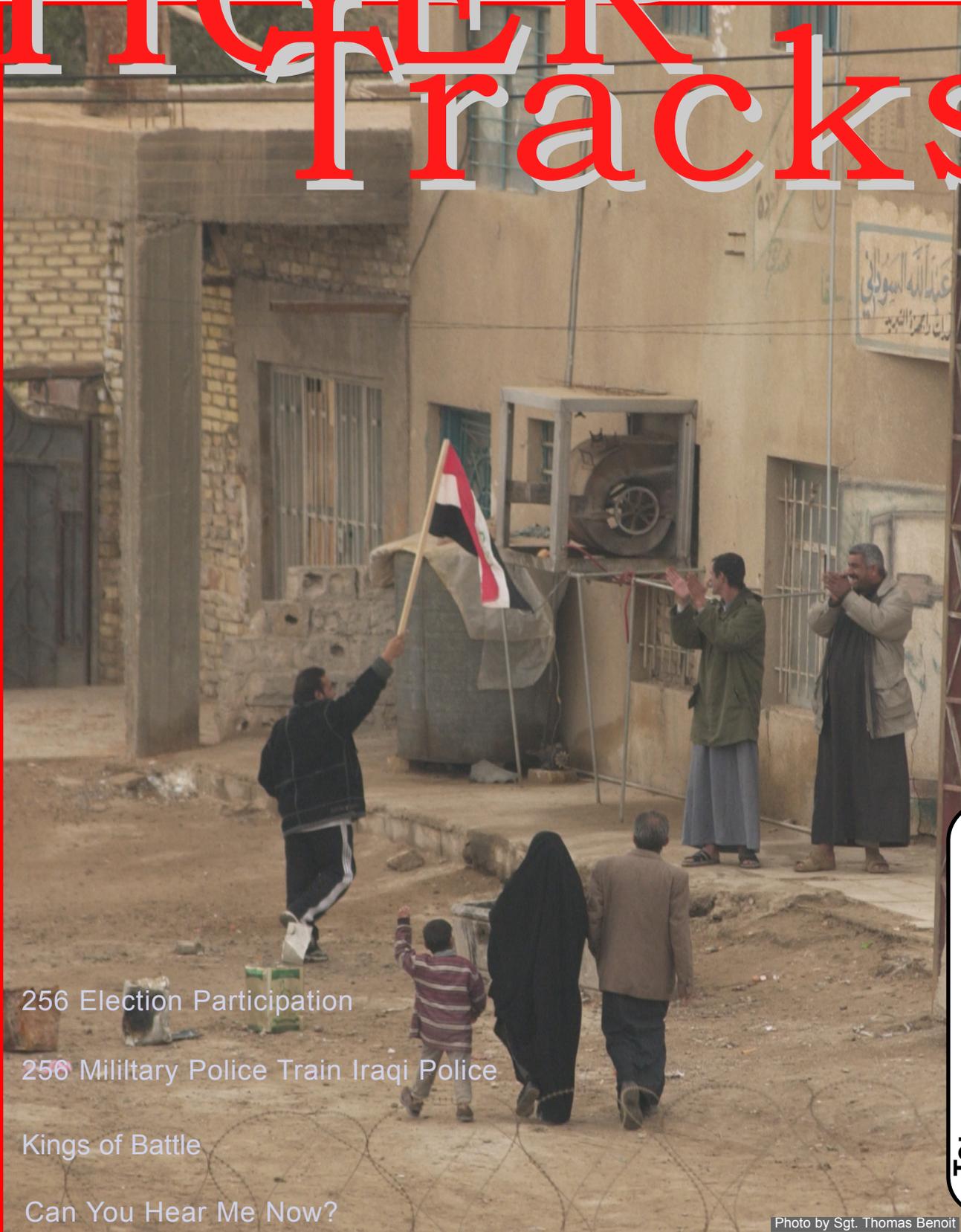


TIGER Tracks



256 Election Participation

256 Military Police Train Iraqi Police

Kings of Battle

Can You Hear Me Now?

Photo by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

To:

FREE MAIL

256th Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs Office

Please forward to your loved ones...Seal with tape or staples

To the Families and Troops

BG John Basilica, Jr.
256 BCT Commander



In the last edition of the Tiger Tracks, I stated that in this edition I would be able to announce that free and fair elections had been held in Iraq.

Well, few would have expected just how successful those elections would be. The final results of the election exceeded even the most optimistic of predictions.

