trouble.

Then, they fanned out and looked closely at the trash littering the shoulder of the road and the palm grove to their left.

The Soldiers know this ground very well and pay attention to every detail they can about their surroundings.

"They become very adept at it," Spencer said, describing the skills of his team. "They know every crater."

Those skills were put to the test when Sgt. Jonathan Wolford and Sgt. Joshua L. Jenkins, both combat engineers with 2nd Platoon, Company A, 70th Engineers, came upon a hollow palm log resting near a small bridge recently repaired after being damaged by a vehicle-borne IED.

Jenkins stooped down, looked into the log and saw something inside.

"I thought it was just trash," Jenkins said. "Then I put two and two together and figured I found something."

Jenkins called out to Wolford, who was looking in the same log from the other end.

"As soon as he said, 'Sgt. Wolford,' I saw red wires, alligator clips, and a black box," Wolford said.

"I'm not scared of explosives, but I have respect for them," he said. "If you see me running, it's for a reason."

The two NCOs let the rest of the group know of the suspected explosive device, a safe cordon area was established using M1A1 tanks, M-113s and Bradley fighting vehicles, and an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team from 766th Ordnance Company was called to dispose of the device.

The EOD team used a robot to survey the log. "We call



An Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team detonates an IED found by members of 1st Battalion, 13th Armored Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division in northern Baghdad. Minutes later, someone detonated a second IED a few meters away as Soldiers moved closer to inspect the detonation site.

him Johnny Five," Wolford said, referring to a robot from the movie "Short Circuit."

Once it was established an IED was inside, the robot placed explosives on the log, and EOD detonated the device in a huge cloud of dust and debris.

The fireworks weren't over yet.

Thirty minutes later, another explosion rocked the cordon area.

Someone triggered a second device across the median from the first one, as three Soldiers moved toward the exploded log to inspect it.

No Soldiers were harmed by the blast.

After a group of Bradley fighting vehicles secured the site of the second blast, regular traffic along the route continued.

If it wasn't for the work of the Soldiers of 1/13 and 70th Engineers, the IEDs could have been used against coalition vehicles or personnel.

These Soldiers made sure that didn't happen.

"We did our job," Wolford said.

Spencer agreed. "It's a very tangible mission," he said. "Every day they go out and save lives."



Capt. Greg Spencer (right), commander of Company A, 1/13 Armored Battalion, and Spc. Bladimir Joseph search through the wreckage of a previously exploded car bomb in northern Baghdad.

Maintenance Soldiers conduct combat-recovery operations

Story and photo by Sgt. Blake Kent
22nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BRASSFIELD-MORA, SAMARRA, Iraq — Soldiers of a maintenance company have taken on new responsibilities maintaining a large variety of vehicles since the Army's transformation to Units of Action.

The Soldiers of Company F, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor, Task Force Liberty have added new dimensions to their day-to-day operations since being deployed here — they do many things that they never did before.

Units of Action are brigade-sized elements that have built-in command and support elements, which allow them to deploy faster to any part of the world.

While the common perception of maintenance Soldiers is of working in the motor-pool or maintenance shop, the Soldiers also conduct combat-recovery operations, which require them to leave the comfort of the FOB to retrieve equipment that has broken down or been disabled, said 2nd Lt. David

R. Hampton III of Key West, Fla.

"We have mechanics going out on the roads all the time," he said. "We train them to be able to go on patrols as well as handle the variety of equipment that we maintain."

When the maintenance company needs to go recover a piece of equipment, it means that it is going to be a difficult job, because the equipment couldn't be self-recovered, said Hampton.

To recover a wheeled vehicle, the maintenance company sends a wrecker, but to recover a tank requires a greater towing capacity, he said. In these cases the company uses another tank, which provides both security and towing ability.

