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‘Matador’ ends, Marines monitor area

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Operation Matador is over, Marine officials in Iraq announced May 14.

The seven-day operation concentrated on cities near the Syrian border. Pentagon officials said many foreign fighters allied with terrorist mastermind Abu Musab al-Zarqawi slip across the porous Syrian-Iraqi border. The operation concentrated on the Euphrates River cities of Karabilah, Ramana and Ubaydi, a Marine statement said.

Nine Marines assigned to Regimental Combat Team 2 died in the operation. Forty more were wounded. The statement said the joint service team’s Marines, Soldiers and Sailors “killed more than 125 terrorists, wounding many others and detaining 39 terrorists of intelligence value.”

Coalition officials were concerned about the region even before fighting in Fallujah in November. The area — part of Iraq’s Anbar province — is laced with smuggling routes that go back generations. Tribal loyalties extend on both sides of the border, and families often control smuggling “territory” and charge for services, said Pentagon officials.

Marine officials said terrorists use the area as a staging ground for attacks against Iraqi and Coalition targets in Ramadi, Fallujah, Baghdad and Mosul.

The operation began May 7, and Marines killed about 70 terrorists in the first 24-hour period. “Operation Matador confirmed existing intelligence assessments focused on this region north of the Euphrates River, including knowledge of numerous cave complexes in the nearby escarpment,” the Marine statement said.

The Marines will continue to monitor the area, officials said. Service members discovered numerous weapons caches containing machine guns, mortar rounds and rocket materials in towns along the Syrian border. “Six vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and material used for making other improvised explosive devices were also found,” the statement said.

“Regimental Combat Team 2 started and ended this operation as planned, accomplished its mission and secured all objectives,” said Maj. Gen. Richard A. Huck, 2nd Marine Division commander, quoted in the statement. “Coalition and Iraqi security forces will return again to this area in the future.”

In the northern part of Iraq, Soldiers of 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division’s Stryker Brigade Combat Team seized a large weapons cache May 12. Soldiers found the weapons during a cordon-and-search operation southwest of Qayyarah. The cache included 16 rocket-propelled grenade rounds, a mortar round, one case of fuses, two bags of charges, one pound of C4 explosives and a case of ammunition. (Compiled from Multi-National Force - Iraq news releases.)



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Birthisel

A Black Hawk crew chief, or gunner, keeps a constant lookout for any hostile action from the Iraqi landscape below as the helicopter flies near the billowing smoke from an oil well that had been set afire by terrorists. Helicopter travel is an expedient means of transportation for service members in Operation Iraqi Freedom. A gunner on each side of a Black Hawk remains ready to return fire to help ensure the crew and passengers’ safety throughout the flight.

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Preventive medicine: Guardians of troops' health

Story and photos by Sgt. Misha King
Scimitar Assistant Editor

CAMP VICTORY, BAGHDAD, Iraq — When it comes to illness prevention, children typically have parent-types looking after their well-being. Some of these parental figures keep giving this type of nurturing even as their children become adults. Unfortunately, most troops deployed to Iraq don't have the luxury of having Mommy nearby to kiss their boo-boos away, or help them through a stomachache, or treat a bug bite. Luckily, troops in Iraq do have people looking out for their health — like guardians in disguise. They are the preventive medicine personnel who operate from various detachments and teams throughout the country.

"In a nutshell, our mission is to take care of U.S. and Coalition forces' health by assessing health threats, recommending appropriate controls to lessen the threat and continuously monitoring to see if what we are doing is working," said Lt. Col. Steve Horosko, Force Health Protection Chief, Multi-National Corps – Iraq sur-



Capt. Ira Heimler, 12th Medical Detachment executive officer, checks a trap for mosquitoes, which will be screened and a percentage sent away for testing to determine if they are carrying disease.

geon's office. "There are five, 12-15 person detachments or units in Iraq that operate in various forward operating bases. We have about 100 or so FOBs and camps throughout the country, and our standard is that a PM team visits each FOB or base camp once a month." Horosko said these teams normally consist of two or three enlisted Army PM specialists or Navy technicians, and possibly even an environmental science officer.

These teams have their work cut out for them and stay extremely busy, said Horosko. One of the many tasks they conduct is checking both bottled and bulk potable water. Horosko explained the water used in dining facilities and in most cases in our showers is potable water that has been purified by water purification units operated by KBR. However, some water, like that from faucets in existing hard-structured buildings, probably comes from the Iraqi municipal water system, which isn't potable by U.S. standards. The PM teams also monitor waste management, both solid and liquid, and also air quality. They make sure when something is burned, it is not harmful to the troops. Additionally, the teams check dining facilities to make sure standards are maintained.

"Most of the DFACs are run by KBR, and if a team should find something wrong, KBR usually gets right on it, and they fix it very quickly," said Horosko. "Most of the DFACs in-country are maintained at very high standards."

Perhaps one of the biggest tasks PM detachments have is preventing diseases such as leishmaniasis and malaria from becoming a problem by continuously monitoring the number of sand flies and mosquitoes in U.S. and Coalition areas, and taking steps to control them, Horosko said. KBR conducts most of the pest control activities in larger FOBs, but the PM detachments or units have this responsibility in smaller FOBs where KBR does not function.

"Most of the samples we get come from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division's preventive medicine team located here at Camp Victory," said Spc. Kimberly A. Cupery, preventive medicine specialist with the 12th Medical Det. Cupery and her



Spc. Greg Helminski, a preventive medicine specialist with the 12th Med. Det. at Camp Victory, Iraq, treats a building's perimeter with a pesticide-filled backpack sprayer, focusing on walls and trees, which are daytime resting sites for adult mosquitoes.

coworkers conduct preliminary testing on mosquitoes and sand flies to determine their sex.

"First we determine the sex of the mosquito or sand fly," she said. "Males are of no medical importance because only females bite and can carry disease. We actually don't have the means to test for leishmaniasis and malaria in-theater, so we send samples to the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine in Maryland, or the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Although testing sand flies and mosquitoes for disease-causing organisms is not conducted in-country, the preventive medicine units collect a variety of insect samples for different reasons.

"We collect sand fly and mosquito adults and mosquito larvae to determine how many of these biting insects are around, and also to

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Services explain realignment, closure changes

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The services have used the base realignment and closure process to realign active duty and reserve forces to better face the threats of the 21st century, Pentagon officials said May 13.

Each service worked closely with the other services and new joint cross-service groups to make sure the process produced a basing structure that will support the forces needed today.

On the active duty side, the Army has used the process to place brigade combat teams and to relocate units returning from being based over-

seas. The service also has used the process to improve joint training and basing. For example, the 7th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C., will move to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. Army officials said this move will improve joint training and joint operations.

The Army BRAC recommendations call for three brigade combat teams to return from overseas and move to Fort Bliss, Texas. Support units will return from overseas duty and be based at Fort Bragg; Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Knox, Ky.; and Fort Riley, Kan. The plan also calls for a brigade to return from Korea to Fort Carson.

On the reserve component side, the Army will close 176 Army Reserve centers nationwide and build 125 new "multicomponent" armed forces

reserve centers. "We're proposing to close some of our smaller 211 Army National Guard facilities and relocate their tenants and units into these new 125 armed forces reserve centers," said Gen. Richard Cody, Army vice chief of staff, during a Pentagon news conference.

Cody said the changes will help the Army transform the Army National Guard into brigade combat teams like those in the active component, and restructure the Army Reserve into the combat-support and combat-service-support structure that mirrors the active component. The restructuring fully embraces the Title 31 responsibilities that the governors and state adjutant generals have for homeland security and homeland defense, Cody said.

Army Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, said the changes should make the Guard more responsive. "At the end of the day, the Army National Guard will be a more ready, reliable and accessible force, and we'll be able to leverage the joint capabilities of both the Army and the Air National Guard so that the governors can protect their citizenry here at home better than they can now," he said. The changes, he added, will allow the states and territories to "do a better job providing Army and Air Guard units to the Army and Air Force, to the combatant commanders overseas."

Blum clarified a statement attributed to him

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PERSPECTIVES

Memorial visit highlights results of tyranny, hope of freedom

By Command Sgt. Maj. William Green
Task Force 1/148 Field Artillery

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq

— During a recent trip to Task Force 1/148 Field Artillery's eastern area of operations (AO Scorpion East), I had the opportunity to visit the city of Halabja. Halabja was the site of the single most deadly attack on the Kurdish people during the Al Anfal campaign conducted by Saddam's army during the eight-year Iraq-Iran War. During Al Anfal an estimated 50 to 100,000 Kurdish people were murdered. Hundreds of thousands of others were forced to flee from their homelands to the nearby mountains or neighboring countries.

Halabja, a town of about 50,000 people at the time of the attack, sits at the base of a majestic mountain range in northeastern Iraq about nine miles from the Iranian border. The mountain range rises to heights approaching 10,000 feet and forms the border between Iraq and Iran, of which over 500 kilometers are within AO Scorpion. The town itself sits in a rich agricultural area, and other than the architecture of the buildings, resembles many of the small farming communities in Idaho, as do the mountains in the distance. Today the city is busy and bustling, but the effects and the aftermath of the attack are evident everywhere.

The actual attack on Halabja occurred late in the afternoon on March 16, 1988. In the initial phase of the attack, Saddam's army used only conventional bombs and artillery. The Iraqi officers knew the Kurdish citizens would seek shelter in the basements and caverns beneath their homes and businesses. After this initial phase, while the local people were still sheltered beneath ground level, Saddam's forces unleashed the chemical weapons, which included both air-dropped and artillery-delivered munitions. Saddam's officers knew full well the chemical gases were heavier than air and once released would settle to the lowest level, exactly where the Kurdish people had sought shelter. The munitions delivered on that day were varied, but included the blister agent mustard, as well as the nerve agents sarin, tubun and VX. In a few short minutes, approximately 5,000 people perished — about 75 percent of them women and children, according to many analysts. Death came quickly, but not quickly enough to prevent the agony and pain these people suffered in their last moments. That pain and agony is apparent in the pictures and paintings in the Halabja Monument, built as a testament to the victims and the survivors.

The attack had no strategic importance in the war against Iran, nor was it a result of collateral damage. Rather, it was part of a large-scale deliberate campaign against the Kurdish inhabitants of the region initiated by Saddam's regime. Al Anfal, which translated from the Koran means "The Spoils of War" or "booty," lasted nearly 10 years and ended with the United States' invasion in 1990 during Operation Desert Storm after the liberation of Kuwait. The purpose of the campaign was to kill the Kurds or force them from their homes in Northern Iraq. The motive: ethnic cleansing or more simply, in this particular region of Iraq — oil. The campaign was directed primarily at males of "fight-



Photos courtesy of Command Sgt. Maj. William Green

Command Sgt. Maj. William Green, Task Force 1/148 Field Artillery, poses at the Halabja cemetery, which is adjacent to the memorial monument commemorating the chemical attack by Saddam Hussein in March 1988 on the citizens of Halabja.

ing age." Saddam's intent was not only to take the oil-rich lands in northern Iraq, but to eliminate any future attempt by the Kurds to reclaim those lands. No evidence exists to suggest Al Anfal would have ended if Desert Storm had not occurred.