In baseball parlance, it was a total shutout. The insurgents scattered a few hits out there and left a few men on base, but they never even came close to scoring any runs. Our partners, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) performed with courage, determination and patri-

otism. And the people of Iraq responded by the millions to defy the threats of intimidation and to vote for their self determination and freedom. It was a historic moment and the 256 BCT played a critical role in the outcome.

All of the many grueling hours of combat patrolling, the countless attacks, the cordon and searches, the caches discovered, and the insurgents killed and detained produced conditions which enabled the Iraqi elections to be such an overwhelming success. The 256 BCT has paid a high price for this success. Sadly, we again mourn the loss of three more superb Tiger soldiers. The magnitude of their sacrifice and the significance of their contributions cannot be over stated. My only hope is for the families of all the Tiger soldiers that have made the ultimate sacrifice, that they would find some solace in seeing on TV the enormity of their contribution and that they have the eternal gratitude of the Iraqi people. I could not be more proud of the Brigade. Your professionalism and proficiency have changed Iraq forever. America is safer today as a result of your selfless service.

Soldiers if the Tiger Brigade,

I am proud of each one of you, and the outstanding job that you all carried out during the elections. As I traveled inside the areas of operation, I saw Soldiers putting in long and hard days to prepare for election day, and it was all worth it to see the people of Iraq vote for their freedom.

CSM James Mays
256 BCT Sergeant Major



There were numerous families carrying Iraq's national flag, claiming their independence as they walked down the streets. They waved their flags and gave a thumbs up the to

our Soldiers as they passed by.

I continue to see the spirit of freedom in the streets of Iraq, and it is changing the way the Iraqi people act towards us. It is definitely a big step to freedom for the nation of Iraq. That is why I want to thank you for all your hard work and sacrifice, because without you the elections would have not been a success. Thank you and keep up the good work.

The Tiger Tracks is a publication of the 256th Brigade Public Affairs Office. This Soldier and Family Support Group newsletter contains official information and complies with the provisions of AR 360-81 and AR 25-51. Questions or concerns can be directed to the editor at taysha.deaton@us.army.mil.
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They Showed Up

Working Together for
Democracy

**By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT Staff Writer**

Medics showed up. Military Police showed up. Iraqis showed up. But most importantly, insurgents did not.

They said it couldn't be done. However, on January 30, 2005, the world watched in anticipation as the victims of Sadaam Hussein's reign of torture were able to speak their minds democratically for the first time in the history of their country. It was apparent on this day that nothing was going to stop them.

"In the area where we were, a rocket attack came in and hit in the middle of the town. It wounded some civilians, but the people kept coming. They kept coming and going to the polling places and were not going to be intimidated."

Col. Ronald Johnson, from New Orleans, La., Deputy Brigade Commander for the 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), had a front row seat for history in the making. He said that the success that day was not only that there were no major catastrophes, but also that Iraq's own security forces were the reason for it.

American Forces would have been a larger target and would have put

more danger into the elections, so the Iraqi security forces had to protect themselves.

The Americans' role was to be on standby backstage in case anything got too out of hand. Over the past several months, members of the 256th BCT Military Police

"I'm 67 years old and this is the first time in 67 years that I've had freedom..."

--A Grateful Iraqi Man

(MP) Platoon have worked diligently to train the Iraqi Police Corps specifically for Election Day. They have spent countless hours molding, shaping, and refining the skills that enabled the IP's to protect their homeland on the most crucial day in the country's history. Though, in the beginning it didn't look too promising.

"When we first went to Saba Al Boor the IP's were reluctant to work with us at all," said Johnson, "they didn't even want to patrol their own town."

When Sadaam Hussein was in office the IP's job was no different than it is

now, but their lives were always on the line, not only from the evil that they were trying to clear from the area, but also, from the evil of Hussein.

If they ended up arresting or detaining someone who meant anything to him, there were severe consequences and

repercussions. In addition to fearing for their own well-being on the job, they also had to deal with the public, who had little respect for the officer corps, since Hussein really controlled what they did.

It's not surprising that when the 256th moved in, they were still shocked and shaken and weren't very willing to participate. There was also the issue of the basic necessities to do the job.

According to Johnson, the IP's were under equipped and under trained, and most of them didn't even show up for work on some days. That's where the 256th

came in. For the past three months, the MP's have taken on the task of teaching the IP's everything that they know.

They have worked to get them ammunition, weapons, body armor, and more than that, have given their time to train them so that they can effectively do their jobs.

Staff Sgt. David Billings and Staff Sgt. Kyle Richard of the 256th MP Platoon were given the singular duty of organizing the training schedule and content.