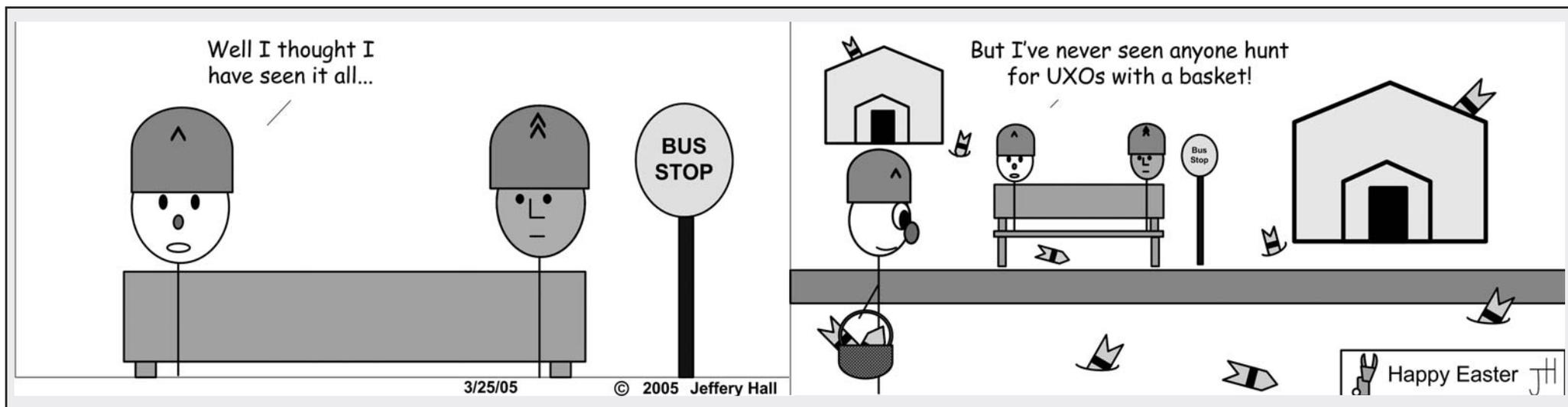
The Soldiers, though well-trained on recovery operations, had to train for conducting convoy and gun-truck operations. They have also had to begin cross-training for the maintenance of the variety of equipment that is part of the new Army UA structure.

"We have track mechanics and wheeled-vehicle mechanics, but they all are getting a lot of experience working on the different types of equipment," Hampton said.



Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor, Task Force Liberty, work quickly as a team to recover a disabled tank in Samarra, Iraq.