The effects of the attack remain obvious today. Many people show the horrible scars of the blister agents. The water and the food supplies show high levels of contaminants. The people of Halabja today suffer from respiratory diseases and certain forms of cancer at a rate that is four times as high as the rates in surrounding areas not involved in the attack. Young children contract leukemia and lymphoma at alarmingly high rates. Emotional scars, though not visible to me on such a short visit, surely remain as well.

The people built the Halabja Memorial Monument on the outskirts of the city to remind the world of the terrible events that took place there 17 years ago. The monument was completed in 2001. Halabja Hall contains graphic photos, paintings and sculptures depicting the tragic events that occurred that day. The names of all of the people who perished there are engraved on plates on the walls in another hall called Halabja Heart. Three other halls in the monument house more exhibits of the tragedy, as well as a 240-seat auditorium where visitors can watch video presentations about Halabja's history and the attack itself. The victims of the mass-murder are buried in a cemetery adjacent to the monument in graves marked with identical white headstones.

I will never forget my visit to Halabja. It was a very emotional experience to say the least. We, not only as citizens, but as Soldiers too often take for granted the freedoms and liberties we enjoy in the United States. After all, isn't that why we are here — to help the Iraqi people build a society and a country based upon liberty and justice? The effects and the aftermath of this ruthless attack left the city and the people of Halabja permanently scarred; the effects and the aftermath are evident everywhere. Although I saw despair, I saw the hope of these amazing people as well. I saw the tragedy and I saw the triumph of their resiliency. I saw their tears, but more often, I saw their laughter and their joy of life. Let's help them build a country that is based upon the rights and freedoms of the many, not the tyrannical greed and madness of the dictatorial few.



The Halabja Memorial Monument in Halabja, Iraq.

Scimitar Pulse

Why do you think it is important to have Armed Forces Day?

"It is important to acknowledge we have Armed Forces. What is asked of us is more than what is asked of the average citizen."



Army Col. Paul Woerner
Multi-National Force – Iraq



"I think it is important to recognize the people who are out there fighting to keep America safe and free."

Air Force 1st Lt. Rebecca Garcia
Strategic Communications

"I think we need to honor the Armed Forces as an institution because of everything they have meant to our country since its birth and throughout history."



Air Force Lt. Col. Myron Majors
Joint Area Support Group – Central

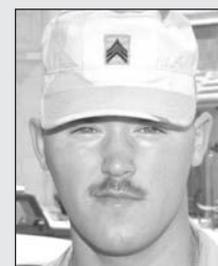


"I think a lot of people who are part of the Armed Forces make great sacrifices for our country, which translates into a great sacrifice for safety and security for all of us."

Patricia Bergstresser
Department of State

"It sheds more light on the brighter sides of serving in the military."

Army Sgt. Andrew Hill
1st Battalion, 58th Aviation



"It not only commemorates the service of military members today, but insinuates great service and sacrifices of all Armed Forces members of the past."

Army Maj. Richard Moon
Multi-National Force – Iraq

"The liberties people enjoy are taken for granted from time to time. Armed Forces Day is set aside to look back at the achievements of the military."

Jonathan Zeno
Army & Air Force Exchange Service



WANTED terrorist leader surrenders to Iraqi Army

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta
42nd Infantry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Tikrit, Iraq

— Pressure from Iraqi Army and Task Force Liberty units operating near Bayji led wanted Iraqi terrorist Nabil Badriyah Al Nasiri to surrender, said Capt. Hussein Ali Suleman, Company C commander with the 201st Iraqi Army Battalion.

Badriyah, who is from Bayji, surrendered to the 201st Iraqi Army Battalion in Tikrit May 2. He is suspected of being a terrorist cell leader responsible for recent vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks against Iraqi police, and other terrorist activities designed to undermine stability in and around Bayji, Tikrit and Samarra.

Badriyah reportedly admitted that he felt compelled to give himself up because of pressure from Iraqi Army and Task Force Liberty units.

Badriyah “found himself in a tight circle,” Hussein explained, because of the intense, intelligence-driven manhunt for him by C Co., 201st IA Bn. and Task Force Dragoon. Task Force Dragoon is part of Task Force Liberty’s 1st Brigade Combat Team, operating in the northern part of Salah Ad Din Province since January.

“We’ve been hunting for him since we got here,” said Lt. Col. Philip Logan, Task Force Dragoon commander. “It started to turn for us when we conducted a series of raids in Bayji and picked up some of his bodyguards.”

Task Force Dragoon and C Co., 201st IA Bn., had been “closing the noose” on Badriyah, Logan said, and the arrest of his bodyguards and breakup of area terrorist cells had “reduced his ability to maneuver.”

Hussein likened the manhunt, which included a series of raids on Badriyah’s sanctuaries and arrest of his other associates, as a “stranglehold” on Badriyah.

“What led up to that [surrender] was very hard work by Iraqi Army and American Soldiers to put the pieces of the puzzle together,” Logan said. He added that Badriyah’s unconditional surrender sends a message that the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces do not negotiate with terrorists.

Both Hussein and Logan said aggressive patrolling and implementing traffic control points by their units also played a part in Badriyah’s surrender.

Task Force Dragoon and C Co., 201st operate near Bayji



A Soldier from B Co., 2nd Bn., 7th Inf., patrols the streets of Bayji. Task Force Dragoon units’ patrols and operations led to Nabil Badriyah’s surrender.

from FOB Summerall. TF Dragoon’s sector, which includes Bayji, is 7,000 square kilometers, Logan said – larger than the state of Delaware, and the biggest sector in Task Force Liberty’s area of operations.

“We’re a motorized infantry task force made up primarily of Pennsylvania National Guard Soldiers,” Logan said.

In addition to conducting missions, C Co., 201st IA Bn., is receiving continuous training from TF Dragoon Soldiers.

“Tactically they’re operating at a platoon level,” Logan said. “They are able to work with my platoons on operations such as traffic control points, dismounted and mounted patrols, raids and cordons and searches.”

Iraqi Soldiers will be conducting company-level operations by summer, Logan predicted.

“When they begin to work at company level, they’ll have their own sector they’ll be responsible for,” he said.

“I believe my Soldiers to be brave and strong,” Hussein said. “They are not afraid of dying. We are ready to take on any mission.” Badriyah was transported to a Coalition forces detention facility. Their hunt for other terrorists continues, Hussein added.

“Everywhere we go, we will capture terrorists,” he said. “When I took command, I told my Soldiers, ‘If I don’t catch Badriyah, I am a loser.’ This is my war. I will win.”

Precision strikes pay off

By Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta
42nd Infantry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SUMMERALL, BAYJI, Iraq

— “The Scorpion” is what Capt. Hussein Ali Suleman, commander of Company C, 201st Battalion of the Iraqi Army calls himself — a nickname that illustrates what he and Task Force Dragoon Commander Lt. Col. Philip Logan are using to defeat insurgents here — precision strikes.

“The mark of a professional Soldier is precision strikes,” Logan said. “You eliminate the threat without endangering the lives of innocent civilians around you.”

“That sums up [Hussein’s] vision for operations,” said Sgt. 1st Class Richard McGovern, Company A, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry, which is part of Task Force Dragoon. “A scorpion is a small animal that wields a lot of power. When it uses its power, it does so with precision and effectiveness.”

That precision is borne out in the continuous, intelligence-driven operations — patrols, raids, cordon and search missions, observation posts and traffic control points — which the Soldiers of Task Force Dragoon and C Co., 201st Bn., Iraqi Army, execute. These missions recently paid off in the defeat of wanted Iraqi terrorist Nabil Badriyah Al Nasiri, who surrendered to the 201st Iraqi Army Battalion May 2, and the May 4 capture of 22 insurgents suspected of launching rockets at Coalition forces here.

“Intelligence drives maneuver” is a saying repeated at all levels of command, Logan said, and one that Task Force Dragoon follows.

“Sometimes you have to fight for intelligence,” Logan said. “You have to conduct patrols, searches and raids aggressively. You have to do that while fighting off [improvised explosive device] attacks and indirect fire attacks.”

This “homegrown intel,” as Logan called it, was compiled with intelligence from other sources and enabled Task Force Dragoon and the Iraqi Soldiers to target and capture Badriyah’s bodyguards in a series of raids in Bayji. This denied Badriyah the ability to maneuver and led to his surrender, Logan said.

“Power is nothing without wisdom,” Hussein said. “If I use my power wisely, I will be able to do good things and draw good men to our cause.”

“It goes back to shaping the battlefield that accounts for our successes this week,” Logan said.

For the Soldiers, this means a high operations tempo.

“We’ve got Soldiers out 24 hours a day, doing mounted reconnaissance, dismounted and mounted patrols, convoy logistic patrols for vehicle parts and supplies, counter-IED ambushes and counter-sniper ambushes,” said Logan. “It’s an enormous undertaking.”

Unlike the precision strikes of Task Force Dragoon, insurgent attacks do not discriminate. Iraqis are suffering the brunt of IEDs’ destructive power and collateral damage, he said.

“People are beginning to realize that anti-Iraqi forces are killing Iraqis,” Logan said.

Task Force Dragoon faced a different threat before the Iraqi elections, Logan said, consisting of roadside bombs, suicide car bombings, direct fire, indirect fire and “sustained, persistent contact with the enemy.” In the weeks leading up to the election, Logan said, he was “prepared for Bayji to become Stalingrad on the Tigris.”

“In the days and weeks following the election, we saw a marked change in community leaders,” he said. “They realized there is a new government, and that they wouldn’t have a voice if they didn’t participate.”

In addition to engaging the enemy, Task Force Dragoon and C Co. are engaging the citizens of Iraq with civil affairs operations designed to help Iraqis get back on their feet, and repair the area’s damaged infrastructure.

Task Force Dragoon leaders also meet with area religious, political, government, and tribal leaders regularly and listen to their needs, and try to balance those needs with projects which will help Iraqis get back on their feet.

But, Logan conceded, the fight goes on.

“When you capture someone like Nabil Badriyah, you’ve got about five minutes to celebrate,” Logan said. “Then you’ve got to get out there and start patrolling and fighting for intelligence again.”

Preventive—

from Page 2

check the effectiveness of our pesticides,” said Capt. Ira Heimler, executive officer for 12th Medical Det. “We apply larvicides to mosquito larva sites, such as ponds and edges of lakes, to help keep the mosquito numbers down, therefore reducing the threat of disease.”