The Lafayette, La. Soldiers are co-team leaders who each took on a police station to prepare for the day of the election. In the months prior to the event the MP's worked with them on honing their skills and making sure that they understood all techniques and procedures.

They coached them on individual searches, pat downs, vehicle searches, and then actually took them out on missions to test what they had learned.

The only way to ensure that the training was paying off was to put the IP's into real life situations.

According to the trainers, the exercises helped to bring the IP's to where they are now, as far as the success of the

election is concerned. A week before Election Day, the MP's moved into the police station to take over operations so that the IP's could work out their plan of action for the big day.

patrolled around in the back of a pickup truck, and every time a gun shot rang out they all jumped out and just began chasing after the bad guy to take him out."

2nd Lt. Shaun

Joyce says that he is glad to have been a part of this process.

"It felt good to say that you were a part of the first electoral process in Iraq," said Joyce, "to get to see the Iraqi peo-

ple thought should happen to Sadaam.

"I told him that it was up to the Iraqi court and the Iraqi people and I asked him what he thought."

Joyce says that the man almost instinctively looked over his shoulder to see who was watching him. "I told him that he could say whatever he wanted now."

According to Joyce the man seemed relieved just to be able to speak his mind about the bad things that the former ruler of the country had done to the people, and also, about what he felt should happen to him.

"On this day, it seemed like everyone was happy just knowing that their

It was questionable as to how many would be there, but the Soldiers were pleased to see that almost every last one of the Iraqi Force showed up.

That was the first step to victory. In the days leading up to the election the IP's intercepted many situations that could have ended in devastation.

"I think that the seven days that we were out there they (the IP's) ended up bringing in five or

six suspected Anti-Iraqi Forces who were shooting at a polling site, mortaring, and they also found weapons caches," said Richard.

The interaction between the 256th Military Police and the Iraqi National Guard has been minimal to date, but that didn't stop them from liking what they saw.

"It was amazing watching these guys work," said Richard, "I looked at them like they were storming the beaches at Normandy. They

Joyce from Albany, N.Y., and of E Trp. 101 Cav. was responsible for escorting the ballots to the polling sites in his area. When he showed up at the locations there was security set up via the ING and IP.

Some seemed a little afraid after the ballots had been unloaded, figuring that the threat level had just increased since the ballots had been dropped off. But once everything was complete the process seemed to run smoothly.

ple really show such tremendous courage against such overwhelming odds, I don't know that the voter turnout in the United States would be that high if someone was threatening to blow up all of the polling sites."

In spite of the obvious risks, Joyce says that everyone that they saw was eager to get out and vote and let their voices be heard. He recalls a conversation with an elderly man where the man asked him what the Americans

voices were being heard," said Joyce.

Spc. James Montesano from Eastberne, N.Y., of D Co. 101 Cav. said that he'll never forget the gratitude that the Iraqi people showed him and his fellow Soldiers on January 30th. The Soldiers weren't supposed to allow anyone near them, but Montesano says that some people wanted to thank them so badly that there was just no stopping them.

"One older man



Staff Sgt. David Billings of the 256th Brigade Combat Team Military Police Platoon instructs an Iraqi Police Officer on proper weapon techniques. The MPs were preparing the IPs for Election Day.

went up to my best friend and told him, 'I'm 67 years old and this is the first time in 67 years that I've had freedom' this is amazing to me," said Montesano, "He came back a little while later with some sodas because he wanted to make it easier for us to be out there."

Montesano says that sometimes he and his friends get bogged down by all of the negative stories that the media reports about the war effort in Iraq, but on days like this, he realizes that they know that they're doing a good thing.

According to him, not even the possibility of getting caught in an ambush again could take away the feeling that he has about Election Day.

In December, he and his platoon were surprised by the largest ambush and fire fight since the 256th has arrived in Baghdad. Montesano says that the bullets were flying at them so fiercely that it looked like glowing orange rain falling down around them.

His vehicle and another died in the duration of the incident and they were pushed out of the kill zone by Sgt. David Bernal, who repeatedly returned to face death in order to save his friends. As a result, Bernal was

awarded a Bronze Star for Valor.

Montesano admits that he never wants to go through that again, but he can see the reason that they're here and he knows that it didn't happen in vain.

Capt. Mark Carbo, from Alexandria, La. is a physician's assistant with Charlie Med. 199th who was in the area for medical assistance on Election Day.

Though the circumstances were anticipated to be much worse, Carbo says that he treated a number of injuries.

"We had a lot of shrapnel wounds from blasts that we treated right on site," said Carbo.