Scimitar Slapstick



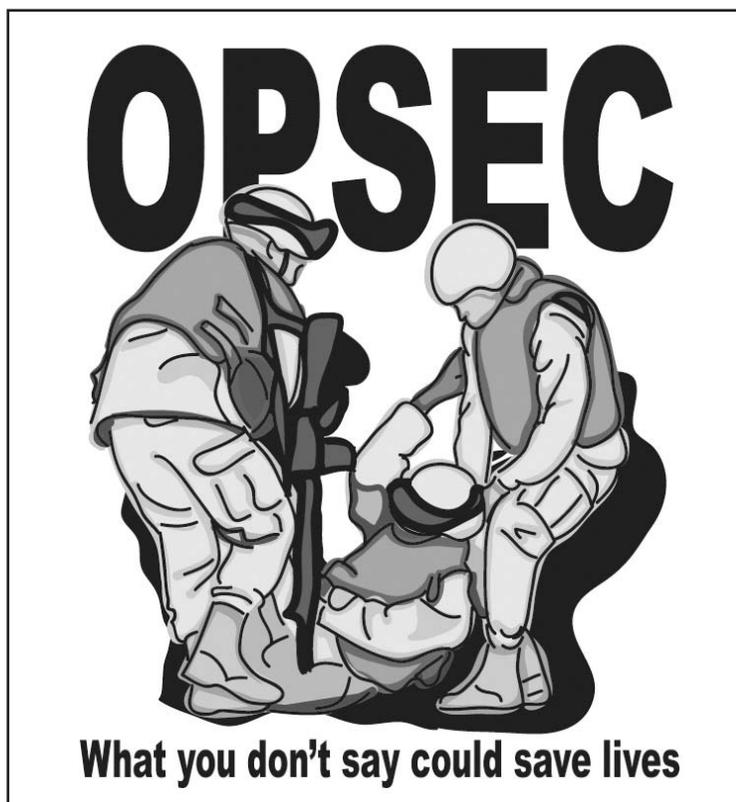
Art by Jeffery Hall



Art by Staff Sgt. Timothy B. Lawn



Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree



Operation Crayon supplies Iraqi children

Story and photo by
Capt. Monte Hibbert

116th Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs

DIBBIS, Iraq — Soldiers of the 116th Brigade Combat Team's 1st Battalion, 148th Field Artillery recently delivered a little bit of hope to a small school north of Kirkuk, thanks to literally hundreds of unseen donors.

Members of the 1st Battalion, 148th Field Artillery Unit Ministry Team and Battery B delivered packages of school supplies to local Iraqi Army, police and government officials to be given to children and teachers at the North Hatin School.

"Many of the teachers do not have the proper equipment or supplies to teach properly," said Sgt. Sebron Farmer, a member of the battalion who participated in the event. "The supplies that were provided and handed out were greatly appreciated."

The school supplies were donated and shipped to Iraq by individuals and organizations in the United States. Once the supplies arrived in Iraq, coalition Soldiers packaged them into standard packages and delivered them to local authorities for distribution. Operation Crayon is a charitable program that gives schools pencils,

crayons, papers and other materials necessary to teach children.

"Operation Crayon is a way for people to make a real difference in these children's lives," said Sgt. Imelda Remillard, coordinator of the program for the 116th BCT. "It also provides an opportunity for Soldiers to build a relationship with the children of Iraq."

The Soldiers delivered around 100 Operation Crayon packets to the Iraqi officials, which were then given to students and teachers.

The Soldiers also brought several newly-repaired desks, which were unloaded by Iraqi Army Soldiers and taken into the school. Also, local government, police, Iraqi Army, and coalition forces leaders walked through the school to do an inspection while the packets were being delivered to the children.

"Hatin School is in very bad shape," said Chaplain William Nicholson, leader of the UMT. "The building is very old and in need of restorations."

Local leaders, in cooperation with Coalition Forces, are making plans to restore and rebuild the schoolhouse.

Iraqi officials who handed out school supply packets include local Iraqi Army Commander Maj. Yawar, the Dibbis Chief of Police, Dibbis Mayor Hadi Mustof, and others. Iraqi police and Iraqi Army



Iraqi police and Soldiers hand out Operation Crayon packets to students at North Hutten School near Dibis, Iraq. Operation Crayon is a charitable program providing schools with pencils, crayons, papers and other necessities to teach children.

Soldiers also helped pass out packets.

After all the students had received a packet, several teachers came forward, and they were given packets also.

"The whole activity was very enjoyable for Iraqis, U.S. Soldiers and all who were there. It shined a positive light upon Iraqi officials," Nicholson said. "It was easy to

see when we finished that the Iraqis were happy — happy for being included ... and happy for being able to help their fellow citizens."

In all, 95 student packets and four teacher packets were distributed. The teacher packets contain supplies expected to last about a year.

Iraqi Soldiers' heroism earns coveted Cavalry Spurs

Story and photo by Spc. Christopher Connelly
42nd Infantry Division Public Affairs

BALAD, Iraq — In every dark cloud there is a silver lining, and March 7 was no exception as Soldiers of Company C, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and the 203rd Iraqi Army Battalion celebrated an auspicious occasion.

That evening Soldiers of 203rd Iraqi Army Battalion received the Cavalry's highest internal award, the coveted Cavalry Spur, which is only awarded to those Soldiers that show exceptional ability and courage, according to Lt. Col. Jody Petery, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment commander.

"This is the first time the 1st BCT, and possibly any cavalry unit, has awarded an Iraqi Battalion the coveted Cavalry Spur," said Petery. The Iraqi Army battalion earned their spurs when they risked their lives on February 13, when 11 members of 3rd Platoon, Company C who were driving in a convoy at night rolled over a narrow road and into a canal.