“By applying pesticides on areas where sand flies and mosquitoes like to rest during the day, like building walls, around sand bags and trees, we can keep the numbers down where troops are,” added Staff Sgt. Charles Osborne, PM specialist, 12th Medical Det. “Treating for these pests with chemical pesticides, encouraging troops to use DEET skin repellent and treat their uniforms with permethrin, and modifying the pests’ habitat helps protect our forces from biting mosquitoes and sand flies.”

And keeping these pests in control is important to everyone and is important to the overall mission.

“One of the most important things is making sure commanders know what the health risks are,” Horosko said. “In Desert Storm, we didn’t do such a good job of monitoring the environmental threats facing our forces, but we’re doing a much better job now. PM units have much better equipment, and the PM mission is getting more support from commanders than in the past. Our PM specialists, environmental science officers and entomologists are better trained and also have a significant reach-back capability through DoD labs in the U.S.

“As a result, we are able to accomplish so much more now than we were able to just 15 years ago. We’re constantly monitoring the water, soil, air, conducting DFAC inspections, controlling disease-causing insects and letting the commanders know what the

threat is and what to do about it. We make sure water, food, where you live, and the air you breathe are good to go, and if it’s not, we make recommendations of what they need to do about it.”

These checks and balances can make a real difference in troops’ well-being and the overall mission success. Not to mention, parents back home would be happy to know their loved ones are being looked after by guardians in disguise.

“When I get calls about troops concerned about their water or breathing in some smoke and are coughing, I can put the right team on it. If there’s a problem with something being dumped on the side of the road somewhere, I know whom to energize to get that problem fixed. It’s good to be able to accomplish things and to make things happen — and it feels really good to be able to make a difference in the day-to-day existence of our forces.”

Murdering ideas to save Soldiers' lives

By Spc. Ricardo Branch

3rd Infantry Division Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq — "If you put yourself in the terrorists' shoes and think of what they'd need and how to carry out a specific task, stopping them from doing those acts becomes easier," said Maj. John Michael Wells.

With that in mind, 256th Brigade Combat Team intelligence section Soldiers discuss the motivations behind terrorist acts in a meeting known as "The Murder Board."

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

As service members throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom witness the dangers of daily operations in Iraq, the Murder Boards aim to help them better understand and combat the anti-Coalition forces attacking them.

Wells, a New Orleans native, said analysts meet weekly in an open forum, bringing their ideas to the table to explore what can be done to aid troops who encounter the enemy.

"Intel personnel don't normally have to face a [vehicle-borne improvised explosive device] or go on a raid, so we have to get a good picture or a story told from the reports," said Sgt. Andrew Hyde, HHC, 256th BCT. "We then try to figure out the next line of the story. Once we figure out what is going to happen next, we make recommendations to the commander on how to combat the enemy."

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

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

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

The theory wrangling among intel Soldiers is also where the board gets its name. "The ideas you bring are being 'murdered' because as soon as the topic is up for discussion, Soldiers are shooting it down with their own opinions," Wells said. "As long as they can back it up, anything is fair game."

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

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

Spc. Joshua Schuttloffel, from Lennox, S.D., an intelligence analyst with the 256th, said participating in this type of meeting is a valuable asset to the brigade and important to build upon Soldiers' teamwork. "You're encouraging thought amongst all Soldiers from the top down," he said. "They see the topic and then predict how and what the enemy may do."

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

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

Whatever the outcome, Soldiers of the 256th intel section know their work will shape brigade operations and will hopefully help to better prepare Soldiers who go out every day on the streets of Baghdad.

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

Army Corps of Engineers' Gulf Region welcomes Iraqi interns

By Denise Calabria

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BAGHDAD, Iraq — We have all heard the saying, "... teach a man to fish and he'll feed himself forever."

Based upon its current reconstruction mission in Iraq, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division, has updated that axiom to read, "... and if you train and enable an Iraqi engineer to intern with your experienced staff, he or she can become a prominent contributor to Iraq's reconstruction."

The Corps works in cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works to build capacity to design, supervise, and maintain Iraq's infrastructure over the long term. To make this goal a reality, the GRD has entered into an agreement wherein promising MMPW engineers from across the country attend a six-day training course in Baghdad to familiarize themselves with corps standard construction practices. During that initial period, in addition to formal classroom instruction, the interns also garner hands-on experience at construction sites in the International Zone.

"The intern program is an important step in helping Iraq and the U.S. governments better understand how we both manage construction and to identify the best business practices of each," said James Dalton, GRD Director of Business Management.

The program trainees attend classes designed to prepare them for the unique reconstruction program underway in Iraq — a program focused on rebuilding war-related damage, shoring up an infrastructure ignored for over three decades by the previous regime, and ongoing attacks by a determined insurgency. Applicants require backgrounds in the disciplines of electrical, civil, mechanical, fire protection, and structur-

al engineering, as well as architecture, in order to qualify for internships with the program.

As part of their preparation, interns attend classes such as "What is Construction Quality Management," "Contractor and Government Responsibilities," "Theory of Project Planning," and "Project Construction," to name a few.

Interns report to a corps field office immediately following their classroom training. They team up with their corps sponsor and begin individual, on-the-job training by shadowing and assisting corps engineers and project managers. Once they complete the internship program, the Iraqi engineers return to their respective MMPW positions.

The initial group of interns consisted of one female and seven male engineers. Although they did not wish to reveal their names due to security concerns, they were anxious to give their opinions of the program.

"It means a lot to us. We are not used to taking courses such as this," said one intern. "It's useful to us. Some information was new to us as well as some procedures."

Another intern responded, "Although our engineering methods are basically the same, the [corps] quality management is much higher than ours."

According to Dalton, the GRD expects both the United States and Iraq to benefit from the six-month intern program well into the future.

"As we award more contracts to Iraqi firms, the information sharing facilitated by the MMPW Intern Program will greatly assist GRD in better administration of these contracts. And participants in the program will experience valuable on-the-job training by spending time at our district offices," Dalton said.

The interns also speculated on what their participation in this program will mean to them in the future.



Courtesy photo

Command Sgt Maj. Jorge Gutierrez addresses Iraqi engineers taking part in the GRD Intern Program.

BRAC

from Page 2

that seemed to suggest he agreed with the notion that governors should challenge DoD's right to close National Guard bases. "All I said was governors ought to be interested and involved in what happens to their guardsmen," he said following the news conference. "The governors are the commanders of those troops."

Although the impact of the BRAC recommendations has been relatively light for the Marine Corps, officials are calling it a positive step in terms of reducing excess infrastructure and improving operational efficiencies.

One of the most significant changes involves centralizing its reserve elements and their associated management functions. According to Maj. Nat Fahy, a spokesman for Headquarters Marine Corps, the recommendations call for consolidating the Marine Forces Reserve headquarters and the Marine Corps Reserve Support Command Element of Mobilization Command in Missouri to Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans.

In addition to centralizing management of reserve elements and their associated management functions, this move will enhance joint-service interoperability, Fahy said.

Another recommendation involves consolidating correctional capabilities at Naval Support Activity Northwest Annex in Chesapeake, Va., and Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

In addition, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., will host all investigative headquarters, Fahy said.

Navy officials said the BRAC process attempts to set the infrastructure for the next 20 years. Navy officials said the BRAC recommendations go hand in hand with other major Navy transformation initiatives under way, including the Human Capital Strategy Plan, Sea Enterprise and Fleet Response Plan.

"A major part of this BRAC has been to [evaluate] excesses, try and look forward in years in terms of the programs that we'll deliver, the type of ships and submarines that we'll have in the fleet, and to try and match the infrastructure with a consideration for surge with that future naval force," Adm. Bob Willard, vice chief of naval operations, said May 13.

Willard stressed that across the range of Navy installations - the ports, the submarine bases, the industrial infrastructure - military value was "foremost in our consideration, and trying to get the size right of these installations relative to the fleet."

Lt. Christine Ventresca, a Navy spokeswoman, said the recommendations, once implemented within the Navy, will save more than \$1.5 billion a year.

Officials said the recommendations will make the Air Force more capable, efficient and effective while helping transform the Air Force to better meet future threats.

According to Air Force spokeswoman Shirley Curry, closing and realigning bases will consolidate aircraft and operations into larger squadrons, optimizing critical resources.

By 2011, all F-16 and A-10 squadrons will have 18 or 24 aircraft, and C-130 and KC-135 squadrons will have 12 or 16 aircraft, officials said.

The recommendations also help balance airpower within the Air Force's active duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard components, strengthening the Air Force's overall warfighting capability, she said.

The BRAC recommendations affect 115 installations and facilities and involve closing 12. Officials said they end flying operations at 28 installations and reduce excess airfield infrastructure by 37 percent and excess building and facility infrastructure by 79 percent.

(Donna Miles of American Forces Press Service collaborated on this article.)

Coalition receives cultural awareness training

Master Sgt. Michele R. Hammonds
Command Information NCOIC

INTERNATIONAL ZONE, BAGHDAD, Iraq — Senior military personnel and civilian employees attended a cultural awareness class to teach them about Iraqi society at the Presidential Palace May 14.

National Iraqi Assistance Center instructors sponsored and taught the class to gather support in their efforts to implement the class as required training for all new arrivals of Coalition forces, contract and civilian workers serving in Iraq.

“One of our goals is to get the senior leadership of the Coalition to say that before anyone sets foot into the country that they go through some sort of cultural awareness training so they understand this society,” said Lt. Col. Richard D. Welch, program manager and assistant chief of staff G5, 1st Cavalry Division. He gave a class on culture training. Welch, an Ohio native, and his eight instructors all of Iraqi descent, led discussions on Iraqi culture, history, religion, women and children issues, and dos and don'ts of the culture.

Mahdi (last name withheld for security), an instructor, spoke to the group about dos and don'ts. The fifth year medical student from Baghdad University said he originally started teaching the class to give back to his Iraqi people.

“It's important for my people when they are treated in the correct way with respect,” said Mahdi, who speaks Arabic, English, French and Persian.

Linda Akroush, a translator with Multi-National Force - Iraq, Ministry of Defense/Ministry of Interior, support office sat in on the culture awareness class to learn more about the Iraqi culture and customs. Akroush, who has worked in Baghdad for two years, planned to put the knowledge she received from the class to use the next time she has the chance to interact with local Iraqis.

“By understanding their culture and being respectful to Iraqis ... we can work together to show the Iraqi people we care and are here to help them and we will succeed,” she said. “That is why I am here.”

Trying to understand the 5,000-year-old Iraqi culture in an effort to provide assistance to Iraqis can be a daunting task to Coalition forces. Sometimes people from older countries become offended when Americans advise them on ways to live, said Welch addressing the class.

“We need to recognize there are many good things that have been learned here and applied here over the last 5,000 years,” Welch said. “By building relationships, we can share with the people the good things of our culture and try to model the values and the things we think are important in our culture and society and help every aspect of the Iraq culture and move toward modernity.”