He said that they cleaned them up, gave them some salve for their wounds, and sent them on their way. He does recall one particular incident that actually built a bridge between the American and Iraqi medical community.

He was visiting the Saba Al Boor clinic, which incidentally, the 1088th Engineer Battalion of the 256th BCT has just completed as an expansion project.

As he was speaking with the doctor on duty, a pickup truck pulled in very fast and was carrying all ING soldiers. He says that a number of them were

wounded from shrapnel from an improvised explosive device (IED). Instinctively, Carbo jumped in and began doing his job.

"Before I knew it I just fell right in and was helping the other physician there," said Carbo, "he didn't speak English and I didn't speak Arabic, but it worked and we were able to communicate."

Carbo says that Charlie Med now has an opening to go back to the clinic and help any time.

There are many successes to be chronicled on this historical day, like the Iraqi security forces showing up, stepping up, and protecting their people. In the end they seemed to have won their respect which they never really had due to Sadaam Hussein's rule.

This, perhaps, is the biggest triumph of all, according to Staff Sgt. Billings.

"I think that the Iraqi public now likes and thanks the IP officers because of their bravery at the polling sites," he said, "for seven days prior to the election they never left the station just to make sure that they were prepared to protect their people."

The course of this country seems to be changing and it's because of Soldiers,

IP's, ING's, and the Iraqi people themselves that Election Day was a success. According to those who witnessed the events, the locals seem to have found a new confidence in themselves and a patriotism in their country that was never more present.

Throughout the time that the U.S. Armed Forces have been in Iraq, the people of the country have waved American flags when the Soldiers have passed by, but on this day, they waved their own. As Billings says, they have found pride and respect in themselves and in their forces, and that's a major step to winning the war on terror.

"The police officers are out there doing their jobs now, keeping the bad guys off of the streets," he said, "and that's what police officers do."

As a result of the United States showing up in Iraq, the Iraqi security forces showed up to protect their people on Election Day. And as a result of thousands of Iraqi people showing up to vote, democracy prevailed and the insurgents...well, they were just shown up.

OUR SOLDIERS

A Tribute to Our American Heroes

Some are sons, some are daughters, some are mothers, and some are fathers. In some way, shape or form, everyone who has a relative in the armed forces-that is the norm. Always in our thoughts and in our prayers.

That's the promise we made for the entire time they're over there. As a volunteer group, fund raisers, packing boxes, and writing letters of cheer.

All of this is so natural and rewarding because we do it for our loved one's who are so dear. We are blessed to reside in Louisiana, especially the part of the state known as "Acadiana" All of this support for our soldiers make my heart swell. The sacrifices they make vary from very big to very small. But no matter the sacrifice our soldiers stand tall. Bravery, loyalty to country, family and God, not enough can be said. Please pray for them each and every night when you go and lay in your bed. God is good, God is fair. Remember he'll always be there.

Forget not the sacrifice that our soldier's make. For we don't know which ones God may decide to take. Please, let us never take any of them for granted, For each one are God's miracle seeds he has planted. Hold on to your soldier, God, Family and Friends.

All of this faith will see us to the end. We love our soldier as do you, we're Oh! So Proud! If someone should ask about them, praise them loud. Our soldiers must know that each and every day.

We carry them in our hearts, we miss them and we pray. Please cherish all the good memories, they will make you glad! Try not to get caught up in the negative thoughts, they will only make you sad.

To feel sadness, loneliness in a room full of people is normal, I would say. Keep your family, faith, and friends close by-they will help carry you all the way.

Because of them we're at home enjoying our freedom both me and you. Let us do all we can to keep their morale strong. For where they are right now is where they belong. God knew a long time ago as soldiers to a foreign land they would go. They all left with their heads held high, their proudness and bravery, no one can deny. To a foreign land to defend a people they don't even know, they were willing to go. If they had any doubts, they were to proud to let it show.

Our baby girl is serving along side of your soldier. When they return they will all have changed, they'll feel much older. Our patience, love and understanding we will give. For because of them we enjoy the life style that we live.

American's please remember the soldier's task they have in hand. Pray God sends back to us every woman and man.

Written By: AJ Olivier Proud Father of CPL Brittani Olivier, C Co. 199, 11/10/04

The Anatomy of the Artillery

1/141 Goes Boom!

**By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT Staff Writer**

It has been said that the "King of Battle," also known as the field artillery, is made up of many parts. The Fire Support Teams (FIST) are considered the "eyes," the Fire Direction Center (FDC) is the "brains," and the Gun Crew are the "muscles." It takes all of these pieces working together to make a mission successful, and the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery are above and beyond the rest when it comes to their job performance.