This was the last time anyone saw the Soldiers in vehicle two alive.

Investigators believe the Soldiers' Humvee rolled over and became submerged in the canal. When the rest of the convoy realized what happened, they began jumping into the freezing water to save the Soldiers.

Not realizing that there was a very fast undercurrent, the Soldiers kept coming back up for air and praying that



1st Lt. Muhammad Borhan, 203rd Iraqi Army Battalion, is presented with Cavalry Spurs for his platoon for their heroic act on Feb. 13th.

they would find them. After a period of time in the fast-moving, freezing water, they began to suffer from hypothermia and had to be medically evacuated. Only three Soldiers of Company C were left to retrieve their fallen comrades. Then a platoon of Iraqi Soldiers from the 203rd Iraqi Army Battalion showed up. The Iraqi soldiers began to strip down to enter the freezing water but were stopped by Capt. Phillip Poteet, C Co. commander. The Iraqi Soldiers pleaded with Poteet, however, to let them go into the water to try to find the lost Soldiers.

"If I can just give something back, to show our thanks

for everything the U.S. Soldiers have done for us, it would be worth the risk," Iraqi Soldier Abdul Mutalib said later.

Meanwhile, the U.S. military brought in an aircraft filled with metal-detecting equipment, and Navy Seals to find the Soldiers. Navy Seals unsuccessfully combed the canal for hours, depleting their oxygen tanks. The Iraqi Soldiers ran to a nearby garage and made a tool that looked like a 20-foot long coat rack. They began working both sides of the canal in 10-man teams. They lowered the tool in the water with ropes, dredged, pulled up the tool and then dredged again until they found the Soldiers — whom they referred to as their fallen brothers. 1st Lt. Muhammad Borhan, 203rd Iraqi Army Battalion, is one of the brave Iraqi Soldiers who risked his life to find the American Soldiers.

"It's not that I am not thankful for this honor," Borhan said of the award. "It is just that they would have done the same thing if it were me down there ... I tried to give them life."

The evening included a dinner of Iraqi delicacies and American cuisine. American and Iraqi Soldiers tried the foods of each other's country, and laughed and talked like old friends. The Soldiers of C Co. were full of smiles, and the Iraqi Soldiers looked as though a large weight was lifted from their shoulders.

This night there was no sign of the past, but only a glimpse of the future.

Prevention is everybody's responsibility

Service members are encouraged to submit stories and photographs to the Scimitar. Email your submissions to cpiccmdinfo@baghdadforum.com

Sexual Harassment

Comics keep Soldiers in stitches

Story and photo by Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, BAGHDAD, Iraq — Here in Baghdad, stress and tension are commonplace among Soldiers. Without the comforts of home, sometimes it's not easy to get rid of those feelings.

But when comedians Colin Quinn, Steve Byrne and Robert Kelly stepped onto the stage March 13, any somber thoughts were drowned out by the howling laughter of hundreds of Camp Victory troops ringing happily through the night air.

Quinn, who is well-known from his years on NBC's "Saturday Night Live" and from his Comedy Central show, "Tough Crowd with Colin Quinn," made his first appearance in Baghdad in 2004.

Apparently, one trip just wasn't enough, though, and Quinn's return found Soldiers ready for a laugh waiting in lawn chairs at the foot of the stage.

"I was here last year, and I love what you've done with the place," he said as he greeted his audience. "This is where civilization began ... and it stayed that way."

He went on to encourage Soldiers, upon returning home, to "walk into any job you want, and kick the other guy out of it."

"Tell them, 'I sacrificed for you, now get out,'" he said.

Coming to perform for deployed troops, Quinn explained, was "the least I could do."

"When I first found out we could come over here, I said, 'Anytime I can be doing anything for them, I'll do it.'

"You guys are probably my best audience," he continued. "When I think about the sacrifices [troops] are making over here, and then they come up and thank me — I say thank you ... I know it sounds cheesy, but it's true."