Eager to stay abreast with the Iraqi culture and customs since her arrival to Baghdad three months ago, U.S. Army Col. Sylvia Moran, MNF-I MOD/MOI, Middle East foreign area officer, also took part in the culture awareness class. Over the course of her 29-year military career Moran, who is a native of Illinois, has studied the Arabic and Islamic cultures.

“I have not studied Iraq or Iraqi culture by actually being here,” Moran said. “I only read about Iraq in books, and books just can't teach you what you need to know. I wanted to find out more about Iraq.”

Moran knows she views the Iraq culture from an American's perspective.

“Our approach with the Iraqi military is very American, but by understanding an Iraqi approach it will help to have clear communications and training between the two of us,” she said.

Understanding the culture and customs is only part of it — Iraqi people want to know the Coalition forces care, Welch said.

“People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care,” he said. Your words then and your dialect with them are much more than just noise.”

Rice visits Iraq, calls on government to move quickly

WASHINGTON — Terrorists continued to attack innocent Iraqis as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice paid a surprise visit to the country Sunday. Attacks in Baghdad and Baqubah killed a number of people, according to news reports. Iraqi officials also found at least 34 men killed execution style in Baghdad's Sadr City neighborhood and in the town of Latifiyah, south of the capital.

Rice met with Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafaari and Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Chalabi. It was her first visit to Iraq since becoming secretary of state.

Associated Press quoted Rice as saying, “The insurgency is very violent, but you defeat insurgencies not just militarily. You defeat them by having a political alternative that is strong. The Iraqis ... are now going to have to intensify their efforts to demonstrate that in fact the political process is the answer for the Iraqi people.”

Rice urged the Iraqi government leaders to move quickly as they write a constitution to set up a permanent government for the nation. She said the Iraqi people are growing impatient with delays.

In Baghdad, Iraqi children led Task Force Baghdad Soldiers to a weapons cache. The children led the troopers to three rocket-propelled grenades and 10 fuses. An explosives ordnance disposal team was called to the site and safely detonated the munitions.

“The majority of Iraqis do not support the insurgency,” said Lt. Col. Clifford Kent, a Task Force Baghdad spokesman. “Most Iraqis want to give the new Iraqi government a chance to work, and that's why they're turning in these terrorists and their weapons.”

In combat operations conducted May 14, Iraqi Soldiers captured seven terror suspects in eastern Baghdad. The Iraqi Soldiers seized a computer, small arms, a protective mask and cell phone parts that could be used to remotely detonate bombs. All seven suspects were taken into custody for questioning.

In southern Baghdad, U.S. Soldiers conducted a series of early morning raids Baghdad and captured three specifically targeted terror suspects. The suspects are believed to have planned and carried out a number of terrorist attacks in the area. The Soldiers also found several AK-47 assault rifles, pistols and cellular phones during the raid. The three suspects were taken into custody for questioning.

Later in the day, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers working in south-

eastern Baghdad found another weapons cache containing seven artillery shells and a rocket-propelled grenade. In Mosul, Stryker Brigade Combat Team Soldiers detained 21 suspected terrorists. Soldiers detained 10 suspects in western Mosul, five in southeastern Mosul and six near the town of Sinjar. (Compiled by American Forces Press Service from Multi-National Force - Iraq news releases and news reports.)

Airmen allowed to show service colors while traveling

WASHINGTON — A new Air Force policy gives Airmen the choice to show their colors when traveling to and from deployment locations.

Airmen traveling to and from the U.S. Central Command Air Forces' area of responsibility have been, until recently, required to wear civilian clothing on flights in and out of the area.

Under a new policy, Airmen now have the option to wear their desert combat uniform on those flights. The policy change came after suggestions to both the chief of staff and chief master sergeant of the Air Force, said Senior Master Sgt. Dana Athnos, the Air Force's uniform board superintendent.

“This started with queries to Air Force senior [leaders] as they toured the AOR,” Athnos said. “This was about pride. Other services were coming home in uniform and experiencing tremendous support along the way from the American public. Our Airmen were in civilian clothes, and people didn't readily recognize them as Air Force personnel. They simply want the country to know they are proud of their service, too.”

The new policy allows Airmen to wear their uniforms when traveling inside the United States to their port of departure, so long as they fly aboard a U.S.-based airline. Airmen may also wear their uniforms when traveling to the AOR if they are flying on a military or chartered commercial aircraft. The same rules apply when Airmen come home.

One concern for policy makers is that Airmen remember to conduct themselves as true Air Force professionals. Athnos said Airmen are reminded that their uniforms must always be clean and serviceable; they must be in compliance with dress and appearance instructions and always conduct themselves in a manner befitting the Air Force.

Continued on next page

Amber Waves: Ensuring agricultural success

By Spc. Ricardo Branch
3rd Infantry Division Public Affairs

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq — Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team ensured farmers of the greater Baghdad area will be able to boost their agricultural development immensely with farm equipment to include an equipment sign-off event at the Al Radwaniyah Provincial Civil Military Operations Center May 2.

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

The equipment, originally purchased under the old regime, lay dormant in a Sadr City warehouse for the past three years. Upon finding the equipment,

Soldiers transported it to a secure area for repairs and eventual distribution to the farmers.

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

“This is all part of Operation Amber Waves, which was initiated during 1st Cavalry Division's time,” Basilica

said. “The 256th BCT is out here to assist the local farmers with improving their farming.”

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

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



Thirty-seven tractors, 16 water pumps and 56, five-horsepower generators were signed over to the Ministry of Agriculture May 2.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Some Airmen might want to wear their uniforms when traveling to a deployed location but are afraid of drawing unnecessary attention to themselves.

Sergeant Athnos said U.S. airports have plenty of security, and that the Air Force has historically allowed or even required Airmen to be in uniform when aboard aircraft.

"Besides, if you were in civilian clothes, you would still have your web gear and your mobility bags with you, and you are still hanging around the [United Services Organization]," she said. "It's not a secret that you are in the military."

Also, part of the policy is a requirement that Airmen carry a change of civilian clothes with them if they choose to wear a uniform, and a clean uniform if they choose to wear civilian clothes. That kind of preparedness allows Airmen to adjust their appearance should the situation demand it. (Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez, Air Force Print News)

Radio connects families to front lines

DALLAS — The Army & Air Force Exchange Service recently introduced its Patriot Family Connection program to help connect deployed military members with their loved ones back home.

The new program offers family members, friends of deployed

service members and AAFES associates a chance to record their greetings, words of support and thanks. Messages can be recorded 24 hours a day, free of charge, and are forwarded to American Forces Network Radio, which is heard at locations overseas including those in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

"Recording the messages is just one small element of a larger AAFES Patriot Family marketing program that includes numerous initiatives," said Mike Westphal, senior vice president of AAFES' Marketing Directorate. "It started with the Patriot Family Tree in December. Now, we have the Patriot Family Connection and 'We All Have a Hand in Securing Our Freedom' hand trace banners we'll be sending downrange. Soon we'll be sending dozens of banners downrange for deployed troops to sign — then those banners will tour each AAFES region." The Patriot Family Connection is one of several initiatives AAFES is using to help bridge the distance between the home front and the front lines. This new program has already yielded messages from Americans expressing their support for troops serving downrange.

Doug Ford from Denton, N.C., called in his greeting, "I want to send all the best wishes to the troops. God bless y'all and thank y'all for everything you do." Another greeting, recorded by Jean

Helen from Columbus, Ga., said, "I want to tell all the troops everywhere we're with your families back here supporting them while you're overseas. We love all you guys. Thank you for what you're doing, and we appreciate your families and their bravery while they're waiting on you."

Anyone can record a message by calling 1-800-713-1302 and following the prompts. For more information, log on to www.AAFES.com and click on the Patriot Family link.



Surprise visit



Photo by Pfc. Ferdinand Thomas

U.S. Secretary of State (Dr.) Condoleezza Rice and Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafaari address members of the press about the improvements and new plans for deployed service members and the Iraqi people at the Iraqi Government building in the International Zone of Baghdad, Iraq. Rice made a surprise visit to service members and civilians in Iraq Sunday. The one-day trip was Rice's first visit to Iraq as the nation's top diplomat.

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

Listen in May to win an EarRadio courtesy of www.americasupportsyu.mil.

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.

Marine saves Iraqi boy from possible death

Story and photos by Cpl. Tom Sloan
2nd Marine Division Public Affairs

AR RAMADI, Iraq — A young Iraqi boy in the city here has Cpl. Michael L. Godfrey to thank for saving him from a life-threatening illness.

The 21-year-old noncommissioned officer with 5th Civil Affairs Group, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, spearheaded efforts to have the toddler admitted into a local hospital and treated for a severe urinary tract infection.

Godfrey was conducting a routine patrol through a neighborhood when he discovered the ailing child.

"I was going through finding out the basic needs of the people living there and what might be done to improve their standard of living," said the Mount Zion, Md., native. "I gave a kid a Band-Aid for a blister he had on his hand, and soon I was swarmed by other kids wanting some. There wasn't anything wrong with them, though, they just wanted to have Band-Aids, too."

A few minutes after he issued the adhesive bandage, an elderly lady approached him carrying a young boy.

"She held him up to me so I could see him," Godfrey said. "He had an open wound that covered his whole penis. There was pus and blood in places where it shouldn't be. I'm no doctor, but I could tell right away he needed medical attention."

According to Godfrey, the boy looked as though he was in a lot of pain.

"His body was limp, and he looked spaced out," he said. "It seemed like he'd been hurting so long that he was used to it."

At the time, Godfrey couldn't do anything for the child except feel sorry for him.

When Godfrey returned to his base, Camp Hurricane Point, he told Maj. Benjamin B.

Busch, Team 1 leader, Detachment 3, 5th CAG, what he saw.

Busch could tell the boy was in danger from what Godfrey told him. He sent a corpsman to do an assessment on the boy's health.

"The corpsman determined the infection was very severe and, if left untreated, it could enter his kidneys and cause them to fail," said Busch, a College Park, Md., native.

The boy's family couldn't take him to the hospital for treatment because they didn't have enough money, Godfrey said.

"They are very poor and come from a poor neighborhood," he said. "They don't even have enough money for a taxi there."

After learning the severity of the boy's condition, Busch coordinated a mission for 5th CAG and Company W with the infantry battalion that would enable them to get the boy to the hospital and receive medical attention.

"There is something pure and necessary about the rescue of an innocent child that answers to our best intentions here," Busch said.

Their operation, however, wasn't as simple as picking him up at his house and making the short trip to the hospital.

The six Marines with 5th CAG created a diversion in an effort to keep local residents from intruding and to protect the privacy of the family, said Godfrey.

Marines with W Co. secured the neighborhood while the Marines with 5th CAG split up into teams of two.