The history of the New Orleans unit is a long and distinguished one that dates back all the way to September 7, 1838. Beginning as the Washington Artillery, the 1/141st FA is the oldest militia unit in the State of Louisiana, as well as the oldest



Spc. Ronald Webre cleans out the weapon prior to the first combat mission for the field artillery since arriving in Baghdad.

Field Brigade. Artillery Battalion outside of the original thirteen colonies. There is obviously a colorful history that comes with the 1/141.

Still considered the Washington Artillery, the servicemen of the battalion served under Zachary Taylor in the Mexican War, both as infantry and artillery. During the span of the Civil War they were involved in over 60 bat-

tles, including Shiloh, First Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg.

In 1917 the Washington Artillery was redesignated as the 1/141st Field Artillery Regiment and in 1979 was assigned to the 256th Infantry

Today they are joined in the fight against the terrorists of the United States and Iraq, and are playing a vital role in making the lives of the Iraqi people better.

The process of the artillery missions runs like a well oiled machine when the steps are accurately executed, and the 1/141 has a glowing reputation for accuracy.

Maj. Harry "Hank"

Pezold is the Fire Support Officer (FSO) for the 256th Brigade Combat Team (BCT), and says that the mechanics of field artillery are an exact science of meteorology and accurate computational data. Everything has to be taken into consideration when setting up a target, from the speed of the round going downrange to the rotation of the Earth on its axis.

"Because of where you're positioned on Earth you're going to have some type of correction for some reason," he said, "it's stuff that you can't measure like temperature or the gun's location on the globe."

The three main elements of the field artillery are the Fire Support Team, the Fire Direction Center, and the gun crew and there are five

requirements of accurate and predictive fires:

- 1.Target Location**
- 2.Gun Location (firing unit location)**
- 3.Accurate Computational Data**
- 4.Accurate Meteorological Data**

Continued on page 8...

5. Accurate Ammunition and Weapon Data

The Fire Support's main mission is to work with the maneuver elements, more specifically, the infantry and armored battalions. He determines all target locations and initiates the missions.

The Fire Support is the center of activity and his mission is to synchronize all fires with other assets, such as the Air Force and Army Aviation, as well as indirect artillery fire, if it is needed.

Artillery fire is an indirect fire system, which means that the gun crew does not have physical eyes on the target.

The FO is the only one who actually sees where the round will hit, before and after the fact.

So after the call for fire is initiated by the FO, Headquarters checks the activities to ensure that there are no friendlies in the kill zone. After it is confirmed, the Fire Direction Center (FDC) decides how the target will be engaged.

After the computations and configurations are complete, the personnel on the M109A6 Paladin actually pick

up the 100 pound round, then loads and fires the weapon.

Though they cannot see the target, based on the information that is sent to them by the FDC, they know exactly where the weapon should be aimed.

After the round is sent and the target is engaged, the FO assesses the outcome and determines if the mission was

the same person who is shooting also does the loading and aiming. Artillerymen do not have the luxury of the simple control of a single shooter.

Being well rehearsed, the field artillery provides accurate and timely fires.

The crew in the Paladin is the nuts and bolts that hold the artillery mission together.

Sgt. Cory Brandt from New Orleans, La. has been a member of B Battery, 1/141 FA for ten years and knows the ins and outs of the system.

He says that it's not only the level of damage that intimidates the insurgents, but also the level of noise.

"One round is the equivalent of about seven hand grenades and the kill zone is about fifty meters. It's also psychological because it's so loud, and they think twice after hearing it."

Brandt says that the FDC is equipped with radars that will track incoming rounds, and before that round hits, within seconds he and

his team will receive a mission and get their own round in the air.

Before the insurgent could make it off of the mortar tube or away from the rocket launcher, he has fire coming right back at him.

"It doesn't take much for them to realize that we're going to shoot back," said Brandt.



Sgt. Cory Brandt loads another round, the second of five, to send downrange.

a success. Pezold admits that the process of an artillery mission is an involved one.

"It's a lot of math, trigonometry and algebra mostly," he said, "it can be difficult because there are so many people involved."

He compared artillery to an M16A2 rifle. When someone is shooting a direct fire

Home Improvements

By Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT Staff Writer

Clinic Expansion

The 1088th Engineering Battalion of the 256th could almost be considered the home improvement warehouse of Baghdad. Over the past couple of



Capt. Jesy Yeates of the 1088th En. Bn. inspects the electrical layout in the clinic.

months the battalion has been actively involved in improving businesses, schools, and even waterlines in the Saba Al Boor area. Their most recent project near completion is a clinic that has gone from offering only one service, to offering a variety of services to the residents in its area. This expansion is thanks, largely, to the supplies provided by American Soldiers. The United States has also funded the project and provided the supplies to make the construction happen, but it is local Iraqis who are doing the work.