Quinn said it surprised him during his first trip here to see "how many of the troops are such nice, good people."

"From the stories the American media gives us, it was amazing for me to come over here and not see them trying to [mess] people up," he said. "They try to put such a bad light on what's going on over here, but after the elections [went so well] ... even the media, as much as they wanted to make it a bad thing, they couldn't."

There were certainly no bad tidings to report during the

show, which ran close to two hours, nor afterward during a "meet-and-greet" in the Victory gym, as Soldiers had the opportunity to get pictures signed and chat with Quinn, Byrne and Kelly.

"They were hilarious," said Pfc. David Salas, an Altus, Okla., native assigned to 35th Signal Brigade, 18th Airborne Corps. "I give props to anyone who wants to come all the way out to Iraq, to the middle of nowhere, to give a show for the troops."

Unlike Quinn, this was Byrne and Kelly's first time in the country, and both said the event had an impact on them.

"It was probably the most humbling experience I've ever had," Byrne said. "We were at Camp Korea, and we were five hours late because of flights, but these guys waited all that time to see us, and they were one of the best crowds I've had ... it's such a huge contradiction for you guys to thank us."

Kelly said the performances he gave here over the weekend "changed my life."

"I've done a million shows," he said, "but doing it for you guys ... when you say 'Thank you,' you really mean it."

"We appreciate you more than you could ever appreciate us," he added.

The comedians' topics ranged from politics to partying, and nothing was sacred, but according to many Soldiers, the evening's pleasure was all theirs.

"It was a really great show; I really enjoyed it," said Sgt. 1st Class Luis Rosado, 166th Area Support Group, from Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. "It shows that they really care about service members."

Capt. Shane Stadtmiller, Task Force 134, from Marion Center, Pa., echoed Rosado's sentiments.

"Any time a celebrity is willing to just make the plane trip, it shows that they don't just say they support the troops, but that they actually do support the troops," he said.

Quinn said the biggest challenge he's had is having to deal with cynical people back in the States.

"It's almost shameful to be patriotic in the U.S. these days," he said. "I feel like the amount of sacrifice the Soldiers are making is so amazing ... I hope they remember they should be proud, and stay proud when they come home."



Comedian Colin Quinn shakes hands with Spc. Samuel Stalions from Golconda, Ill., while Quinn and colleagues Steve Byrne and Robert Kelly take time after their show to meet fans and give autographs at Camp Victory, Iraq, March 13.

Coalition Corner

... highlighting countries
serving with MNF-Iraq



Portugal

local name: *Portugal*

The Portuguese Republic is located in southwestern Europe, west of Spain and bordering the North Atlantic Ocean. It consists of a main body and two major island groups, Madeira and Açores (Azores). Size-wise, it is slightly smaller than Indiana.

Portugal joined the European Union in 1986 and traded in its Portuguese Escudo for the Euro in 2002. Although Spanish-speaking Spain is right next door, Portuguese is the official language spoken in Portugal. Mirandese, a language dating back to the Kingdom of León, is also an official language, although it is mostly used locally.

At 900 years and counting, Portugal holds the record for the oldest established country with original, unmoved territorial boundaries. Besides countless kilometers of beautiful beaches, Portugal also boasts historic architecture, such as castles built by Moors around 700 AD, ruins of Roman temples, and even an old Roman aqueduct.

Portugal's coastline is not only pleasing to the eye, it is also an endless source of palatal pleasure for seafood lovers because of its location. Portuguese cuisine is typified by fish, particularly Bacalhau, a salted codfish said to appear in some 365 recipes, and is considered the Portuguese national food. The two most popular ways to prepare Bacalhau are grilled and served with olive oil and potatoes, and Bacalhau à Gomes de Sá, a casserole of cod, potatoes and onions.

Besides great beaches and seafood, several famous people hail from Portugal, such as Vasco da Gama, the person who discovered the sea route to India in 1498. Famous Pop singer Nelly Furtado was born in Canada to Portuguese parents, and lead singer Jay Kay of the British band Jamiroquai also has Portuguese roots.