Sgt. Hector Martinez Jr., and Gunnery Sgt. Wayne B. McClam handed out soccer balls, dolls, clothes and wrist-watches to children in the street. Minutes after the gift giving began, the area was bustling with smiling and laughing children.

Meanwhile, Busch, Godfrey and Ricky Wissam, their translator, went to the boy's house and explained to his mother the reason for their surprise visit.

"We told her we're here to give her money to pay for a taxi to take the boy to the hospital," Godfrey said. "We told her to wait for a while after we leave to do so, though. It won't look suspicious that way."

Prior to the mission, Busch arranged for a doctor at the

"There is something pure and necessary about the rescue of an innocent child that answers to our best intentions here."

Maj. Benjamin Busch



Sgt. Hector Martinez Jr., noncommissioned officer with 5th Civil Affairs Group, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, hands an Iraqi boy a soccer ball on an Ar Ramadi street from the back of a Humvee.

hospital to treat the boy when he arrived.

Wissam wrote the doctor's name on a piece of paper and gave it to the mother so she would know who to seek out. She was also given enough money to pay for return visits while her son undergoes treatment.

"It rejuvenates our connection to the Iraqi people through unbiased compassion, and I feel this kind of act is essential during ongoing combat operations in this complicated city," Busch said. "Cpl. Godfrey built that connection today as a Marine, as an American and as an individual."

The Marine's act of kindness brought a smile to the mother's face and tears to her eyes. Godfrey was also touched.

"I've never saved a life before," he said. "It feels great. I guess God put us together for that reason. So he could live."



Cpl. Michael L. Godfrey (left), with 5th Civil Affairs Group, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, provides security at a house here while Maj. Benjamin B. Busch (second from right), a 5th CAG team leader and Ricky Wissam, a translator, speak to the mother of an Iraqi boy who has a severe urinary tract infection. Godfrey, of Mount Zion, Md., was conducting a routine CAG patrol through a neighborhood when he discovered the ailing child. Marines with 5th CAG coordinated for the boy to be taken to a local hospital to receive medical aid for his illness. If left untreated, the infection could have entered his kidneys and caused them to fail.

2/14 Infantry hunts for weapons in Abu Ghraib

Story and photos by Spc. Matthew McLaughlin
10th Mountain Division Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq — “Life is a garden: dig it,” a Soldier says, quoting the movie “Joe Dirt” before he begins to move earth with a rusted shovel.

When not conducting raids or other combat operations, Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, treat the town of Abu Ghraib like a giant treasure hunt as they leave no stone unturned in the search for weapons caches.

First Lt. Joshua Betty, a platoon leader from College Station, Texas, said digging for potential weapons is a daily routine for him and his Soldiers. Entire patrols are often dedicated to searching large areas for buried ammunition.

“We’re denying the enemy the ability to operate,” Betty said. “It’s become a big part of our operations. It’s really starting to pay off.”

The cache hunters aren’t alone combing a beach for buried treasure, however. Soldiers from Company B, 27th Engineer

“We’re denying the enemy the ability to operate.”

1st Lt. Joshua Betty

Battalion from Fort Bragg, N.C., assist 2/14 Infantry Soldiers with mine detectors. The engineers scour fields, roads and yards looking for the tone that indicates metal, said Pfc. Samuel L. Goll, a Morris, Okla., native with the 27th Engineers.

“Whenever we get one, we work them like a horse,” said Staff Sgt. Thomas E. Larkin, a Carthage, N.Y., resident with 2/14 Infantry.

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

The combination of digging and detecting has paid dividends, Betty said.

Since mid-November, 2/14 Infantry has unearthed more than 90 caches in the Abu Ghraib district. Many Soldiers can now spot a potential cache by glancing at oddly colored grass or soft dirt surrounded by hard earth. Keen eyes during expeditions aid them all over the town, including backyards and gardens. One



Soldiers from 2nd Bn., 14th Inf. Regt., 10th Mountain Division prepare to roll over what remains of a car to search underneath it. Insurgents often bury caches in areas they believe Soldiers will not look.



Spc. Robert Fairfax, a Wilmington, N.C. native with the 27th Engineer Bn., Fort Bragg, N.C., walks through a field of scrap metal while on patrol. Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division use Soldiers from the 27th Engineers to search for caches and other weapons made of metal.

time the Soldiers found a large cache buried in an Iraqi’s front yard.

“We found like 60 mortar rounds,” Goll said.

Soldiers from 2/14 Infantry often search the outsides of Iraqis’ houses, Betty said. Instead of barging in, however, they ask for permission to search the grounds. The majority of Iraqis are receptive to the Soldiers’ search.

“They’re very inviting for the most part,” Betty said.

Part of their willingness to help may reflect on Abu Ghraib residents’ desire to be rid of insurgent activity, Larkin said. Sometimes Iraqis will even lead 2/14 Infantry Soldiers to caches.

“They’re getting sick of it, too,” Larkin said. “They don’t want it in their backyard.”

Several Soldiers said they feel they are improving the situation in Iraq by uncovering caches. They do admit, however, that there are far more munitions yet to be discovered.

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

Goll said he feels frustrated when he returns from a patrol without finding any munitions.

But Betty said he and other Soldiers still go out every day hoping to take the insurgency down one cache at a time.

“Even if we found one cache a month, that’s one less piece of ordnance, one less mortar round that can be used to shoot at us.”



Staff Sgt. Russell Odonnell, a native of Bradford, R.I., with 2nd Bn., 14th Inf. Regt., inspects a bag of coins buried in a garden. Soldiers use metal detectors to find caches, which often turn up surprising results.



Sgt. Ruben Paredes, a Roosevelt, N.Y., resident with 2nd Bn., 14th Inf. Regt., digs after an engineer detects metal in Abu Ghraib. Soldiers from 2/14 Infantry often spend hours digging for hidden weapons.

Texas Soldiers provide first line of defense in Iraq

Story and photo by Pfc. Matthew Clifton
Multi-National Corps - Iraq Public Affairs

CAMP TAQQADUM, Iraq — There are many necessary components the Army must apply to ensure proficient and successful force protection. Observation posts are one such component, and at Camp Taqqadum, they are controlled by a group of Soldiers from the Texas National Guard.

Camp Taqqadum is located approximately 45 miles west of Baghdad and serves as both a military base camp and an air strip to transport troops and supplies.

“We have responsibility for the entire perimeter’s security,” said Capt. Wesley Bryan, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 112th Armored Regiment, from Fort Worth, Texas. “If these observation posts weren’t here the effects would be devastating. They are our first line of defense.”

The observation posts are essentially a string of points on the perimeter of the camp positioned in a way so guards can keep constant watch over every inch of the perimeter, said 1st Lt. Chester Harbert, support platoon leader, HHC, 2nd Bn., 112th Armored Regt..

“We run on a shift rotation with at least two people in each post to provide security and scan for any intelligence information they might be able to gather ... and call in any suspicious activity,” Harbert said.

The observation posts are critical in the coordination between quick reactionary forces, external patrols and internal security of the camp, Bryan said.

Soldiers in the observation posts also let the patrols outside the perimeter know what is going on. They have a better view of the surrounding area and can see anything happening that may interfere with the operations of the base or a patrol, Harbert said.

“On a daily basis, the Soldiers at the posts have to deal with issues like sheep herders getting too close to the fence line and local nationals trying to cross the wire. Sometimes they deal with calling in indirect fire to the surrounding area,” Harbert said. “They call in the fire so the counter-battery can triangulate its origin and respond.”

“Their job is to provide an early warning,” Bryan said. “If the Soldiers see anything suspicious, they call it in to our tactical operations center, which in turn allows us to coordinate the movements of other platoons inside the base to wherever they

need to go to address the situation.”

As one observation post is reporting what they are seeing, the TOC will call another observation post, Bryan said. If the second observation post is seeing the same thing as the first, the TOC knows something is going on out there and will make adjustments to what forces are sent where.

“The intelligence sent up by the observation posts effects how we maneuver our platoons,” Bryan said. “Intelligence and security have equal roles in the observation posts, because we take what they see and build the big picture of what is going on out there.

“Without the observation posts out there on the front line providing the intelligence reports to the tactical operations center, we would basically be sending our Soldiers out into the darkness when they go on convoys or patrols,” Bryan said.

Soldiers running the observation posts are very dedicated to their jobs, Bryan said. It takes a lot of self-discipline to sit up there for hours on end, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and keep a close watch on anything that might happen. “They are extremely disciplined, hard-working and do an outstanding job.

“The mental drain is tough on the Soldiers, and I really have to commend them because it is difficult to stay strictly focused for as many hours as they have to,” Bryan said. “There isn’t a lot to see out there, but the Soldiers have to maintain their mental focus because all it takes is one of the enemy getting inside the wire with the wrong type of equipment to create havoc on a base like Camp Taqqadum.

“We do various things to help keep the morale up,” he said. “We have a Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent, but a lot of the Soldiers like to go work out at the gym because we put a lot of emphasis on physical training.”

The Soldiers are here for 12 months, and there is no reason why they shouldn’t be in the best shape of their life when they go back, he said. The observation post Soldiers’ shifts are set up so when they come off of duty they have time to work out, and there are also some intramural sports, cookouts and movie nights put together by the battalion so the Soldiers can relax on their down time.

“Ours is a 12-month tour, and these Soldiers will spend the vast majority of their time manning the observation posts, so we try to switch them out to give them something different,” Harbert said. “It is very crucial to have every asset available



Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 112th Armored Regiment, Fort Worth, Texas, look out from an observation post over a saltwater lake bordering Spring Lake Logistical Support Area, Camp Taqqadum, Iraq.

when focusing on the strength of the force behind the observation posts.”

“We have recently received enough augmentees to where we can switch the Soldiers out and give them different tasks other than manning the observation posts. This acts as sort of a break from the strain of the job,” Harbert said. “The Soldiers are doing a fine job, and they can’t be praised enough.”

“The Soldiers up there are still human, they are like all of us, they have good days and they have bad days,” Bryan said. “A lot of their emotions come from news they might have gotten from back home while talking to their family the day before.

“Sometimes they may come to work upset, but as a whole they are very motivated,” Bryan continued. “They know what they are doing here is important, and that is part of our job as leadership to communicate to them how important their job is and how it ties into the big picture.

“If they aren’t there, who is going to provide that early warning? We have sensors that we use, but they can go down,” Bryan said. “These guys are the human element that we have out there on the front line, telling us what is going on. They understand this, and that’s why when it is time to go to work they put everything else aside and go do it.”

Ambassadors visit Fallujah, tour reconstruction sites

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy B. Lawn
Scimitar Staff

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Three Coalition ambassadors visited the city of Fallujah Thursday to see new construction projects under way and reparations.