Up until now the facility was only equipped for handling immunizations, however, thanks to the 1088th and the 443rd Civil Affairs team, it can now give quality care for several types of ailments.



An Iraqi worker lays down flooring in the brand new living quarters behind the clinic. The rooms will be used for staff who are on call at the facility.

abundance of supplies that will make it able to better serve the people in the area.

“(In the past) the doctors did not have the equipment to run the clinic efficiently. We are supplying them with beds, dental equipment, x-ray machines, computers, printers, IV bag holders, and a list of other

necessities,” said Yeates.

The two units have also collaborated to provide the clinic with two ambulances and a Nissan pickup truck so that they can transport patients to the hospital when necessary, and to pick up supplies from the Ministry of Health for use at the facility.

As a result of the project there will be many more services offered to the people of the area. Once the renovations are complete, the services provided will consist of pediatrics, orthopedics, dental, optometric, and small trauma. The trauma room is also a new expansion. The clinic will then be designated as an urgent care facility and able to perform minor surgeries, such as suturing, for example.



Iraqi workers and clinic staff unload air conditioners as part of an expansion project by the 1088th En. Bn. and the 443rd Civil Affairs team of the 256th BCT.

In addition, the 1088th has facilitated the construction of two buildings behind the clinic that will serve as living quarters for the staff when they are on call.

The head doctor of the clinic expressed his appreciation to Spc. Justin Godfrey from Syracuse, N.Y. and of the 443rd CA team.

“He told me that we are all their brothers because we are helping them and have done a lot of work on their clinic,” Godfrey said, “they can see that we only want to reach out.”

The goal is to build the clinic up to a regional capacity that’s able to handle small traumas, and a little bit of everything. According to Yeates, the goal is well on its way to being accomplished.

“When we first started coming to the clinic there was hardly anyone here. Now there are so many people each time we show up and more people are being cared for than ever before.”

Filing Your Taxes

From Families and
Soldiers

IRS Extends Time to File and Pay Taxes for Soldiers Fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan

By 1Lt. Jason M. Warren
Battle Captain, TF Geronimo
and Leslie Amos, CPA

Soldiers defending our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan can focus on their duties as opposed to filing their income tax returns this tax season. This is because the IRS automatically extends the deadline for filing tax returns, paying taxes, filing refund claims, etc. for U.S. Armed Forces personnel serving in combat zones. The deadline is also extended for U.S. Armed Forces personnel whose service: 1) is in direct support of military operations in a combat zone, and 2) qualifies for special military pay for duty subject to hostile fire or imminent danger.

For qualifying soldiers, the filing deadline is automatically extended for at least 180 days from the last day of qualifying combat zone service or the last day of any continuous qualified hospitalization for injury from the combat zone, plus the number of days the soldier was deployed in the combat zone during the income tax filing season (January 1st through April 15th). For soldiers deployed on or before January 1st, the extension period is 285 days after leaving the combat zone. This deadline is also applicable to spouses of deployed service members serving in a combat zone, even if filing separate returns.

Even though there is an automatic extension available, some may want to file their return earlier to receive any refund that may be due. These returns should be clearly marked "Combat Zone" at the top of the Form 1040 and should also include the date of deployment. If your spouse is unable to sign the return because he/she is serving in a combat zone, and you do not have a power of attorney, you can sign the return for your spouse. To take advantage of this option, you must attach a signed statement to your return explaining that your spouse is serving in a combat zone. Although not required, you may also notify the IRS via email of the service member's status at combatzone@irs.gov. The email need only include the name, stateside address, date of birth, and date of deployment of the service member. (No social security numbers should be included in the e-mail).

Enlisted members, warrant officers and commissioned warrant officers serving in a combat zone during any part of a month may exclude that entire month's military pay from his/her gross income. This exclusion also applies to military pay earned while hospitalized as a result of wounds, disease or injury incurred in a combat zone. The exclusion amount for commissioned officers (other than a commissioned warrant officer) is limited to the highest rate of enlisted pay, plus special military pay for duty subject to hostile fire and imminent danger. Amounts excluded from gross income are not subject to federal income tax. Military pay attributable to service in a combat zone should not appear in Box 1: "Wages, tips, and other compensation" on the soldier's W-2. If you believe that the military pay exclusion is not accurately reflected on your W-2, you will need to request a corrected Form W-2 from your service branch.