When asked what he misses most about his country, Lt. Col. Rui Ferreira of the Portuguese Army said, "I miss the food, the fish in particular. We are a sea-side country so seafood is very important to us. I also miss watching the local news; we don't see much European news here."

Portugal — yet another piece of the Multi-National Forces-Iraq puzzle dedicated to rebuilding Iraq.

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IZ personnel get creative with physical fitness

Story and photos by
Pfc. Ferdinand Thomas
Scimitar Staff

INTERNATIONAL ZONE, BAGHDAD, Iraq — Imagine that everyday physical training was scoring a goal in a soccer game, snatching a touchdown pass out of the sky or dunking the winning point at the buzzer in a championship basketball game.

The Morale, Welfare and Recreation department has recognized that weight lifting, treadmill running, and strict military PT workouts are not the most exciting ways to achieve physical fitness for everyone. MWR coordinators, with the ideas and help of International Zone personnel, embraced the challenge of creating more electrifying workouts and have put together different leagues and tournaments, most of which are held at Black Hawk field and other locations close to the palace compound. These leagues consist of Ultimate Frisbee, soccer, and flag football. There are also open runs after every scheduled game. Tournaments held at the gym and the pool areas consist of 3-on-3 and 5-on-5 basketball and volleyball. MWR also hopes to sponsor monthly 5K races.

“We have such a good response with our sports programs,” said Rennie Aleshire, MWR event coordinator for Kellogg Brown and Root. “Lots of people come out for the competition as well as the exercise.”

It seems Black Hawk field has become almost as popular as some of the gyms around the IZ, Aleshire said.



Felix Revilla, assigned to a personal security detail, works on his form with the speed-bag at the palace gym.

The various games held there benefit the service members and civilians in many ways. If one needs stress relief, someone to compete against or an awesome cardio workout, Black Hawk field is their playground during daylight hours.

“Participating in the different tournaments and events are important because it helps you get away from what is going on here in Iraq,” said Staff Sgt. Kate Neuman, 214th

Mobile Public Affairs Detachment from Richmond, Va. “It gives you a chance to burn some energy. You get to interact with people you wouldn’t get to talk to on a daily basis.”

Neuman, a Soldier in the Army Reserve, is an elementary school physical education teacher in her civilian life. She teaches her students the significance of physical fitness and how a variety helps your mental as well as your physical well-being.

“Physical fitness is important because it’s a part of being healthy, and it helps you have a better attitude,” she said. “It keeps you alert and gives you more energy. It makes you feel better all around.”

Becoming physically fit and having fun are what each of the sporting events and tournaments aims to do. The staff that monitors these functions tries to make things as simple as possible. Most of the

time, your body is all you need to bring to any of the events, Aleshire said. There are usually some sports drinks or water nearby. The balls and Frisbees are supplied by MWR staff or regular participants.

Some IZ service members have sponsored a few different programs themselves. At the palace gym, a few people get together daily to teach and practice the basics of boxing and wrestling. Occasionally, there are boxing tournaments there. With the weather warming up, IZ personnel have started taking advantage of the pool at the palace by swimming laps and playing water volleyball and basketball for a fun-filled workout.

People who don’t make it to the gym every day also feel a variety of activities are important to help them get physically fit, said Spc. Brian Sparks, radio telephone operator in Company C, 184th Infantry. “If people need motivation, the different programs and events help.”

Sparks said it is hard and takes discipline to stick to a specific workout — it is a lot easier when it is exciting. The work hours are long, so time off is valued. A sport that requires a lot of running and jumping along with a workout plan would be great for anyone trying to reach or maintain physical fitness.

Aleshire said helping keep the people here motivated and helping them to achieve physical fitness in a fun way are the MWR’s goals.



Bryan Weaver, personal security detail, plays catch with one of his buddies behind the Presidential Palace.



Janessa Gans with the U.S. Embassy, Baghdad participates in the Ultimate Frisbee open run held at Black Hawk field.