Unal Cevikoz, Ambassador for the Republic of Turkey, Margriet Struijf, Charge d’Affairs for the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Peter WaterWorth, Political Counselor for the United Kingdom, briefly gathered at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad where they were greeted by U.S. Political-Military Counselor Ambassador, Ronald E. Neumann, and Ambassador Bill Taylor, Director of Iraq Reconstruction Management Office.

The British, Turkish and Netherlands ambassadors went on a trip to Fallujah, a city reduced to rubble during Operation Phantom Fury last November, now coming alive with post-war reconstruction.

“The goal we laid out for the mission was for the Coalition partners to see what they are spending their money on,” said Col. Thomas J. Sellars, United States Joint Forces Command. “We wanted the Coalition ambassadors to see firsthand the progress being made and to capitalize on the synergy created by Coalition reconstruction efforts.”

At Camp Fallujah they were greeted by Marine Maj. Gen.



Ambassador Bill Taylor, Director of Iraq Reconstruction Management Office, left, discusses the trip to Fallujah with Kingdom of the Netherlands Charge d’Affairs, Margriet Struijf, Republic of Turkey Ambassador, Unal Cevikoz, and United Kingdom Political Counselor, and Peter WaterWorth at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Stephen Johnson and his staff for an overview on Fallujah’s progress. Johnson is commanding general of II Marine Expeditionary Force and of Multi-National Force – West.

“Fallujah is a model we hope other Iraqi cities follow,” Johnson said.

Traveling from Camp Fallujah to the Civil Military Operations Center, the delegates had the opportunity to glimpse the resurrection of a city. Though evidence of the battle of Fallujah were everywhere, people had returned, shops were open and streets bustled with life.

At the CMOC the ambassadors were greeted by Iraqi and Marine security and reconstruction experts. The mission of the CMOC is governance, economics and reconstruction, said Marine Lt. Col. Jim Haldeman, CMOC Director. Haldeman briefed the ambassadors on progress in Fallujah.

“Groundwork has been laid for a \$14 million hospital,” he said. “More than 14 health care facilities have opened and are servicing residents in the Fallujah area.”

In addition to health care facilities, Mohammad Hady, an Iraqi engineer from the ministry of municipalities and Kamal Abdul Salam, stressed the importance of reparations payments. Emergency fund compensation payouts for damage valued at 20 percent of individual losses are being paid every day.

“The children go to school safely. The people are very happy for all our efforts,” Amal said.

The positive results of assistance funding were discussed during the briefing the ambassadors received. The

What's up, Doc?

'Charlie Med' keeps Soldiers healthy

Story and photo by Pfc. Dan Balda
4th Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq — Traditionally, the title “doctor” is bestowed on those who have earned an advanced degree, whether it is medical or philosophy; either way, the term is used as a measure of respect.

In much the same way, medics in the military are affectionately known as “doc” because of the respect they are shown by their fellow troops. Medics assigned to Company C, 703rd Forward Support Battalion are no different.

Capt. Matt Farishon, the company commander, entered the medical branch after enlisting in the combat arms during the Cold War.

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

“Charlie Med’s” mission is to provide level two combat health care to units at FOB Falcon. This includes approximately 5,500 Soldiers assigned to the 4th BCT as well as tenant units.

“We have a very young company — only six of us came over the last time,” Farishon said. “We do a lot of training, but there is still that uncertainty that when you are under fire, or you get that first U.S. casualty. They have developed a huge sense of confidence knowing that they have the training and are able to use that training to save lives.”

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

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

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

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

cians, real Army doctors.”

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

“By the time we get the Soldiers here, most everybody that’s over here knows the dangers,” Stubbs said. “We want to mitigate those dangers by keeping them healthy, functioning, keep ’em going and get them home safe.”

Stubbs credits his Soldiers for helping him to succeed at his job. “We have a great staff here including our mental health people, our chaplain and our noncommissioned officers who are keeping the Soldiers’ spirits up and mentoring the younger Soldiers.”

Staff Sgt. Ronald Diaz, attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, is one of those Soldiers mentoring the uninitiated. Diaz is assigned to 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry, a National Guard unit from Modesto, Calif. Like most of the medics assigned to his unit, Diaz works in the medical field as a civilian. The medics assigned to 1/184 support 703rd in many ways. Because the majority of the 1/184 medics are emergency medical technicians back in the states, they have all kinds of experience dealing with the trauma found in a war zone, Diaz said.

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

“When I see a casualty come in and watch my medics take care of him, going through all their steps such as IVs and bandaging wounds, whatever they have to do, calling a helicopter to get them to the [combat support hospital] and then hearing that they have been stabilized, that is the most tremendous feeling of ‘what I’m doing is worthwhile and making a difference,’” Fairschon said. “To me it means a lot. It’s important for me to have my company in the mindset that what you’re doing is for everybody, because there isn’t a single person back in the states who doesn’t want their loved one to come back home.”



Spc. Eric Ingram, a Dallas native and a medic assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, checks an Iraqi Army Soldier's progress after he took shrapnel during a patrol.

Task Force Baghdad medics bring care to remote village

Story and photo by
Sgt. Thomas Benoit
256th Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs

THINEEYAH, Iraq — Armed with school supplies and multivitamins, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers sponsored a medical civil affairs project at Al Nassir School in Thineeyah, Iraq recently.

The team from 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, provided basic medical assistance to children and adults as part of the ongoing effort by Multi-National Forces to help rebuild Iraq.

Once the patients were seen by the physician or physician assistant, they received various gifts or a care package containing toys for the children and dental hygiene products and toiletries. School supplies and treats were freely given out to the delight of young Iraqi children; additionally, several pairs of

shoes were given along with apparel.

If a patient had a diagnosis that was beyond the scope of the physicians, the families were educated via the interpreters on the importance of the abnormality and stressed the importance of seeking an Iraqi physician.

“Multivitamins and medicines were dispensed to combat epilepsy, congenital



Lt. Col. Joseph Dore, from Charlotte, N.C., C Company, 199th Forward Support Battalion, uses his medical skills on a goat, although he is not a trained veterinarian.

abnormalities, and movement disorders in the elderly and post-traumatic palsies. The predominant health problems diagnosed included dermatological, gastrointestinal and upper respiratory ailments,” said Lt. Col. Joseph Dore, the 256th BCT surgeon.

Once the MEDCAP in Thineeyah concluded, the team traveled to a remote nomadic settlement where the doctors treated several patients with the principal of “tailgate medicine” ranging from common cold ailments to redressing the bandages of a broken arm.

The remainder of care packages, clothing and school supplies from Al Nassir School were handed out.

Once care was complete at the settlement, the team was once again on the move to a new family of nomads herding sheep. The family was very healthy and only required basic medical attention.

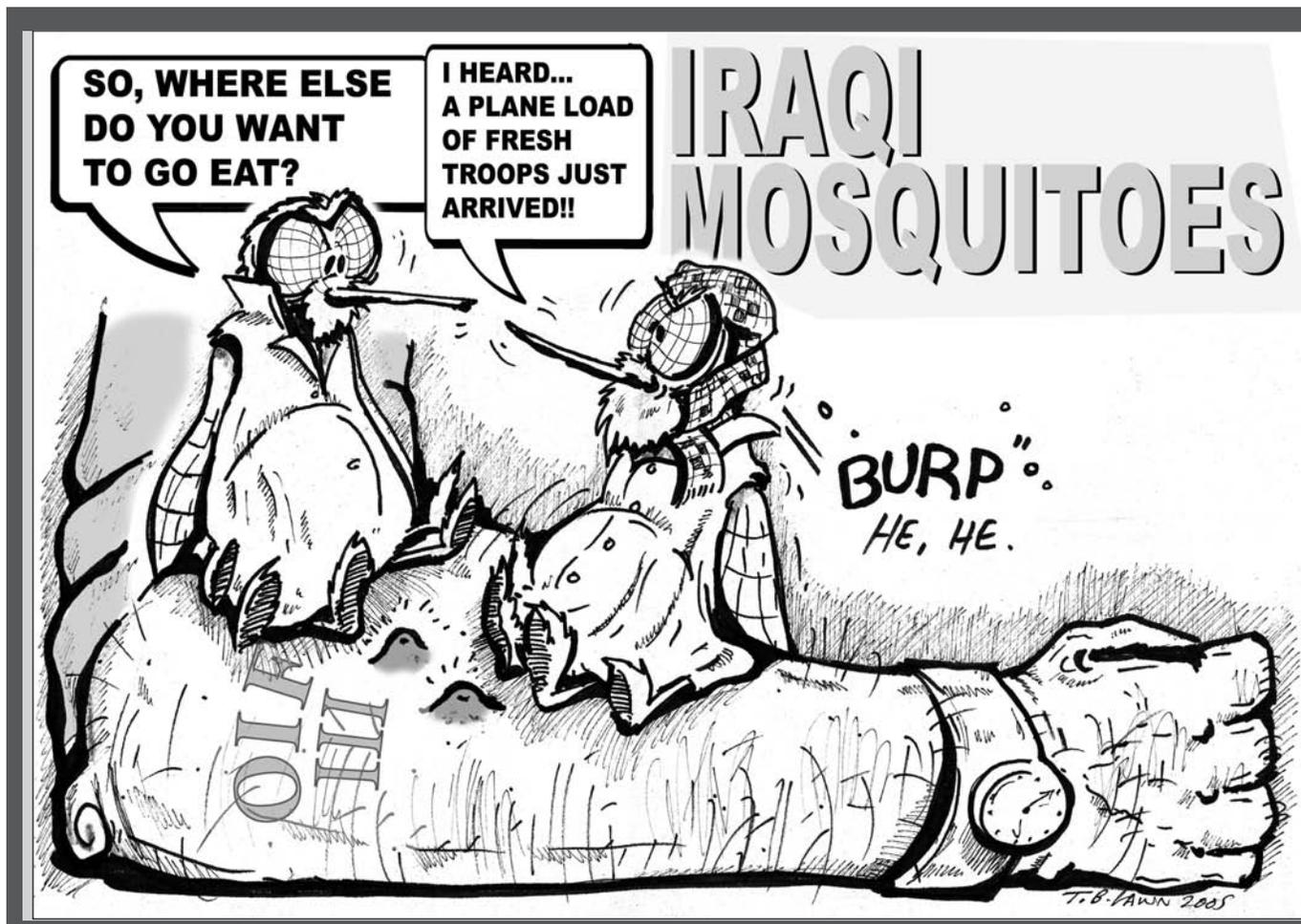


Spc. April Clark, C Co., 199th Forward Support Battalion, 256th Brigade Combat Team, checks the vitals of a patient before the physician arrives during a medical civil affairs project held at Al Nassir school in Thineeyah, Iraq.