Differential pay or payments made voluntarily by an employer to compensate for the difference between the employee's regular salary and military pay cannot be excluded as combat zone compensation. However, no taxes should be withheld by the employer and the pay should not be reported on the soldier's W-2; rather, differential pay should be reported on Form 1099-MISC, Box 3: "Other Income". The recipient should report this income on Line 21 of Form 1040, "Other Income" and list the type as "Military Differential Pay". Self-employment tax is not due on this income.

Additional information, including frequently asked questions and answers, on combat zone tax provisions is available at www.irs.gov.



Can You Hear Me Now?

By Sgt. Thomas Benoit
256th BCT Public Affairs

Boom, Boom, Boom

It's been several months since the training at Fort Hood. The training pace was set, and it was grueling. With lessons learned, we prepared for battle. The teeth and claws of the fierce war machine "The Fighting Tiger Brigade" were as sharp as ever. With time, harsh weather and long sustained patrol routes even the sharpest weapons in our arsenal become dull. In light of the Iraqi elections, it was time to re-sharpen our tools of destruction. The 256th Brigade Combat Team aided Iraqi Police (IP) and Iraqi National Guard (ING) with security for the election.

down the stairway with the speed of a demon, he exhibits the talents of the 256th BCT. Simultaneously Sgt. Louviere peers around the corner waiting for his squeeze from his teammate to enter into the room so that he can wreak havoc on all

Billings from Duson La., with Headquarters Company 256th Military Police is conducting area security, site security, and searching of personnel with the Iraqi Police whom have recently completed the Police Academy.

Sgt. Bryan Louviere preparing to enter a room during CQC training.



Back at Camp Liberty, Spc. Erin Robicheaux from Welsh, La., and of Headquarters Co. 256th, is preparing to fire her first ever high explosive round from an M109A6 Paladin. History was made the moment Erin pulled the lanyard releasing the roar of 10,000 Tigers. That high explosive round was the first fired in a combat mission for the 256th in support of Operation Iraqi



1st Lt. Brian Hollifield trains the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment on static security.

1st Lt. Brian Hollifield from Central Valley, N.Y., with D/101 Cav Demon Task Force Element, is conducting a course on static security.

those who opposed the free elections, which were held on January 05, 2005.

After close quarter combat rehearsal, 1st Lt. Josh Reich, from Prairieville, La. saddles up and marches to their first observation



Freedom III.

Sgt. Ransonet has Anti-Iraqi Forces within his eye sight.



ducting a course on static security. He hammers A Co., 2/156th a set of razor sharp teeth. As Sgt. Joshua Ransonet team leader, descends



With the aid of the Vipor binoculars Lt. Josh Reich can drop artillery rounds inside a trash can.

point.

Reich "calls for fire" over the fires net to 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery. The 256th has the ability to reach out and touch anyone even if it's over 18 miles away. Area denial is the name of the game. As all this is taking place, Staff Sgt. David

A volley of several rounds sent birds and shrapnel flying into the four winds. A small message to the Anti-Iraqi Force: "Hey, boom, can you hear me now? Boom,boom, how about now?" The paws of the Tiger Brigade are far reaching and can swat down all Anti-Iraqi Force members like flies, whom unfortunately believe they are out of reach inside our area of operations. Erin Robicheaux, now Commando Robicheaux, completed the fire mission with great success. There has been in place, a long standing tradition amongst the artillery Soldiers. The first round any Soldier fires he also has to load the breech with their own ...sorry, can't say; Why?...because it's Victoria's Secret.

Honor the Fallen

*Another Look at the
Combat Patch*

**By Spc. Dustin Bourque
256th BCT Fighting Tigers**

Since May of 2004, one of the most frequently brought up topics of conversation has been about which combat patch the 256th Brigade Combat Team would be allowed to wear. Most of Soldiers were told that they would have the choice between two: either 1st Cavalry Division's or the 3rd Infantry Division's.

I had personally decided that I was going to represent the 3rd ID. We all looked forward to being able to wear something different to show where we been and who we fought with.

When we got to Iraq, it was put out to everyone that because we are a Separate Brigade, we have the honor and privilege of wearing our own patch as our combat patch. Well, just like most Soldiers I didn't agree with this, and said that I wasn't going to wear it because I wanted to feel like I was part of a larger organization.

I continued to have this conversation with a lot of Soldiers until one day someone brought up a very good point to me that made me realize how selfish it was to feel that way.

