

# DISPATCH

Volume 14

May 22, 2005

## Task Force Liberty Soldiers celebrate Mother's Day away from home

Story and photo by Spec. Christopher Connelly,  
42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division Public Affairs

TIKRIT, Iraq - Traditionally, Mother's Day is spent with a quiet dinner, a bouquet of flowers or maybe a special gift of jewelry. This year for Mothers stationed at Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit, it will be spent as no other. Here they are competing in a Basketball tournament, planned specifically in honor of Mother's Day.

It's important to recognize the contributions and the sacrifices being made by the female Soldiers serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 3, especially those who are Mothers, said Sgt. Stefoni Harrell, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 42nd Infantry Division. In order to do this Harrell organized a special basketball tournament and cook-out on May 7 and 8.

"I think it was a great moral boost" said Chief Warrant Officer Renee Linville, 29th AG, Buffalo, New York, who decided to join in when she saw some of her Soldiers signing up for the event. Linville, a mother of two teenagers loves to play sports. "Being one of the oldest players it reminded me of when I was young and playing basketball," said Linville.

Skeptical at first, Harrel was concerned about the reception this event would receive and was pleased to learn that many were interested. The 42nd ID Military Police Company already had an all female Basketball team, named 'the Lady killers', so Harrel helped form the headquarters company team.

"One thing I noticed was the camaraderie between Soldiers that didn't know each other prior to the game," Linville said. Lindville also noticed that some male Soldiers seemed to look at them differently now, "they could not believe how well some of the girls played, it seemed to surprise them," said Linville.

Approximately 50 spectators gathered in the 100 degree heat for the event and were surprised by the newly formed teams. This was evident when Spec. Lucia Rivera, 411 Civil Affairs, Bridgeport Connecticut, came up the court with the focused look of a NBA point guard and took charge. Setting up and passing the ball to a teammate, to have it returned and without hesitation and in perfect form, Rivera jumped into the air, flipping her wrist to send the ball sailing into the air and into the net. "It's a game" was enthusiastically shouted from the crowd.

"I think I am good enough with some practice to be on the same court as guy's, but I like playing with other females that know how to play", said Rivera. "It reminds me of when I played in High school."

The tournament began on Saturday with the Lady Killers coming away with the victory. A second game on Sunday was won by the newly created 42<sup>nd</sup> ID headquarters team. "I didn't think we had a chance after what happened on the first day" said Spec. Elizabeth Kirkby, from Watervliet, New York, who is assigned to the 42nd ID, Division Surgeons office.

With the headquarters team coming from behind to win the second game, a doubleheader was played that evening to decide the tournament championship. This time the Lady Killers were true to their name and came out with guns loaded. In no time at all, it was 13 to 0, but the initial deficit didn't stop the

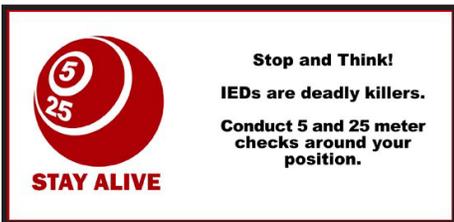
HHC, 42nd ID players from giving it their best. When all was said and done, the Lady Killers came up victorious, and with grace the headquarters co. players lined up to congratulate the winners.

Both teams were presented with medals and team photos. After the game, the players enjoyed a barbecue with the assistance of the dining facility, inviting everyone including the fans.

The Mother's Day weekend was a special event and one that will be remembered for a very long time. According to Kirkby, they played cards and shared stories. By time the barbecue ended, the players had forged friendships and set a goal to play basketball together at-least once a month for the rest of the tour.



Spec. Lucia Rivera, 411 Civil Affairs, Bridgeport Conn., joins 42nd Infantry Division Soldiers during a Mother's Day basketball tournament at FOB Danger, Tikrit, Iraq.



## Army campaign focuses on Soldier IED awareness

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Improvised explosive devices are the number one killers of America's sons and daughters serving in Iraq, and the Joint IED Defeat Task Force at Camp Victory is kicking off an information campaign May 25 in an effort to increase IED awareness and save lives.

The "5-and-25" campaign, as it is called, is designed to increase IED awareness and reduce the effectiveness of the mountain of makeshift bombs being produced by insurgents. Officials say the deceptive devices account for more than half of the coalition deaths that have occurred since the start of the Iraq war in March 2003.

Efforts to date have reduced the IED casualty rate by more than 45 percent during the period of April 2004 through February 2005 – but that is not seen as enough.

"IEDs are our number one killers here," said Eric Eglund, who works at the Iraq headquarters of Joint IED Defeat Task Force at Camp Victory. The task force is responsible for developing innovative ways to rid the country of IEDs.

"The IED is one of the most dangerous threats to coalition forces," said Royal Australian Air Force Group Capt. David Stockdale, deputy chair of the IED Working Group at Multi-National Corps-Iraq. "To mitigate their effects, we wanted to put together an information campaign that would make the IED reaction drill a normal part of daily activities for the coalition forces."

Eglund said several different counter-IED organizations were already delivering good messages and possible solutions out there, but with no real emphasis or impact to the troops who needed it the most. "It wasn't as good as it could be. Some channels just naturally don't flow as well as others," he said.

The working group, deputy-chaired by Stockdale, represents a cross-section of coalition forces formed as a result of this issue.

The group's solution for getting vital information to the forces required three objectives: First, ensure information gets to those troops who need it most; second, develop an effective counter-IED organization that can take the fight to the enemy; third, produce pinpointed products from one organization which can be approved and delivered in a timely fashion.

"IEDs can be any time, anywhere, any shape; the trends change," Stockdale said. "The aim is to get the message to the field. It's dangerous out there."

Task force members agreed they needed some common thread to tie all the messages together – like a logo.

"The [designers] suggested we needed to have [a logo] that everybody recognizes," said Lt. Col. Theodore Martin, field team leader, Joint IED Defeat Task Force-Iraq. "5-and-25" became that logo. "The most important thing coalition forces can accomplish is situational awareness when they're outside the wire; it is the most basic [tactic] that you have to master."

"This seemed appropriate because 5-and-25 means awareness," said Master Sgt. William Johnson, one of three designers. "5-and-25 means checking the area around you for a threat. Every time you stop outside a secure area, you always should check. Not checking could get you killed."

More specifically, 5-and-25 requires that troops look for anything out of the ordinary within a five-meter radius of their vehicles, according to counter-IED policies. If halted long enough, forces should then exit their vehicles and conduct a 25-meter sweep around their position. Halting for as little as four minutes can prove costly.

"Evidence shows that [many] Soldiers, who are at a short halt [for as little as] four to five minutes, are getting hit by IEDs near their vehicles," Martin said.

"There's no predicting exactly when, where or how you're going to meet an IED when you're driving around," Stockdale said. "Practicing those basic methods and regularly using them significantly enhances your chances of survival."

## New filtration system provides clean water for Task Force Liberty Soldiers

Story and Photos by Sgt. Jeffrey Lucas,  
145<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq-Cleaner shower water is now available for 116<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Gains Mills thanks to a state-of-the-art water purification system recently installed there.

In the last several weeks, the 145<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion has set up a Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit (ROWPU) to bolster the water capability at the FOB. Additionally, the water holding tanks have been thoroughly cleaned.

Before the ROWPU was delivered to FOB Gains Mills, soldiers had no water purification system. The soldiers had bottled water to drink, but showers were a different issue. According to system installers, unsanitary shower conditions will no longer be an issue for soldiers

"The water issue should be solved permanently," commented 2nd Lt. Jacob Mong, Platoon Leader for the Water, Ammo, and Petroleum Section. "The water we are providing (the soldiers) is cleaner than the bottled water they are drinking."

According to Mong, the ROWPU system is effective but it is a temporary measure that should eventually be replaced with a more permanent system.

"We are currently working on getting the pipeline system working, one does exist on the FOB, but it is not necessarily clean," he said.

The increased size of the ROWPU's 600-gallon-per-hour units will provide the FOB with a more secure water source. The ROWPU comes on a trailer with a generator and two large 10,000 gallon tanks. The system is designed to include all necessary equipment, supplies and chemicals to make it effective wherever it is needed.

"You just hook it up and take it were you want," said Mong.

The system was planned to be set up initially in only two weeks, but logistical and weather-related issues delayed the completion of the project for nearly two

months. The recent rains may have been good for the Iraqi farmers, but also made the soil too soggy and muddy for placement of the ROWPU system.

Another big issue was preparing the installation site. Sandbags and large sand-filled HESCO barriers had to be placed around the area where the ROWPU was to operate.

Installation of the system will reduce the need for water to be trucked to FOB Gains-Mills. This translates to fewer soldiers on the road in convoys.

"Our water section was trucking over 3000 gallons of water out to FOB Gains Mills every week. Now, I have no people from my water section on the road," said Mong. "Since it only takes three people to run the system, they work on a rotation system, only going out to the FOB to rotate in or out."

Once the logistics were worked out for support of the ROWPU maintenance team, Mong was able to arrange so that one soldier comes back to FOB Warrior every other week, providing them with an opportunity to enjoy the amenities of FOB Warrior on a regular basis.

Providing for the needs of deployed soldiers is one way the 145<sup>th</sup> Support Battalion is helping in the success of operations of the 116<sup>th</sup> BCT in the region.



Staff Sgt. Richard Martinez downloads the Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit that will produce clean shower water to service Forward Operating Base Gaines-Mills.

## AVIATION UNIT COMPLETES 5000 COMBAT FLYING HOURS



Fire Department vehicles at Forward Operating Base Speicher, Tikrit, Iraq, spray water on taxiing UH-60 aircraft to commemorate the successful completion of 5,000 flying hours in a combat theater for the 1-150<sup>th</sup> General Support Aviation Battalion, Trenton, New Jersey. The unit has been serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since late 2004.

The pilots and crew chiefs involved in this historic event were Maj. Daniel Dreher, Chief Warrant Officer Jeffrey Angle, Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Parsons, Warrant Officer Guenivere McCulla, Sgt. Zbigniew Mroczkowski, Sgt. Stephen Army, Spec. Anthony Carro, and Spec. Martina Balaburska.

Photo courtesy of 1-150<sup>th</sup> GSAB