Scimitar Slapstick



Art by Chief Warrant Officer Mark J. Hart

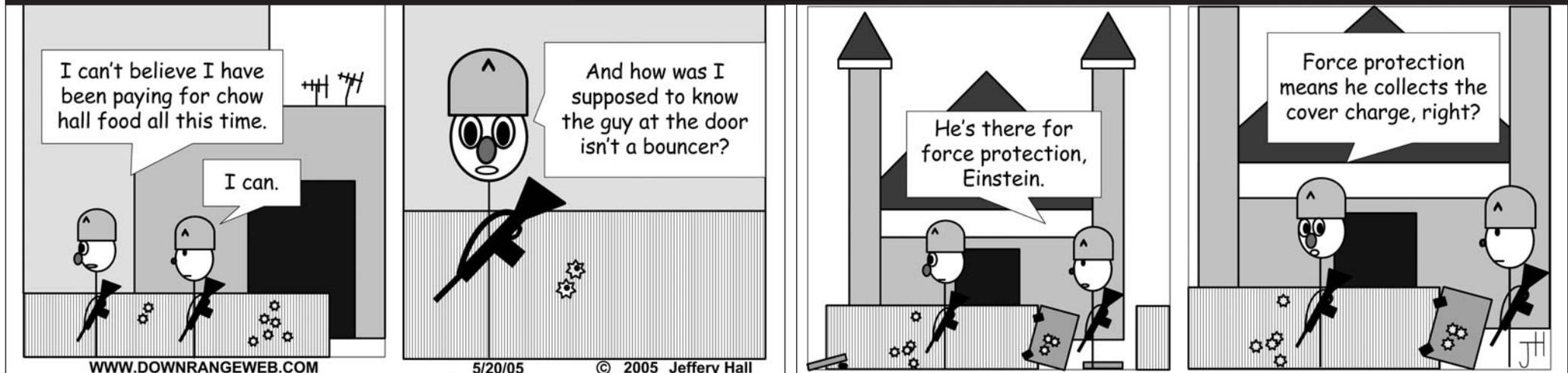


Art by Staff Sgt. Timothy B. Lawn



Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree

Downrange



Art by Jeffery Hall

Marines seek citizenship while serving in Iraq

Story and photos by Cpl. C.J. Yard
2nd Force Service Support Group Public Affairs

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq — Two Marines fighting the Global War on Terrorism are also fighting a personal battle for themselves. That battle is attempting to gain U.S. citizenship while deployed here to Iraq.

“I know I need to get this for when my Marine Corps career is done,” said Lance Cpl. Valdemar Duarte, a truck driver with Company C Motor Pool, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Force Service Support Group. “This will help me get a better job when I get out.”

Duarte and Lance Cpl. Simon Delgado started the process in December after returning from their Revised Combined

Arms Exercise.

“We came back from RCAX, and I wanted to get everything straight,” said Delgado, a Norwalk, Calif., native and heavy equipment operator with C Co. “I didn’t know that Duarte was trying to get his citizenship, too. He just happened to be at [the base legal office] the same time I was.”

The two Marines started their paperwork with help from a representative at the base legal office at Camp Lejeune. The representative also keeps the Marines informed about what else they have to do, according to Duarte.

“We had to go get our fingerprints taken in Charlotte, [N.C.],” said Duarte, a Waterbury, Conn., native who was born in the Cape Verde Islands of Africa. “We just drove down there to get our fingerprints taken and then we had to turn around and drive right back so that we could continue to get ready for the deployment.”

Duarte, who will be the second in his family to become a U.S. citizen, said it’s hard to stay excited about it here because of the operational tempo. Duarte goes on two to three convoys a day with C Co.

Delgado will be the first in his family, originally from Guadalajara, Mexico, to achieve a goal he and his mother have been working toward since their move to America.

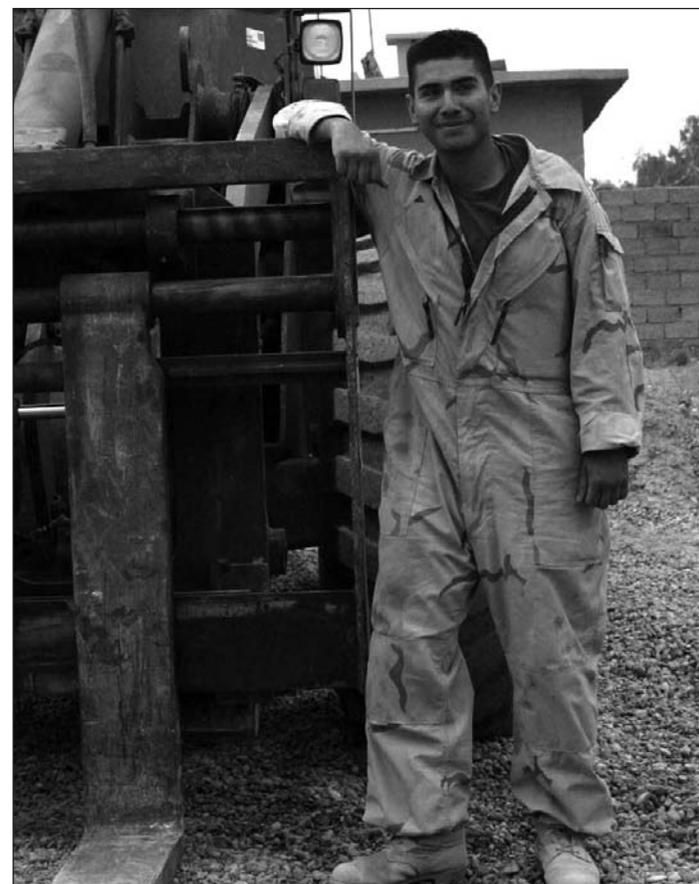
“I had to wait to get my residency,” said Delgado, who was 16 when he finally achieved residency after five years of waiting. “My mom didn’t start the process right away because she wanted me to help. She doesn’t hear very well and only speaks Spanish.”

Delgado’s mom has applied for citizenship but has been denied because of her disability.

“Right now, my mom has hearing aids, but doctors say that over time they won’t even help,” said Delgado. “It kind of makes me angry because we’ve had to spend a lot of money and they still deny her application. The good news, though, is if she waits until she’s 54, she automatically qualifies for citizenship.”

With Delgado trying to gain his citizenship, it makes his mom very happy, and he tries to keep her informed as much as possible.

“It is kind of hard for me to keep in contact with my mom,” Delgado said. “Because the different hours she works, it is hard for catch up with her on the phone. I call my cousin in Mexico, and she talks to my mom and keeps her informed of everything.”



Lance Cpl. Simon Delgado, a Norwalk, Calif., native, born in Guadalajara, Mexico, stands next to a tractor. The heavy equipment operator with C Co. Motor Pool, Combat Logistics Bn. 8, 2nd Force Service Support Group, is attempting to gain citizenship in the United States while deployed to Iraq. If his paperwork is approved he will be flown to Kuwait to be sworn in as a naturalized citizen at the U.S. Embassy.



Lance Cpl. Valdemar Duarte, a truck driver with C Co. Motor Pool, Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Force Service Support Group, takes a break on a recent convoy operation. Duarte, a Waterbury, Conn., native who was born in the Cape Verde Islands of Africa, is attempting to gain U.S. citizenship through the military during his deployment to Iraq.

The Marines in Duarte and Delgado’s chain of command feel that this is a very good goal for them and are proud of them attempting to get their citizenship.

“Those two are good Marines,” said 1st Sgt. William Hines, C Co. first sergeant and Fort Bragg, Calif., native. “If they can fight a war for their country, why can’t they become citizens? This is outstanding and it’s a great goal for them.”

If the Marines are approved for citizenship, they will take the final step in becoming naturalized citizens when they are flown to the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait to be sworn in as the final step of the long process.

Aviation Brigade provides field sanitation training

By Spc. Brian Henretta
3rd Infantry Division Aviation Brigade
Public Affairs

CAMP TAJL, Iraq — Throughout history far more casualties have occurred from disease and non-battle injury than combat-related injuries.

Training and educating Soldiers are the key to preventing diseases such as severe diarrhea, leishmaniasis, malaria and other diseases.

American forces established preventive medicine teams during World War II as a response to malaria control, and this later expanded into vector animal and insect control and preventive medicine. However, the Iraqi Army has never received training on combating preventable sickness until now.

The Aviation Brigade environmental science officer, along with Soldiers from the

Division Support Brigade, 988th Medical Detachment and Air Force Vector Control Team, held a three-day field sanitation course here recently for members of the Iraqi Army.

Capt. Lalini Pillay, Aviation Brigade Environmental Science Officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Aviation Brigade, led the course, which taught 19 senior noncommissioned officers from the Iraqi Army how to prevent diseases and non-battle injuries and why doing so is critical for them to accomplish their mission.

Topics included in the course were personal hygiene, heat and cold injury prevention, insect and animal control, food sanitation, medical threats and waste disposal, said Pillay. Many of these topics are now part of the Iraqi Army basic training program.

The Iraqi NCOs began the course with

many basic preventive measures, said Air Force Staff Sgt. Rafael Serrano, an environmental specialist with the 200/201st Red Horse Unit, who was also an instructor. “Some of the things we taught them were to wash your hands before and after each meal or when you use the latrine to control illnesses such as diarrhea. Diarrhea can severely decrease a unit’s combat effectiveness.”

“The Iraqi Army leaders learned that anything unsanitary can create more problems,” said Serrano. This is a concept known to field sanitation specialists as the “circle of filth.”

“An example of the ‘circle of filth’ is trash left in an area. The trash will attract flies, then mice, rats, snakes, cats and dogs. Sand flies carry diseases like leishmaniasis, and rats and mice carry fleas that can even bring plague. The mice will also attract hungry snakes. Cats and dogs are attracted

to these other animals and can carry rabies. It is all a cycle of uncleanness perpetuating more uncleanness, but it can all be avoided just by keeping the area clean,” Serrano said.

“Training the leadership is vital. Now it’s up to them to enforce these standards to the troops. Enforcing preventive medicine measures and sanitation habits contributes to a healthier, more effective force,” said Pillay.

Pillay said the class went very well and the Iraqis were enthusiastic about learning the material.

“Despite the language barrier, with practice working with our interpreter, it became no problem,” Serrano said.

“It went very well, and we plan on holding this class every few months to train and certify as many of the Soldiers as possible,” said Pillay. “I am optimistic they will use the information wisely, and believe we have made a difference.”

Twin battle captains share another combat experience

Story and photo by Pfc. Ferdinand Thomas
Scimitar Staff

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, BAGHDAD, Iraq — “A coincidence is a higher power trying not to show its face,” said Col. Craig Candelore, speaking his mind about the different wonders in Iraq.

If one asked personnel deployed alongside the Kilbride brothers if their working together and continuous, paralleled, career paths are coincidences, their answers are, “yes.” The answers of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment Soldiers have surprisingly been the opposite, according to the 3rd ACR officials. Both brothers said they have different leadership styles.