Our fellow Soldiers of the 256th BCT go out on missions everyday and risk their lives to defend themselves, our country, and the Iraqi people. Some have lost their lives in doing so. Out of honor and respect for them, I feel that we should wear our brigade patch on our combat shoulder to show our fallen comrades that we are proud to be on the same team with them and that the sacrifices that they made will never be forgotten.

We are all here as one team and we need to show everyone else that. We are the 256th BCT Fighting Tigers and we will not be denied. So, I hope after reading this that you will all agree with me and decide to wear your 256th BCT Patch to show your pride. Thank you and God Bless.

256 BCT Families



The Edward's Family. (from left to right). Sgt. Isaac Guillory Aco. 1088th, CSM Paul Edwards of the 1088th En Bn, Staff Sgt. Williams Edwards Aco. 1088th, and Sgt. Joshua Guillory Aco. 1088th are one big family at Camp Victory, Iraq.



Cpt. Christinia T. Capello of HHC. 1088th and Cpt. Henry T. Capello Jr. of C co. 1088th are husband and wife, and have a beautiful girl, Sabrina Capello



Spc. Joe Jeske and Staff Sgt. Ronald Jeske of HHC. 2-156, are father and son here at Camp Victory, Iraq

256 BCT Photo Album

Soldiers at Their Best



After a half century, Iraq's first free election was a positive turn out. Despite terrorist threats, even the future of the country gives U.S. Coalition troops a thumbs up.

Pfc. Harold Sandoval of the 3/156, hands out candy to children during election. In December of 2004, Sandoval received CG Coin from the 1CD Cmdr, MG Peter Chiarelli, for his outstanding performance during a simulated mass casualty exercise held at the Tigerland Dining Facility.



Spc. Troy Trombley of C Co. 1088th En. Bn., provides security for the Fox News team during election day.

The Fox News Team, led by Geraldo Rivera, tells the story of Iraq's election day. Geraldo relinking with the 256th Soldiers after visiting polling site.



The Iraqi Police took control and apprehended anyone who attempted to disrupt Iraq's first step to freedom.

Soldier's Voice

What is your response to the care packages sent by America?

In Their Words

1st Sgt. Wade Duplechin
256 MI Co.

"Thank you for all your support and for the gifts you sent and the ones you will send in the future. We could not be here if not for the support of our family, friends and co-workers that make up the family readiness center. Also thanks to Operation We Care of Acadiana. Everyone enjoyed that."



Sgt. Jonathan Bonano
A Company 1088th Engineer Battalion

"I would like to thank Sarah Runnels and son Nathan for adopting me. I appreciate all the things you've sent me. Also would like to thank Adopt a Soldier, Operation We Care of Acadiana and AnySoldier.com."

Staff Sgt. Jessica Kelly
HHC 256th

"It's catching on like wild fire even after the holidays. Brilliant concept, they should be canonized for what they do. It's a great thing for the Soldiers, especially the ones that don't receive a lot of care packages from home."



Soldier's Voice Cont..

Throughout the
Brigade

What is your response to the care packages sent by America?



Cpt. Shelly Hermes
B/134 Signal Commander

"I just want to say that I am so proud to be a citizen of the state of Minnesota. We've received an out pouring of affection and generosity from the people back home and our soldiers and I appreciate it. We are proud you're helping us serve in the war on terrorism."



Sgt. Chad Potter
E Troop 101st Cav

"We appreciated all the packages for the holidays. It made being away from home a lot better."

How do you feel about being able to witness the Iraqi Elections first-hand?



Pfc. James Hall
HHC 1/69th

"I think that the elections had a very positive turnout and if it continues to go this way, I believe that the Iraqi people will have a great future for themselves, and generations to come."



Pfc. Chris Huff
HHC

199th Forward Support Battalion

"I was happy to see the number of Iraqi people that showed up for the election. It felt good to know that we have helped the nation of Iraq take their first step to becoming a free nation. I am also glad to be part of something that will be in history."

Fallen Soldiers

In Loving Memory

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Ray Reed

Sgt. Christopher James Ramsey

Sgt. Michael Scott Evans

A Soldiers Story

I was that which others did not want to be
I went where others feared to go
And did what others feared to do
I asked nothing from those who gave nothing
And reluctantly accepted the thought of eternal
Loneliness.....Should I fail
I have seen the face of Terror
Felt the stinging cold of fear
And enjoyed the sweet taste of a moments Love
I Have Cried, Pained, and Hoped
But most of all I have lived times
Others would say were best forgotten
At least I am able to say that
I Am Proud of what I was....A Soldier

-Anonymous