In spite of their differences, Capts. Kevin and Bryan Kilbride have many things in common. Both are deployed to the same theatre, and they are assigned to the same regiment, 3rd ACR, in Baghdad. They also have the same job and are identical twins. The Kilbride brothers have stayed close, literally, for all of their 28 years.

“Ways we think, react and do things have always been identical,” said Bryan, a fire support officer. “That didn’t change much until we got married. Now people who are around us on a consistent basis don’t have such a hard time telling us apart, because they get to see us work and they get to see the different styles we have.”

Kevin and Bryan are stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., and that was not a coincidence. “Many couples have lots of trouble getting assignments close to one another,” Bryan said. “Surprisingly one phone call made the assignment happen for us.”

The battle captains for the tactical operation centers at Camp Stryker and Forward Operating Base Falcon said their similar career path decisions started a year before their graduation from high school in Arlington, Mass., where they were born and raised. The twins decided at the end of their junior year to enlist into the Army Reserve. In 1994 following graduation, they completed Advanced Individual Training, and in 1995 they enrolled at the University of Massachusetts.

The brothers graduated in 1999 and two months after they finished college, they received their commissions and joined the active Army. Kevin became an armor officer, and Bryan became a field artillery officer. That separation couldn’t keep these brothers from being together.

Korea was their first duty station as lieutenants, and they longed to be together again. Bryan and Kevin also met up in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom I in July 2003. Each of their wives has been pregnant during their tours to Iraq.

“My daughter was born when we were here in

OIF I, and now his firstborn will be born while we are here this time,” Kevin said.

The brothers are inseparable. “I’m as close to him now as I was when we were children,” Kevin said. “Being married and having children has strengthened our bond.”

When they were children, the twins did most things together including playing their favorite sport, hockey, which they still play weekly at home, they said. “We weren’t superstars. We just went out to have fun,” Kevin said.

“Since we have been at Fort Carson, we play once a week,” Bryan added. “We are a little gentler now. I would have to say my brother is the better player. I don’t know why. I just have to blame my parents for that.”

The Kilbride brothers’ bond and love for each other has shone in their attitudes here, Soldiers serving with them explained.

“They have very positive personalities. They are both very can-do people. When they are faced with an obstacle, they try to find a way around it, and they are professionals in our military,” said Maj. Steve Cichocki, 3rd ACR operations officer.

Attitude reflects leadership as the saying goes, said Maj. James Gallivan, 3rd ACR operations officer. He explained that the battle captains, experience has helped their fellow troops tremendously in accomplishing the mission.

“Kevin and his brother are a remarkable asset to the regiment. Their combat and troop leading experience are significant to the success of our mission,” he said.

When it is time to work, the Kilbride brothers don’t pull any punches, Gallivan said. When it is time to play, they don’t forget the camaraderie and rivalry they have had over the years. Little punches here as well as a joke there help the twins keep that brotherly competition going.

“Do I look up to him as a role model?” Bryan said jokingly about their rivalry as brothers and officers. “Of course not, because I am artillery. I am the king of battle, and he is just an armor officer.”



Capt. Kevin and Bryan Kilbride catch up on old times for a moment. The brothers are deployed with the same unit in the same city in Iraq.

Coalition Corner

... highlighting countries
serving with MNF-Iraq



Mongolia

local name: *Mongol Uls*

Mongolia is located in northern Asia between China and Russia. It is slightly smaller than Alaska. Almost 2.8 million people live here, and the Tugrog is their currency system. Khalkha Mongol is the official language, but Turkic and Russian are also spoken in various regions.

Ulaan Baatar, the country’s capital, is built along the Tuul river and surrounded by majestic-looking mountains, the Tsetseegum, Chingeltei, Songino Khairkhan and Bayansurkh. Known as the “four holy peaks,” these mountains correspond roughly to the four compass points and are popular not only for hiking, but also for their forests, grasslands and beautiful bird and animal life. The Khustain Nuruu Nature Reserve was established in 1993 and is home to the wild takhi horses, also known as Przewalski’s horses. Almost becoming extinct in the 1960s because of poachers, these horses have become symbolic of Mongolia’s diverse and unique wildlife. Perhaps Mongolia’s most gorgeous site is Khövsgöl Nuur, an alpine lake with water pure enough to drink. This lake, the deepest lake in central Asia, is surrounded by dozens of mountains, pine forests and meadows and is sacred to local Mongolians.

The Mongolian diet is based heavily on dairy products, lamb and mutton. Roast lamb is perhaps the most popular food and is especially served when great celebrations are held or at dinner parties in honor of distinguished guests. Mongolian Fire Pot, which is instant-boiled mutton, is just one way Mongolians prepare this delicacy. Cooked mutton is perhaps the most popular version of this dish, and is prepared for special occasions such as offering sacrifices to gods or ancestors, weddings or celebrating elders’ birthdays. Milk tea is a traditional Mongolian drink and is made by boiling water with brick tea and fresh milk, and some prefer also adding butter, salt or millet as well.

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



References: www.cia.gov, www.chinats.com, www.lonelyplanet.com, <http://us-mongolia.com>, and www.tripadvisor.com.

Coalition Corner is compiled by Sgt. Misha King, assistant editor, scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil.

AF meteorologists critical in mission planning

Story and photos by
Spc. Maria Mengrone
100th Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, BAGHDAD, Iraq — One important factor often overlooked when planning an outdoor event is weather. But when it comes to the Global War on Terrorism, accurate weather predications are key to mission preparation and success.

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

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

The 15th EASOS provides division planners with vital information that impacts most



Staff Sgt. Gerry Q. Thompson, 15th EASOS, uses computer model data to prepare forecasts for mission planning.

aspects of a mission, including weapon systems functionality, troop convoy movements and flight activities. The weather team also generates a five-day forecast, which can be critical to mission planning.

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

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

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

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

“The weather team is essential — we have to have them,” he said. “Everywhere you see aviation, you’re going to see some sort of weather detachment.”

The 15th EASOS covers the 3rd Inf. Div. area of operation in and around Baghdad. Prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom weather data was not accurate. Currently, computer model data is updated twice daily and forecasters theater-wide submit hourly reports allowing more reliable and timely weather updates.

The weather team is put in a unique posi-



Air Force meteorologist Staff Sgt. Gerry Q. Thompson, 15th Expeditionary Air Support Operation Squadron, collects data from a tactical meteorological observation weather satellite system used to measure weather information.

tion, said Staff Sgt. Gerry Q. Thompson, 15th EASOS noncommissioned officer in charge. For the first time, detailed surface-level weather information is being collected and disseminated for worldwide use.

During the upcoming summer months, sandstorms and extreme temperatures are important weather factors that can adversely affect a mission’s success. “We’ve already had our first taste of sandstorms,” Thompson said.

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

advised to remain indoors.

Thompson said sandstorms are especially worrisome because sand and dust seeps into the crevices of equipment and weapon systems, which causes functionality failure if proper precautions are not taken.

The weather team issues weather warnings and advisories up to 3 days before an approaching sandstorm. Advance warning allows leaders to plan convoy movements around the impending severe weather conditions.

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

The months of July and August are the hottest months with an average high of 110, and the extreme high is 123 degrees, Thompson said.

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

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

Little agreed, “The best part of our job is when our forecasts happen as we predicted.”

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

Assessment commemorates Medal of Honor recipient

Story and photo by Spc. Jeremy D. Crisp
Multi-National Corps - Iraq Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, BAGHDAD, Iraq — In remembrance of the Global War on Terrorism’s first Medal of Honor recipient, Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, Soldiers from Camp Victory conducted a battle assessment ride May 4 to the scene of Smith’s last battle.

Members of the 319th Military Intelligence Battalion, 525th MI Brigade, Fort Bragg, N.C., conducted a slide and battlefield presentation to enlighten Soldiers on what took place April 4, 2003, the day Smith lost his life.

Capt. James B. Cogbill, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Service Company, 319th MI, was the orchestrator for the event and said he originally heard about the Smith story before he deployed to Iraq in December.

“Before we came over here, I heard about this guy who lost his life defending a courtyard in Baghdad,” Cogbill said. “I was interested in the story, so I went to the Army Web site to get more information. What I hadn’t realized was the battle was so close to here.”

Cogbill said his battalion runs a noncommissioned officer and officer professional development session each month, and about the time of month the development session came around, so did his idea.

“I asked our battalion commander if we could do our NCO and officer professional development on the Paul R. Smith courtyard battle,” Cogbill said. “I got the go-ahead and was able to get Smith’s platoon leader, Capt. (then 2nd

Lt.) Brian Borkowski on the phone.

“He was very excited about helping and said he was very glad that we are keeping the memory of such a great NCO alive, and I told him we were glad to do it,” Cogbill said.

Part of Cogbill’s presentation was a visual representation taken from www.army.mil and the *St. Petersburg Times* site, www.sptimes.com. The Web sites displayed a virtual battlefield with detailed information that reconstructed the events that occurred that day. Along with information from Borkowski, Cogbill was able to demonstrate these events at the battlefield.

Located 250 meters from the 319th headquarters, the courtyard and surrounding environment has changed little. Bullet holes adorn the tower where Smith unloaded many of the over 300 .50-caliber rounds he fired from atop an M113 Armored Personnel Carrier. Unspent, corroding rounds and a metal canteen are some of the battle-

field relics that still lay strewn about the area.

Soldiers were able to get inside the tower to get a bird’s eye view of the battlefield and stand at the remains of the gate where Pfc. Thomas Ketchum, Pvt. James Martens and Sgt. Joshua Henry first saw Iraqi soldiers streaming in from the east.

Cogbill invited Soldiers to climb up on the crumbled remains of the courtyard wall, which gave Soldiers a view of the highway heading eastbound into Baghdad. This was where Smith and the Soldiers of 2nd platoon, Company B, 11th Engineer Battalion, Fort Stewart, Ga., entered the courtyard.

At this vantage point, Soldiers could get a visual layout of where troops and equipment were during the battle. Cogbill explained the importance of the battle at the end of his presentation and answered questions the troops had.

“It is important that we take whatever lessons we can from our military past,” Cogbill said. “It is important that we learn from Sgt. First Class Paul R. Smith. It’s critical for Soldiers to be able to see and have described to them what heroism really is and what it looks like.”

Staff Sgt. Quintana J. Hankins, maintenance platoon sergeant, HHSC, 319th MI Bn., was a participant at the presentation, and she said she relished the opportunity to be able to get to out and see the battlefield first hand.

“I had no idea that this had taken place here,” Hankins said. “We need to be reminded how things have changed since 2003, and to remind us that a lot of people have lost their lives out here.”



Capt. James B. Cogbill stands at the remains of the gate where Soldiers faced off with Iraq Soldiers during the battle that killed Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith.