

The Marne Express

"Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork"

Volume 2, Issue 15

Serving the Soldiers of Task Force Baghdad

September 11, 2005

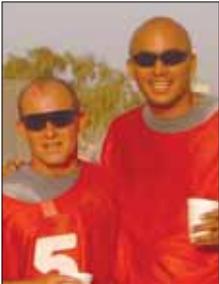
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MEDCAPS
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Staff Sgt. John R. Rozean

1st Lt. Brandon Shelley, left, from Rome, Ga., and Maj. Chad Sullivan, of New Hampshire, both of 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, talk with local Iraqi children Aug. 20 in the Khadamiyah district north of Baghdad as part of an orientation convoy with their 256th Brigade Combat Team counterparts.

1st Bde., 10th Mtn. Div. arrives in Iraq

Pvt. Jason Jordan
1/10 Inf PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – After several days of training and acclimatization in Kuwait, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Soldiers began arriving in Iraq last week.

The Soldiers, from Fort Drum, N.Y., have been setting up equipment and preparing their operation centers for the mission that lies ahead.

"Our initial goal is to receive all incoming flights with positive accountability of Soldiers and equipment," said 2nd Lt. Laron

Somerville, 1/10 Mtn. assistant personnel officer, from Lithonia, Ga. "As far as the future, we expect to move smoothly into a steady state operation as we relieve in place our counterparts and continue the mission with the same hard work and dedication of those before us."

The immediate task ahead for the 1st BCT Soldiers is to shadow their counterparts from the 256th Brigade Combat Team of the Louisiana National Guard and learn how they have conducted operations in Baghdad

See 1/10 MTN., page 19



Spc. David Kobi

Sgt. 1st Class Vester Bland, a civil affairs soldier assigned to 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, visits with an Iraqi Public Order Brigade Soldier and a happy recipient of a new Beanie Baby during a humanitarian assistance drop to the residents of Horajeb as part of Operation Thunder Goodwill Aug. 17.

Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers spread goodwill, smiles in Horajeb

Spc. Christopher Mallard
425th Civil Affairs Bn.

BAGHDAD – As part of a U.S. and Iraqi stability and support operation, several truck loads of humanitarian assistance rolled out from a forward operating base in southern Baghdad to provide Horajeb residents with basic food items, medical supplies, and recreational items Aug. 17.

Two transport trucks left before dawn, as a 29-vehicle convoy passed through the southernmost limit of the Al Rashid district, making its way along streets known as Toyota, Chicken and Bulls that the U.S. Army has named to help guide American Soldiers through the often sign-less streets they've become so familiar with.

The convoy consisted of Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment; 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team; and Iraqi forces from 1st Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade.

"Expect to see the Army increasingly hand authority and

See GOODWILL, page 19

Marne 7 Sends

Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Grant
TF Baghdad command sergeant major

"I will always place the mission first."

How do we live or model this phrase from the Soldier's Creed?

Is this important or are they simply words we throw around because they represent the flavor of the day, thus rendering the significance of the creed shallow and meaningless?

Just the opposite. This means we should be ready to fulfill our responsibilities inherent in our role as team players. Times are difficult. The recent disaster in Louisiana and Mississippi has changed the lives of many Americans forever.

Likewise, the same is true

here in Iraq. We continue to deal with the present and unique challenges that only this mission can bring.

However, despite all the tensions in Iraq and the fear of the unknown concerning the disaster at home, I believe that there are good people working to provide answers and solutions to the multitude of contemplating questions.

Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division are performing admirably and their motivation and morale is high.

This said, it doesn't mean that everything is perfect.

The responsibility for mission accomplishment, good morale and motivation rests with all of us.

I would ask that we never forget how important this mission is, coupled with the impact we are having while aiding in the reshaping of this county.

Take care of yourselves. Stay safe. Always think about safety and continue to place your mission first.

Never accept defeat. Never quit.

And never leave a fallen comrade.

"Rock of the Marne"

THE ARMY VALUES
Selfless Service
Put the welfare of the nation, the Army and your subordinates before your own.

Unsung Heroes: Eyes in the Sky

Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Grant
TF Baghdad command sergeant major

Warfighting continues to be an art that's either aided or hindered by ground commanders' abilities to command and control forces.

In recent years, the Army has benefited from numerous technological advances that Soldiers are using in many of their land and air combat systems.

Soldiers on Camp Liberty's Antenna Hill, and on other Forward Operating Bases throughout Multinational Division-Baghdad, are doing a great job supporting the war effort and I'm honored by your efficiency and commitment to excellence.

However, there's another force occupying Antenna Hill that's also worth its weight on the battlefield.

They are our eyes in the sky. These troops provide 24/7 monitoring to pinpoint the location of mortar or rocket launches that threaten U.S. Soldiers.

These troops are dedicated artillerymen who serve behind the scenes.

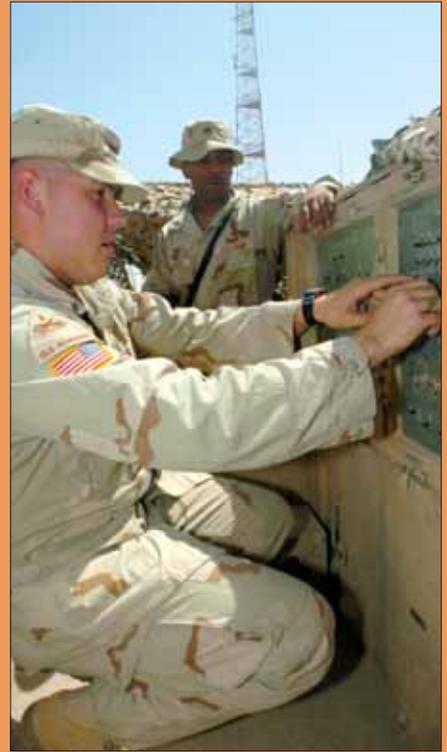
Within seconds of a launch, systems operators provide real-time data to the battle captains who, in turn, help them determine and activate appropriate forces to reduce the possibility of follow-on attacks.

These combat functional areas are just two more examples of the great things Soldiers are doing to support Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

My hat is off to the Marne Soldiers of the "Voice of the Marne," and the "Re-Trans" team that share the battle positions.

Thanks for all you do. You exemplify the Warrior Ethos through your daily duty performance. All of you share in the recognition of being "Marne Unsung Heroes."

"Rock of the Marne"



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Spc. Keith Smith (left), a Niles, Ohio native, works on a system that controls the radar atop signal hill July 22, while Saginaw, Mich., native Sgt. Terrance Parker supervises. Smith is a radar operator and Parker a shift supervisor, both with 2nd Field Artillery Detachment, 101st Airborne Division.

The Word on the Street

How did the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 touch your life?

"It showed me why I needed to stay in the Army."



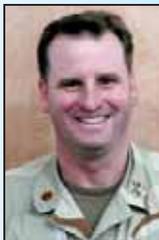
Capt. Craig R. Bender
HHC, 1/13 Armor Regt., 1st AD
Eaton, Ohio

"It made me think defending our freedom was even more important."



Spc. Megan R. Buxton
A Co., 125th FSB, 1st AD
Davie, Fla.

"I knew we were going to war. I was concerned about my high school friends who worked in the World Trade Center."



Maj. Scott E. Sill
HHC, 3rd Bde., 1st AD
New York, N.Y.

"It made me want to serve my country and do something about terrorism."



1st Sgt. Timothy Jones
HHSB, 1/118 FA Regt., 48th BCT
Tignall, Ga.

"It's the reason I joined the Army."



Spc. Jamison M. Groh
HHC, 1/13 Armor Regt., 1st AD
Big Point, Miss.

The Marne Express

Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs Office

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr.
Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. Robert Whetstone
Public Affairs Supervisor: Master Sgt. Greg Kaufman

The Marne Express Staff

Editor: Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Benner
Layout and Design: Spc. Brian P. Henretta
Staff Writers: Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick, Sgt. 1st Class David Abrams, Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker, Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper, Staff Sgt. Britt Smith, Staff Sgt. Kevin Bromley, Staff Sgt. Russ Rozean, Sgt. David Bill, Sgt. Thomas Benoit, Sgt. Andrew Miller, Spc. Ricardo Branch, Spc. Natalie Loucks, Spc. Ben Brody, Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr., Spc. Jennifer Fitts, Spc. Derek Del Rosario, Spc. Christopher Foster, Spc. Brian Henretta, Spc. Maria Mengrone, Spc. Erin Robicheaux, Spc. Matthew Wester, Spc. Tracy Smith, Spc. Daniel Balda, Pfc. Jason Jordan.

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Commentary

The bad guys look like the good guys

Spc. Jimmy Lane
1st BCT PAO

The situation here in Iraq is different than any other in history. There are two main things going on here; we are fighting an insurgency and helping build a strong, secure democratic government.

As a journalist and a Soldier, I get to see both sides of the effort. One day I am chasing insurgents through fruit groves during a house raid, and the next day I am present at the opening of a new government center.

I guess the hardest part is recognizing the difference between the people who want freedom and those who mean to destroy the effort.

When I ride down the road or

have to stop on a highway to pull security, I get a little jumpy. I try to be polite and patient, but in my heart I believe that is a type of complacency. I know that patience and politeness made a few of the Soldiers who have died wait one second too long before recognizing a threat.

I have become belligerent while pulling security, and pointed my weapon at a single driver coming up to a checkpoint faster than he should. I can see the person in the car



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

suddenly realizing we are there and slowing down – it's some young kid just cruising too fast as young kids in any country do. I have done it myself.

But you never know if it is a kid or a guy running late to work. By the time you get a glimpse of the person in the car, shrapnel from a 155mm round would kill you.

I know most any Soldier who goes outside the wire can relate to that. It wrenches my gut wondering if I should take a shot or wait that extra second.

This enemy wears no uniform, has no honor and will kill anyone in his path.

It is so frustrating. We as Americans are true in our heart to the mission, even though much of the time we

don't want to be.

We want a set enemy with a large force that we can seek out and have a battle with. At least that is what we were trained to do. We were not trained to be police. Cops have a hard job. They are constantly living in a scenario of doubt. The next guy they pull over could be the one who tries to kill them.

I can totally relate to all the cops that I laughed at when I was one of those young kids speeding around in my dad's car. I know why they are overly suspicious and live a lonely life.

We want to bust the bad guy, but who the heck is he?

We work so hard to get limited intelligence. Most of the time we find out who the bad guy is after he blows himself up

along with a couple of Soldiers, a few Iraqi Police officers and a couple dozen women and children.

I believe things are changing. I've seen the evidence in the seven short months I have been here. People are getting angry. They want to live and work in peace. Most of them are curious about us and interested in our culture. Many are dazzled by free trade and capitalism. I bet any given insurgent has owned a cell phone, wanted a nice car and watched an American music video.

Me, I just want to go home to my wife and kids. They are my goal in life. I joined the Army to provide them security. It seems like I am doing that for the whole world right now.

Patriotism, freedom and why I love serving

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PAO

The attacks on New York City were not only on the city itself, but on America as a whole. We should never forget that the Pentagon, the center of our national defense, also felt the blow of terrorism.

The tragic terrorist-driven attacks that took place four years ago this week were the catalyst that caused Louisiana Army National Guard Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team being called to serve during Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

We sat in our living rooms, our offices and our schools as terrorists took our Twin Towers, our Pentagon, and our fellow Americans.

As Soldiers, we should always remember what we felt that day; the fury, the frustration, the desire to help.

Someone said of the attacks, "in that instant all Americans felt like New Yorkers and we all wanted to be there."

It's usually unorthodox for a military journalist to give their own personal testimony, yet somehow I feel compelled to do so.

In the very beginning, and perhaps because I'm a National Guard Soldier, I personally had a hard time dealing with this deployment. It was not so much that

I did not want to be here; rather, I had a difficult time justifying the reason for it.

The bottom line is, whatever the reason, I was called to serve.

In my family, I have an uncle who lost his arm in World War II and another uncle who was forced into early retirement as a colonel due to failing eyesight. He is a member of the 'Greatest Generation' who stormed the beaches of Normandy on that fateful day. After hours and hours of relentless fighting, something hit him in the head and knocked him unconscious for two days. Thought dead, he woke up in the back of a cattle truck under a pile of fallen Soldiers. This man, my hero, survived.

But perhaps the biggest hero and "Soldier at heart" of all, is my father.

He never was in the military, but he sure wanted to be. He tried to enlist on his eighteenth birthday, but was denied due to a bought with asthma.

My dad, who I affectionately refer to as a "cheesy patriot," will stop any Soldier in uniform, in any store, in any town and thank them for HIS freedom. He flies the American flag in his front yard, has yellow ribbons tied around every tree, and his truck is so full of "support our troops" bumper stickers, it could be a billboard on the side of Interstate 10. He gets emotional during

the "Star Spangled Banner" and holds special prayer meetings specifically to pray for the troops overseas.

He is the best kind of American.

Is my dad unique? Not at all.

From the overwhelming support I have received from friends, family, and even perfect strangers, the majority of American citizens are just as supportive of the armed forces as my father.

Just think back to the day that you, a Soldier, left your hometown in your military vehicle on your way to join the fight against terrorism. Think back to the streets of your hometowns and bases.

Do you remember the scene? I do. The streets were decorated adoringly with patriots. Mile after mile, Americans were waving their flags and holding their signs while standing next to their vehicles adorned with yellow ribbons and patriotic bumper stickers. And some, the truly patriotic at heart, followed us down the interstate, as if to tell us, "I would take this journey with you if I could."

The milestones have been many and



Spc. Erin Robicheaux

there remains much to accomplish while assisting the Iraqi people on the journey to democracy.

It is pertinent to remember that if our forefathers did not follow the very same path we are on at this moment in Iraq, we would not be the fighting force we are today. History is, in fact, repeating itself.

In the end, a safe and secure Iraq is a safe and secure America.

If you ever need a reason to cling to, a reason for being here, think of my father or better yet, think of yours.

They represent the countless Americans who are praying for our safe return. They represent the Americans who died in the attacks on New York City and the Pentagon.

Our ultimate goal is to stop terrorism and to protect the rights and the freedoms of Americans.

I personally never want to see the fury in my father's eyes or feel that same fury in my gut as I did the day we watched the suffering in New York. It could happen anywhere, even in our own hometowns. More frightening than the thought of feeling that anger again is the thought that somewhere in the United States, someone, someday will be watching my father and loved ones suffer just as those patriots did on September 11, 2001.

Your unauthorized radio transmits

DEATH.

STAY ALIVE

000R IEDs KILL

Sgt. Matthew Maupin

The following well known words from the Warrior Ethos ring true for Sgt. Matt Maupin. Maupin is an Army Reserve Soldier from 724th Transportation Company who was captured April 9, 2004 during Operation Iraqi Freedom 2. Sgt. Maupin – we are still looking for you and we will find you. You have not been forgotten.

"I will not leave a fallen comrade"

Soldiers! Fires are often started due to negligent practices. Be aware, practice fire safety.

Sadr City crews expand local medical facilities

Spc. Norris Jones
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Baghdad, Iraq — More has been invested for health care in Sadr City this past year than over 15 years under Saddam Hussein.

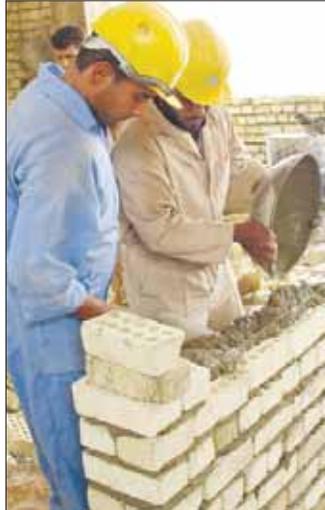
In fact, it was 1986 when Iraq's last new hospital was built.

For Sadr City, the Al Baladi Maternity and Children's Hospital opened in 1983. Last July, workers began renovating and upgrading that facility under a \$17.2 million contract. In addition, six new primary healthcare centers are under construction at a cost of \$3.7 million.

Al Baladi hospital was originally designed as a two-story facility with 260 beds. It has been expanded to accommodate 100 more beds and serves an average of 500 to 700 maternity, pediatric, and blood disorder patients daily.

"Prior to the hospital refurbishment getting underway, patients there had to tolerate 100 F (38 C) temperatures because of non-functioning air handling systems. The newborns (about 30 babies are born there daily) and the elderly are two groups who have little tolerance for such extreme heat," said Robert Helmerick, Sadr City medical facilities project engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central District. "Today those interior temperatures are at 75 F (24 C) and the infant mortality rate at the hospital is declining."

Among the major items the contractor has already completed is rehabilitating the hospital's four elevators, putting on an entire new roof, building a new incinerator for the biohazard waste, and



Spc. Norris Jones
Two Iraqi bricklayers lay mortar while building a section of a wall for a new Sadr City medical center.

installing a reverse osmosis purification plant capable of producing 6400 gallons of clean water daily, said Helmerick. "All repair work is coordinated with the Iraq Ministry of Health, the hospital administration, and the contractor," he explained.

About 130 Iraqis are on the construction crew. Work there is 40 percent complete and the contractor has a goal of scheduling the commissioning of all refurbishments in February 2006.

The six primary healthcare centers in Sadr City, which are 20 to 40 percent finished, are designed to help ease Al Baladi's huge outpatient load and should be ready in late fall. Each of those facilities, with an average price tag of \$600,000, is a two-story structure which will offer 1,155 square meters of space for medical/dental examinations including X-ray capabilities, testing laboratory, pharmacy, vaccination, and public education.

"This capability will dramatically improve the healthcare available to Sadr City's 2.5 million residents," according to Capt. Jack Mooney, assistant brigade engineer with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, Third Infantry Division.

"The biggest challenge we faced early on was convincing the contractor he needed larger crews at each site to meet the deadline," noted Helmerick. "Those crews have doubled in size (now somewhere between 20 to 60 Iraqis at each site). Another concern we had was safety — ensuring the workers had the proper safety equipment and training regarding hard hats, shoes, goggles, etc. That's something we continue to emphasize."

Apart from the new medical facilities, a number of other infrastructure improvements in Sadr City are also underway:

- \$106 million to install new electrical poles, power lines, and transformers in 76 sectors (impacting 1.2 million residents there).

- nearly \$60 million on a sewer repair project involving about 39 kilometers (24 miles) of Sadr City sewers.

- \$2.3 million for 27 new compact water treatment units, each producing

15,000 liters of clean potable water daily. Ten of these units will use water from wells, 17 from the Sadr City raw water system. The Compact Water Unit at Thawrat Al-Hijara School is the first to be fully operational and clean water from there is being supplied to Sadr City residents. Currently 60 people are employed working on this project.

- \$600,000 to renovate three police stations. That work, which has been completed, includes force protection measures of additional security walls, new guard towers, and new gates.

- \$902,000 for a new Sadr City Fire Station which will open next spring. The three-story, 925-square-meter structure will feature five bays (three for ladder trucks, two for SUVs). It will include a dormitory area for 20 fire fighters, dining room for 30, commercial grade kitchenette to feed 40 people, a training room for 20, locker room, a control room, and a Chief's office.

- \$279,125 for a trash transfer station with expected completion by the end of December.

- \$3.7 million for 28 Sadr City schools (an average of \$133,250 each) to upgrade their electricity, lights, heat, water, doors and windows, blackboards, functioning bathrooms, and furniture for both students and faculty.

The projects referenced above account for nearly \$190 million of infrastructure improvements for Sadr City. Major Paul Ashcraft, 2nd Brigade Combat Team's Engineer, 3rd Infantry Division, adds, "We are continuously assessing the essential service needs in Sadr City, specifically the need for more potable water, and have more projects planned for later this year."

U.S. 550th ASMC Soldiers train Iraqi Police in basic trauma care



Capt. David Hamilton
550th Area Support Medical Company

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - "Nafess and Nazeeff! Nafess and Nazeeff!" emphasized Col. John J. Lammie to the 20 Iraqi Policemen in a training session at the Al Taji IP Station north of Baghdad.

Those Arabic terms for "breathing" and "bleeding" were repeated often during the Basic Trauma Treatment course taught by Lammie, a medical doctor from Fayetteville, N.C.

Lammie was joined by other doctors, nurses and medics of 550th Area Support Medical Company, Brigade Troops Battalion, Division Support Brigade as they taught IPs how to respond to medical emergencies.

The medics of the 550th ASMC, who deployed here from Fort Bragg, N.C., to support the 3rd

Infantry Division, have teamed with 4th Platoon, 860th Military Police Company of the California Army National Guard. The MPs patrol with and mentor four IP stations in the communities surrounding Camp Taji.

Along with conducting daily patrols to the stations, the MPs also have the mission of providing classes to the local IPs on various subjects including medical life-saving measures.

The 550th ASMC medics seized the opportunity during their daily visits to provide much-needed first aid and basic trauma training to the IPs, who are often first on the scene of terrorist attacks.

Training was recently conducted in 17 classes at the four IP stations and one IP checkpoint.

More than 170 Iraqi Policemen were taught the basics such as airway control, rescue breathing, chest wound dressings, bleeding control, tourni-



Courtesy photos
(left) Sgt. Cristen M. Kwiatkowski, a combat medic with the 550th ASMC, Bde. Troops Bn, DSB, and (above) Col. John J. Lammie, a doctor with the 550th ASMC, watch Iraqi Police officers go through treatment procedures on one of their colleagues who is role-playing a trauma victim.

quets, burn treatment, and transporting the wounded.

First Lt. Ronald Leach, a physician assistant with the 550th, planned the final training event using a scenario exercise. Some of the IPs were spread throughout the station, role-playing as casualties, while teams of three policemen responded to their "wounded" partners by assessing their injuries and then treating them.

"They were very enthusiastic," said Leach, who is from Hardinsburg, Ky. He said the IPs did a great job evaluating casualties and providing the proper care.

Leach said future training will include teaching the policemen how to transport casualties in IP vehicles as well as how to coordinate with local medical clinics to develop training relationships and access to ambulance services.

1/69 Inf. holds farewell prayer service, Sept. 11 remembrance

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PAO

CAMP TIGER-LAND, Iraq – Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment gathered together Aug. 31 to give thanks for their own lives and to ask for blessings upon their fallen brothers and their families.

A Catholic Mass was offered for Soldiers by Task Force Wolfhound Chaplain (Maj.) Alejandro Sanchez, at the request of 256th Brigade Combat Team Commander, Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr.

“Just under one year ago, we gathered together in the Mojave Desert to

remember your friends, your families, and two of your fallen Soldiers lost in the attacks on New York City,” Basilica said.

Soldiers of 1/69th Inf. Bn. literally lived through the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and after three years of active duty service, the New York National Guard Soldiers continue to fight the war on terror, taking the fight from their own streets, to the streets of Baghdad.

“You may not have known it at the time,” Basilica said, “but a year ago I knew that you and the Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team were about to be pushed into the front lines of Baghdad.”

For one year, the troops of 1/69th endured two of the toughest areas of operation in Baghdad, first at Taji, then along Route Irish.

Sanchez told the Soldiers the past year has changed him and made him a better man while serving in their presence.

“You are men of bravery and magnificent human beings full of courage,” he emphasized.

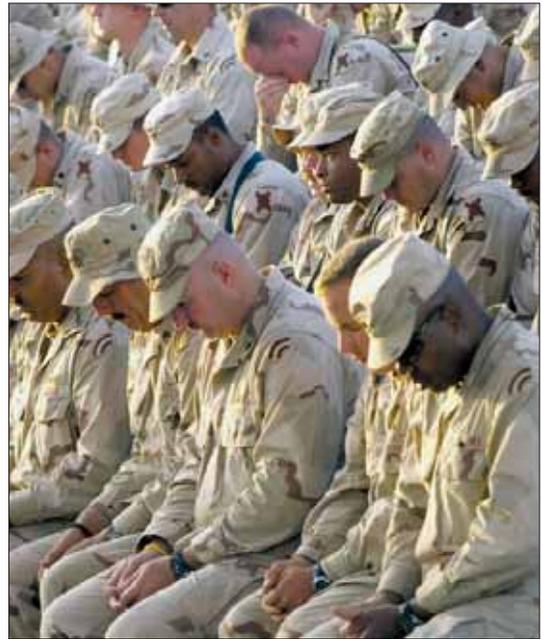
Basilica thanked the New York Army National Guard Soldiers for their year of service and assured them Louisiana’s Tiger Brigade will stand behind them when they call.

“You represent the reason for our deployment,”

Basilica said. “You were at ground zero from the very beginning and stepped it up to come here. You came right to the worst of it.”

The general told everyone in attendance he believed God was pleased with the progress they’ve made over the course of the year.

Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack, commander of 1/69th Inf. Bn., told his Soldiers a part of them will always be in Baghdad in the spirit of their fallen brothers. He said the ground is now sacred where they fought and gave their lives and he assured them that New Yorkers affected by the Sept. 11 attacks will never forget the battalion’s sacrifice and dedication.



Sgt. Thomas Benoit
Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment, 256th Combat Brigade Team, 3rd Infantry Division bow their heads in prayer commemorating September 11, 2001.

4th BTB teams improve electricity in Jihad neighborhoods



Maj. Alayne Conway

The rehabilitation of Jihad is underway with electrical improvements. Workers are connecting power lines to individual homes Aug. 17. Repairs should be complete by the end of September. Repairing the electrical networks of Jihad has been a priority for 4th Brigade Combat Team. This neighborhood is going through the first stage of repair. Old electrical systems are replaced with new poles, wire and transformers by local contractors.

Maj. Alayne Conway
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – In recent surveys conducted by Task Force Baghdad, the top three priorities for the Iraqi population have been electricity, security, and water.

Electricity is crucial to keep families cool during the hot summer months and to provide a sense of security by bringing light to dark streets.

When personnel from 4th Brigade Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division deployed to Iraq in January, they assumed the mission of setting up an Infrastructure Coordination Element that oversees essential service projects such as electricity for the 4th Brigade Combat

Team area of operations.

“One of our main missions is to manage electricity for approximately 400,000 people in the Baghdad area,” said 1st Lt. David Cox, the projects manager for electricity from 4-3 BTB. “We are dealing with a number of different entities including the Ministry of Electricity and the Ministry of Municipalities – organizations that work to keep things running and try to keep power to the people.”

Cox, a native of Winchester, Va., and other members of the ICE visited Jihad and evaluated progress for an electricity project in two separate neighborhoods Aug. 17. With about 10,000 homes, Jihad is located in the al-Rasheed dis-

trict where an emphasis has been placed on improving electricity distribution.

Generally, electricity in Baghdad averages two hours on and four hours off, but Jihad has not always fared that well, said Cox.

Iraq has not been receiving any power from Iran or Syria and some of its larger network lines are down which impacts the power in Baghdad.

With 32 mahallas (neighborhoods), the al-Rasheed district represents the third most densely-populated region of Baghdad.

“The new electrical system in Jihad is replacing an old, unreliable system that was disrupted by years of neglect and insurging activity,” said Cox. This coupled with tremendous

unchecked urban growth in Baghdad makes it more of a challenge.

Rehabilitating the networks for Jihad was deemed priority for 4th BCT a couple of months ago and work in two mahallas began three weeks ago. The local networks will receive power from a substation in west al-Rasheed which is being built now, Cox said.

First, the team visited a neighborhood where between the homes they saw tangled wires that looked like a bowl of spaghetti. Cox said residents try to tap into whatever wires they can find in attempts to get electricity.

Joining efforts with the al-Rasheed Essential Services Committee and other Iraqi ministries, the ICE is repairing the network and has hired local contractors to replace the old system which consists of installing new poles, wires and transformers.

The rehabilitation progress of the second neighborhood is further along and the team observed poles standing tall along the roadways with power lines spanning the gap. There was also a group of local workers standing on ladders connecting those power lines to the individual homes.

“We deal largely with local workers and local contractors so not only do we provide power to the local residents in the community, but we also provide jobs and work for them so they can take a sense of pride in what they have and what we are building for them,” Cox said.

The new system replaces the old and unreliable system, but will also take into account the increased electricity demand of the future, Cox said, adding that rehabilitation in these two areas should be complete by the end of September with a completion

date of mid-November for the substation.

Rehabilitating the electrical network in Jihad cost approximately \$150,000.

Cox said his work gives him a sense of accomplishment.

“When we go around at night and see lights are on and people are able to have ... refrigerators to keep their food cool and stoves to get their food cooked – all the essential electrical items so they can conduct their daily business – it makes me feel really good that I am helping them get these lights turned on.”

Ongoing Electrical Projects around Iraq

Salah Al Din Governorate

The completion of a substation electrical distribution project in the Al Daur District, Salah Ad Din Governorate, which includes six underground feeders from Dooz that will service the residents of Tuz. The project was completed by Iraqi workers in five days. There are seven electrical distribution projects programmed for construction in the Al Daur District.

Al Tameem Governorate

Daquq electricity project in Kirkuk District, Al Tameem Governorate. The electricity distribution and street lighting project replaced old networks with upgrades, providing electrical service and street lighting to approximately 650 residences in surrounding neighborhoods. To those Iraqi citizens who previously had very little or no electrical service, the project offers them a reliable quality-of-life enhancement. Although the contractor encountered numerous setbacks, workers still managed to complete the project within the required time.

Engineers keep U.N. compound safe

Pride in mission, neighborhood motivates 1/64 Soldiers

Sgt. Andrew A. Miller
2nd BCT PAO

CAMP RUSTAMIYAH, Iraq — Since their arrival in Iraq, combat engineers with 2nd Brigade Combat Team have served their time in an especially Spartan way.

Soldiers in E Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor are charged with guarding a huge concrete wall, isolated from comfort and distanced from the rest of their unit at Camp Rustamiyah.

To civilians it's called Canal Hotel. Service members call it Dog Base.

On a biweekly basis, E Co. Soldiers call this crumbling United Nations compound home.

Staff Sgt. Perre Echolz, a squad leader with E Co., pointed out a large section of a building that was destroyed by a car bomb in 2003. That section of the compound represents the reason for E Co.'s mission, Echolz said.

Before and since that bombing, the compound has served as the main logistical base for U.N. personnel working out of the International Zone in Baghdad.

"(1/64 Armor) battalion knew this was going to be an important mission before we got here," said Captain Todd S. Duncan, E Co. commander. "This has been the main focus for our company since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom 3."

To secure the compound, engineers are posted in guard towers at intervals along the perimeter. Though their presence is considered a deterrent, the engineers have seen attacks. The Soldiers have been assaulted by rifle fire, mortars and snipers, said 1st Lt. Adam Smith, an E. Co. platoon leader.

However, the walls of the compound have never been breached since E Co. took the job.

With security measures tight, Soldiers not manning the gates or towers have taken the fight to the enemy.

Using armored humvees, personnel carriers and tracked earthmovers, the engineers conduct missions in the area around their base. By day or by night,



Sgt. Andrew Miller

E Company Soldiers monitor the U.N. compound's perimeter from guard towers overlooking the area.



Sgt. Andrew Miller

Pvt. Matthew J. Ennis, a combat engineer with E Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, mans his machine gun while watching the perimeter of the U.N. compound from a guard tower Aug. 11. Ennis is from Westfield, N.Y.

they are out gathering intelligence and looking for roadside bombs.

Echolz, a Brooklyn, N.Y. native, said the key to their offense is based on building relationships with local Iraqis.

"We went out into our sectors and cleaned them up," Echolz said. "In the last six months we turned the whole area around."

By establishing their presence and displaying a willingness to act on intelligence, the Soldiers of E Co. have shown the locals that they are there to help, he said.

"The people trust us and if something happens, they're not afraid to tell us," Echolz said. "They don't want us to leave, you know?"

For now, no one has to worry about the engineers leaving.

Unlike any other unit before them, E Co. has been assigned to the U.N. compound for the duration of their tour.

"All other previous units never took ownership of it," Duncan said. "When we got here, it was dirt piled upon dirt."

Despite making improvements, Soldiers at Dog Base live in humble conditions without some of the conveniences found on larger installations. A few engineers said they miss creature comforts like laundry service, telephones and a choice of food while at the compound. Yet none of the engineers spent much time complaining.

"We're in Iraq, I'm not at home," said Spc. Gary Blair, a combat engineer with E Co. "You just deal with it."

Dealing with rough living conditions is part of what the Spartan



Sgt. Andrew Miller

A soldier with E Company, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment stands guard in one of several guard towers around the U.N. compound Aug. 11.

Brigade engineers do. Smith, of Hudson, Wis., said since arriving at their temporary home, the Soldiers have spent a great deal of their down time making improvements.

The engineers fixed electrical wiring that had been shorting-out and damaging their personal appliances. Large equipment, back from when the base was a cooking school, had to be moved out. The engineers also built a gym and fixed local roads. They even set up and continue to maintain an internet connection for themselves.

Smith said great improvements have been made to the building the

engineers sleep in, and they are now working on the structure next to it.

"So the next people who come in to guard the compound have a better place of living," Smith said.

He also mentioned something else that makes life at Dog Base more comfortable.

"We have a lot of support from people back home," said Smith. "They take time out of their day to send care packages, they send e-mails, they send letters, and I just appreciate them doing that for my Soldiers. It makes it easier and it's nice to know that people actually care about you."

MEDCAPS mean more than medical care

1st Lt. Jamie Davis
3rd Inf. Div. PAO

How do you translate "Open and say ahhhh" into Arabic?

Members of D Company, 1st Squadron, 101st Cavalry Regiment know. They know that simple command and many, many more. Interacting with Iraqis on a regular basis gives them the opportunity to brush up on their Arabic language skills during medical and civil affairs projects.

MEDCAPS are designed to help local communities receive medical attention for those in need.

The first critical step for the Soldiers is deciding where to go and who to see.

"We're trying to put everything in the hands of the local government and the Neighborhood Advisory Council," said D. Co. 1st Sgt. Daniel Bien. "We're going to let the NAC members decide who needs the medical care the most and those are the people we'll be looking at."

A lot of coordination goes into a typical MEDCAP mission.

Numerous personnel from the specialized fields of civil affairs, psychological operations and medical practitioners all have important roles to play.

On the morning of their missions, Soldiers from the different teams gather with their convoy escorts for their comprehensive mission briefs before traveling to their assigned location.

Much attention is given to mission safety. A building that is easily secured and defended is often used for the doctor's office and examination rooms. One room is dedicated for the reception area and patients are brought in several at a time.

Often, hundreds of people seeking medical attention show up for assistance.

Mothers bring their children seeking relief from tummy aches to swollen tonsils, while the elderly come burdened with their own ailments. Some complain of swollen ankles, some of more serious problems. From the time the doors open for business until the last patient leaves, the military doctors

see it all.

Maj. Steve Scott, commander of C Company, 199 Forward Support Battalion, 256 Brigade Combat Team, is in charge of many of the MEDCAPS.

"We listen to their complaints mostly through an interpreter, but their English is quite good," Scott said.

Medical personnel listened while patients eagerly explained their health concerns and showed their injuries to those who could help the most. The staff provided treatment plans for follow-up care. Diabetes and high-blood pressure are most common in adults and a lot of the children have parasitological concerns which can be easily remedied with medicine.

"From many of the Iraqis there is an appreciation of what we do for the children," Scott said.

He mentioned that his medical team members wished they could do more, but at this time their assistance is merely a short-term fix in the face of so many health care shortcomings in the communities.

"They have neighborhood clinics, but they are sorely understaffed and they simply need more clinics," Scott explained. "Once the security situation is improved, we'd like to be able to see more of the families."

After the children have been tended to, they stay close by and play with the other kids who have gathered. Children are curious. They want to see what's going on and, sick or not, will often show up at the impromptu clinic.

While the medical personnel are performing their mission, the civil affairs Soldiers were outside conducting their own operations.

They gave away Beanie Babies which have proved to be a big hit with children and women alike. Everyone seemed eager for the multi-colored critters ranging from purple puppies to green gorillas as soon as they came out of the box. The civil affairs Soldiers were winning the hearts and minds of the people – one Beanie Baby at a time.

Many of the children were interacting with their newfound American friends. Some wanted their pictures taken with the Soldiers. Some tested



1 Lt. Jamie Davis

Dr. (Lt. Col.) Philip Isherwood, C Co., 199 FSB, listens to a local Iraqi woman describe her ailment to ensure quality medical care can be provided for her.

their English abilities by hollering "Hey, Mister" and visiting with the troops. For the children, the excitement of the visiting MEDCAP was a break from their normal daily routine. For the time being, all were happy, except for the kid with the tummy ache.

Soldiers from 301st Tactical Psychological Operations Company also traveled with the humanitarian convoy. As the convoy made its way through the community, PSYOP personnel periodically announced over their loud speaker system that the NAC was providing free medical care with assistance from the Americans.

Two members of Tactical PSYOP Team 1423 provided their thoughts about the benefits of MEDCAPS. "It's about showing that the local government has the lead and we're here to help them," said Sgt. Tim Ochinang.

Spc. Anthony Mancino said he feels he is making a difference in people's lives.

"The interaction with people and families less fortunate than you lets you have a pretty good feeling, knowing

you're here helping them."

Many people besides U. S. Soldiers are involved in making these missions a success.

Iraqi policemen play an important role by keeping the doctors safe so they can concentrate on doing their job. The policemen acknowledged they appreciate what the troops are doing to help the Iraqi people.

"We've had a lot of success in this community," said Spc. John Montesanto from D Co. "We come in here and help the community. They see all the bad things going on in the neighborhood and call the NAC. The NAC then calls us and we come out and take care of the bad guys. It's a great relationship."

Soldiers from many different units bring their specialized skills and experience to the mission, combining them for the same overall purpose.

Despite language and cultural barriers, MEDCAP missions help foster relationships between the Iraqi populace and U.S. Soldiers – even if all you can say is "Ahhhh."

Iraqi Public Order unit prepares to take control of their streets

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Every day, Iraqi Security Forces get closer to assuming full control of the defense of their sovereign nation.

For proof, look no further than the partnership between E Company, 216th Air Defense Artillery, a National Guard unit deployed out of Cloquet, Minn., and 1st Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade, an Iraqi Special Police unit.

Capt. Justin Rodgers, the E Co. commander, said his unit has been working with the POB since June 1. The POB is sufficiently trained on the basics of soldiering, so the teaching has been mainly done through joint missions and planning with the leadership of the POB.

This partnership performed a joint operation during the early morning of Aug. 4. During this operation the POB's ability to do most of the "heavy-lifting" was in full view.

"When we go out with (the POB) we usually just provide perimeter security, while they perform the actual strike mission," said Sgt. Derek Gunderson, a surface-to-air missile operator.

Working night operations with the POB can be hectic and tiring, but it's still "cool" to work with them, said Gunderson, a native of St. Louis, Minn.

"We get to learn their culture and some of their language," he added. "One of the guys had a new baby and we brought him some stuffed animals for the baby. They appreciate the things we teach them."

"(Working together is) good for us and good for them," Rodgers said. "It gives them a chance at joint

operations and different kinds of operations like traffic control points and strikes. It's good for us because we get the extra training and we get to see the ISF in action."

During the Aug. 4 mission, the POB detained seven of 17 suspected insurgents the Ministry of the Interior had culled from Operation Thunder.

In the first house that was raided, the POB just missed their target as evidenced from the lights being left on and the water still running. A search of the house turned up a few large caliber shells as well as a grenade.

At another target site, a sewage plant, two men were detained as suspected terrorists for using the plant as a car bomb factory.

Rodgers, a native of Maple Grove, Minn., said the POB is a little more methodical in their raids.

"They do more of the investigative police-work type stuff," he explained. "(They) try to make sure who they've got is on their list."

Rodgers said he is certain that the cooperation between the two units is making a difference in Iraq and in the Iraqi peoples' perception of the ISF.

"The big thing is that detainee (operations) is always a concern," Rodgers said. "We want to make sure they are treating (the detainees) well. The POB is definitely more aware of it, they understand the concerns, and are quite upset when they see other units masquerading as a part of their unit and their reputation is soiled when the impostors mistreat detainees."

Sometimes the MOM will call the POB complaining that some of the detainees have been mistreated. During these inquiries, the POB commander answers

that all this trucks have been in the compound, under his control all day and that it's not possible the detainees were harmed under his watch.

"Other units will say they are a part of the elite units (i.e. POB or Wolf Brigade), put on the same uniform and then turn around and abuse these guys," Rodgers said. "They get the rap even though it wasn't them."

Rodgers said the Special Police care about their reputation and the way they are perceived by their fellow countrymen.

The only problem Rodgers sees with the POB is their high turnover rate.

"Two of the reasons they struggle with maintaining their members is the living conditions and their pay rate," he explained.

POB Soldiers get paid the equivalent of \$250 a month while their police counterparts make as much as \$450 a month. Even the POB commander makes roughly \$400 a month.

"They are making great strides," Rodgers said. "(But) they reach a high level of proficiency and then they can't afford to stay with the unit."

Both Gunderson and Rodgers seem encouraged by the progress the POB is making in securing the future of Iraq. The unit was already battle-ready when Rodgers' battery started working with them.

Soon enough, they will run all their missions by themselves.

Gunderson, like most U.S. Soldiers working with the ISF, appreciates that the Iraqis are working so hard.

"They are doing a good job," he said. "I'm glad to see that they are doing more than us."

Iraqi citizens help U.S. Soldiers apprehend anti-Iraqi insurgents

Task Force Baghdad PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces, working together and also independently, took 19 suspected terrorists into custody while conducting a series of combat operations in and around Baghdad Aug. 21. Tips received from Iraqi citizens led to the detention of 12 of the 19 terror suspects.

Thirteen of the suspects were captured during five pre-dawn raids carried out in west, central and south Baghdad. Iraqi Army and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers also seized a computer, two AK-47 assault rifles and improvised explosive device fuses during the raids.

The largest operation of the day was carried out at noon by IA and U.S. Soldiers working together.

Acting on information provided by another Iraqi citizen, Soldiers searched an anti-Iraqi forces safe-house in south Baghdad and captured six suspects thought to be involved in terrorist activities.

At about the same time, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers manning a traffic control point stopped a vehicle at a busy intersection in east Baghdad. When the Soldiers searched the car, they found a shotgun and four pistols hidden inside.

The patrol detained the suspect and brought him into custody for questioning.

In other combat operations, a Task Force Baghdad unit patrolling in northwest Baghdad struck an IED. No one was injured in the attack, and when the Soldiers searched a nearby house they found an AK-47 assault rifle and a machine gun with 10 ammunition magazines. They also found binoculars, a periscope and 40 to 50 circuit boards which could have been used to detonate bombs. The patrol took the owner of the house into custody for questioning.

Iraqi Security Forces and Task Force Baghdad officials continue to encourage all Iraqi citizens to report suspicious behavior by e-mailing baghdadtipshotline@yahoo.com or calling one of the TIPS hotlines at 07901737723 or 07901737727.

U.S. Soldiers detain drug dealer with ties to terrorists

Sgt. Kevin Bromley
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – A U.S. raid turned up a suspected drug dealer with ties to the insurgency Aug. 7.

An Iraqi informant provided information regarding the drug dealer who was supporting Anti-Iraqi Forces.

Soldiers from B Company, 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry Regiment, assigned to 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, raided three houses based on the tip provided by the Iraqi citizen.

U.S. troops found drug paraphernalia and large quantities of narcotics in the first home they searched. Soldiers also found AIF propaganda in the other two homes and detained two additional men for their suspected participation in AIF activities.

Task Force I-118th Soldiers detained the drug dealer and suspected terrorists for additional questioning.

"Local citizens pointed out someone suspicious to us because they didn't want drug dealers and terrorists in their neighborhood," said Col. David Bishop commander of 3rd Bde., 1st Armored Div.

Iraqi Security Forces and Task Force Baghdad officials continue to encourage all Iraqi citizens to report suspicious behavior by e-mailing baghdadtipshotline@yahoo.com or calling one of the TIPS hotlines at 07901737723 or 07901737727.

مكافآت تصل الى 50000 دولار امريكي
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الافراد الذين يقومون بالهجمات
مواقع السيارات المفخخة والذين يقومون بتصنيعها
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Task Force Baghdad Soldiers observe Women's Equality Day



Photos by Spc. Maria Mengrone
(above) Tiger Chapel Praise Dancers perform a rendition of "Minister To Ya" during the Women's Equality Day program at the 3rd Infantry Division's Morale, Welfare and Recreational Facility Aug. 26. (right) Spc. Christie E. Speights, supply specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div. reads an inspiring tribute about women.



Spc. Maria Mengrone
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - U.S. Soldiers at Camp Liberty celebrated Women's Equality Day at the 3rd Infantry Division's Morale, Welfare and Recreational Facility Aug. 26 by recognizing the accomplishments of women whose struggles helped change the course of our history.

The event, sponsored by the 36th Engineer Combat Group's equal opportunity office, showcased prominent women, past and present, by highlighting their achievements and contributions. Inspirational dances following the themes of faith, overcoming adversity, and self-fulfillment were performed by fellow Soldiers.

In 1920, a woman's right to vote was finally granted by the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving women a voice in government. Even today women continue to break gender barriers that help pave the way for future generations.

Among the women highlighted at the event was Susan B. Anthony and her instrumental role in jumpstarting the women's rights movement in the late 19th century. Her plight to empower women with equal rights is an important fact we should never lose sight of, said guest speaker Capt. Jeanette P. Brown, brigade logistics officer, 36th Engineer Combat Group.

"We celebrate today so that other women can understand that this was a struggle," Brown said. "Today we have these privileges because of their hard work and because of their struggles and we should appreciate that and live up

to those expectations and go beyond them."

Brown, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y., knows about hard work and struggle. She raised three sons while working her way up from a private in the Army ranks. She put forth the extra effort and intense dedication to achieve her education while still on active duty so she could become an officer.

Although, the women's rights movement was mostly fought by women for women, men also supported and played a vital role in

we get to share our dancing, it helps us keep our mind off of what's going on and I also learned the date women were allowed to vote which was something I didn't know before," said Tiger Chapel Praise Dancer, Spc. Natasha D. Calvin, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 199th Forward Support Battalion, 256th Brigade Combat Team.

A reflective and thought-provoking tribute titled "What About Women?" addressed the obstacles and achievements that have affected the lives of women. The tribute

was read by Spc. Christie E. Speights, supply specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div.

Speights, who volunteered to support the program, said preparing for her reading caused her to really think about the women, especially those in her family, who have influenced her life.

Besides becoming acquainted with a historical overview of women's progress in society, EO programs also provide Soldiers a chance to mingle with other

like-minded individuals who share a genuine interest in others and in humanity in general.

Speights said she welcomes the chance to encounter others outside of her normal course of duties.

"It's very interesting to meet other people for the first time," Speights said. "You learn different things and gain a broader outlook from talking to them."

The following excerpt from the reading summed up the ambiance of the night, "... women can be whatever they want and whenever they can, they have earned our country's respect, excelling and achieving equal to any man."



Spc. Maria Mengrone
Dressed in all white attire and painted faces, the Virtuous Angels of Liberty Gospel Choir dance to "Can't Give Up Now" during the Women's Equality Day program.

women obtaining the right to vote, said Sgt. 1st Class Frieda Taylor, equal opportunity advisor, 36th Eng. Combat Group.

The program also included a motivational reading and two elaborately choreographed dance performances by the Virtuous Angels of Liberty Gospel Choir and the Tiger Chapel Praise Dancers.

Dancers graced the stage with soulful renditions of "Can't Give Up Now" and "Minister To Ya" as audience members clapped and sang along, giving both performances a standing ovation.

"It's a great experience when

PCO participates in second National Iraqi Women's Conference

PCO PAO
Media Release

BAGHDAD - The Ministry of Women's Issues held the Second National Iraqi Women's Conference Aug. 3-4 at the International Zone convention center in an effort to educate women on their rights within the new Iraqi constitution and encourage their increased involvement in community and government affairs.

Nearly 300 women from all over Iraq attended the conference, listening intently to presenters from various organizations, including speakers such as Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Laith Kubba, representatives from the National Assembly, the Civil Society & Constitution, Homeland Security & Constitution, the Hope Organization and leading women's institutions.

The Project & Contracting Office participated in the conference as well, with a speech delivered by PCO Women's Issue Coordinator Azza Humadi as provided by PCO Program Director Karen Durham-Aguilera. In addition, several women from PCO Programs were able to attend the initial part of the conference.

Durham-Aguilera's speech was provided in English and Arabic and was later covered by two independent Iraqi newspapers.

In addition to listening to guest speakers, conference attendees were able to attend workshops where they sat in groups of 10 to learn more

about the new constitution, how to participate in leadership positions and how network with others.

They filled out referendums from different parties in which they were asked their opinion and how they envision the new Iraq, and discussed ways to participate in the new constitution.

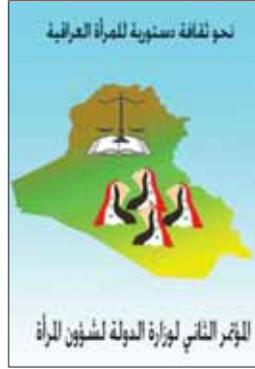
At one point during the conference, members were asked to stand for a moment of silence in remembrance of those killed in Iraq due to the war and terrorist activities.

PCO personnel participating in the conference took their role very seriously, said Humadi, who feels the event was an important one for Iraqi women.

"When Karen asked me to deliver her speech, I was happy for two reasons," she said. "One, because I was representing a lady who I very much admire due to all her hard work to improve both this country and work opportunities for Iraqi women, and two, because it would enable me to meet this great audience that is eager to learn about and participate in the changes that are taking place right now in Iraq."

In her speech, Durham-Aguilera encouraged women to find ways to be a part of the political process in Iraq, saying, "Iraqi women's involvement in decisions regarding the future of their country will be an important tool for the country in moving beyond war to stability and self-reliance."

Attending conferences such as this one was an important example of such participation



The poster for the Ministry of Women's Issues second national conference held in the International Zone in Baghdad Aug 3-4.

according to Durham-Aguilera, who said, "This conference is a clear demonstration of democracy in action in Iraq."

Conferences geared towards Iraqi women can be a great opportunity for both learning and networking says Durham-Aguilera. "We recently sponsored a Business Day for Iraqi women-owned engineering and construction businesses to increase the opportunities for women to gain awards for reconstruction projects. Before that day, there was one award to a women-owned business for a police station renovation. After the Business Day, there have been nearly 30 new project awards to Iraqi women-owned businesses."

"Additionally, she contin-

ued, "many more firms are learning how to successfully bid and qualify for awards of construction projects. We have hundreds of Iraqi associates, many of them women, working as engineers, architects, project managers, accountants and other professions on the reconstruction program. These professionals are also receiving technical training so that they may increase their skills and further assist the nation of Iraq. This is an ongoing coaching and learning effort, and we expect increased successes."

The infrastructure of Iraq is undergoing major changes, most of them positive, according to Durham-Aguilera, who cited several PCO projects as examples.

"As the Director of PCO Programs, I oversee a \$12 billion program of reconstruction projects ongoing over the entire country. Additional funds are improving women's access to quality healthcare, including maternal and child health."

"PCO reconstruction includes 22 hospital renovations, she continued. "Seventeen of these are maternity and children's hospitals. There are also five expanded health care centers planned, with five of these for maternity and pediatrics, and 142 new primary health care centers throughout Iraq."

Durham-Aguilera said other PCO work includes 800 school renovations, educational and training academies, improvement in essential services for water treatment and water supply, electricity and more. Of

these, more than 2,800 projects have started and nearly 1,600 completed, with much of the work being contracted directly to Iraqi companies.

"I am honored to be serving in Iraq and helping the Iraqi people achieve economic growth and personal stability in their everyday lives," said Aguilera, who added that she believes the numerous challenges faced by Iraq have severely affected the advancement of Iraqi women. "Support is required for the advancement of women and their capacities in society so that the nation may continue to grow and prosper for all."

"We consider Iraqi women's involvement in the reconstruction process essential to shaping the country's future and ensuring gender equity in constitutional processes," she summarized. "The role and status of women reflect the development of society. When women prosper, the entire country prospers."

The Project and Contracting Office (PCO) is responsible for contract management and execution of approximately \$12.1 billion of the \$18.4 billion Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund designated by the U.S. Congress to support the reconstruction of Iraq. The office reports to the U.S. Department of the Army and Department of Defense on matters relating to contracting and project management, and to the U.S. Department of State's Iraq Reconstruction Management Office on matters relating to project requirements and priorities. For more information please visit our website at: www.rebuilding-iraq.net.



Spc. Brian P. Henretta

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston speaks to 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers at the De Flurry Dining Facility about topics such as the ongoing Army transformation, brigade team lifecycle management, retention and enlistment success, and how proud he is of their hard work during his visit Aug. 27.

Test pilots troubleshoot Apache 'symptoms'

Spc. Jennifer Fitts
Avn Bde PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Day in and day out, Aviation Brigade aircraft are taken apart for routine “phase” maintenance or to address problems that come up during daily operations.

After looking at an aircraft that’s been in a million pieces on a hangar floor, and then put back together, it can take a special breed of pilot willing to be the first one to take it out for a spin.

In 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), 3rd Infantry Division, that mission is performed by the maintenance test pilots.

Being a test pilot requires quite a bit of experience in the aircraft, as well as additional training at Ft. Rucker, Ala. A pilot who wants to go through the course at Ft. Rucker must have at least 550 hours of pilot in command time, said Chief Warrant Officer Joe A. Laucius, A Co., 1-3 ARB, but “usually, successful (maintenance) pilots have a bit more time than that.”

The four-month course is “the most demanding flying course, without a doubt,” Laucius added.

Actually figuring out what’s wrong with a particular aircraft is a considerable portion of a maintenance test pilot’s job, said Chief Warrant Officer Joseph B. Shorts, A Co., 1-3 ARB.

A pilot may bring Shorts an aircraft with its list of “symptoms,” leaving it up to Shorts to figure out exactly what’s wrong.

Pulling out the logbook is the first step, since crew chiefs record details of every flight.

“The big thing is ... going through the troubleshooting procedure,” said Shorts, originally from Cherry Point, N.C. “We’ll figure out what’s wrong by what we know, what the book says, what the other guys around you know.”

For general maintenance questions, the pilots look in the interactive electronic technical manual. After figuring out the general scope of a problem, the test pilots dig



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Hattiesburg, Miss., native Spc. Matthew Stallard and Eagle Point, Ore., native Pfc. Eric Cramer, both of A Co. 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, work on an Apache rotorhead as part of its phase maintenance.

a bit deeper into other technical manuals.

“There’s a lot of information, and knowing where to find that information is about 60 percent of the battle,” said Laucius, a Bethel, Conn. native.

Other aircraft personnel use more of “an operator’s manual,” Shorts said, but the books they use are the “how it’s built manuals.”

After any maintenance is complete on a particular AH-64 Apache helicopter, Shorts and Laucius take it out on a test flight. Depending on the level of work or how well the maintenance went, the test flight may be finished during the same day.

After major maintenance procedures, thorough test flights take more time.

“When they take everything apart and then put it back together, you inevitably find something wrong,” Laucius said. “To get (the helicopter) back to flying sta-

tus, you have to troubleshoot a bunch of things along the way.”

Since the Apache is designed as a weapon platform, maintaining stability and smoothness, both in a hover and in flight, are important to the overall performance of the aircraft.

Laucius said lots of vibration will cause excessive wear.

“Rotor smoothing” – making sure the rotor blades don’t move up or down more than three-tenths of an inch during flight – is an important aspect of the test pilot’s job, too. Both time-consuming and precise, rotor smoothing is important to the health of the aircraft, Laucius said.

Being able to see the big picture is part of the training for a maintenance pilot, he added. “We can diagnose the symptoms and let the mechanics treat the problem.”

“We’re kind of like crew chiefs on the enlisted side of the house,” Laucius explained. “We may not be trained in the ‘remove the fuel pump task’ or know every task the crew chief knows, but we know what makes it work, and why it wouldn’t work.”

In a demanding and technical job, maintenance pilots can put in long days, depending on the work flow of each company. The maintenance plan on a particular aircraft will also determine how long their days last.

“If you have aircraft down, you do whatever you have to do to get the aircraft up and flying, everything that’s humanly possible,” Shorts said.

Both Laucius and Shorts said staying busy makes the time go faster.

“I’m a little tired,” said Laucius, who is on his second deployment after a tour to Korea, “but we’re flying a lot and I like the problem-solving and the maintenance.”

Maintenance is a constant, Shorts said, since you can always fine tune and improve on an aircraft.

“There’s no boredom with this job, he said. “It’s taxing, mentally and physically, but there’s something new every day.”

MEDEVAC helicopter crews stay busy with missions

Spc. Jennifer Fitts
Avn Bde PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – When a Soldier gets hurt somewhere within the Multi-National Division-Baghdad area and requires transport to the nearest combat hospital, a special group of Soldiers assigned to the Aviation Brigade is called upon to get the job done.

Pilots, crew chiefs and flight medics of the 50th Medical Company (Air Ambulance) from Ft. Campbell, Ky., spend their days and nights ready to answer an emergency call.

Although the unit calls the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) home, it is attached to the 3rd Infantry Division’s 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (General Support) for the duration of the deployment.

To ensure equal coverage, the unit is divided with a portion of the unit at Camp Falcon in order to support the southern part of the MND-B area.

Missions are sorted into three categories; urgent, priority and routine. Daily missions can fall into any of the three categories.

“Generally, when we’re called, it’s ‘life, limb or eyesight,’” said Staff Sgt. Jamie J. Rath, referring to the type of missions the medical evacuation pilots and medics respond to in their area of operations.

That isn’t set in stone, though, said Rath, since the 50th Medical Co. pilots will

sometimes pick up what might normally be a ground ambulance mission.

The teams are divided into day and night crews, who are on standby to handle an average of six to eight missions a day.

The pace ebbs and flows depending on operations within theater and medical needs, said Chief Warrant Officer Gary T. Murphy, a pilot from Greeley, Neb.

It’s all day to day, Rath said.

“We’ve had days where all of the aircraft were out, and days where nobody’s flying,” he explained.

On one of the busiest and more difficult days, the company had 24 missions in 23 hours.

At Camp Taji, shifts generally last anywhere from 10 to 13 hours, the beginning of each shift overlapping the ending shift by approximately an hour, allowing time to relay information and brief the incoming crew.

Camp Falcon, with a marginally slower operational tempo, runs crews on 24-hour shifts.

With the aircraft ready to go at any time, Soldiers from the 50th are capable of responding to an emergency within minutes.

Making sure the helicopters are ready to go at all times means that maintenance is a team effort.

The company maintenance shop plays a big role in keeping the MEDEVAC helicopters mission-ready.

“We rely on them pretty heavily, since we’re limited on what we can do,” said Spc. Joshua M. Martinez, a flight medic from Santa Fe, N.M.

The crew chiefs take care of maintenance that doesn’t take the aircraft out of service, with each shift helping out their counterpart. Day crews take care of inspections for the night crew’s birds and the night crew returns the favor.

While crew chiefs work maintenance, the flight medics ensure they have the appropriate medical supplies stocked and ready for the next mission, whenever that comes.

In a demanding and fast-paced environment like a MEDEVAC unit, all of the personnel, including the flight medics have to be on top of their game.

“We’ve got a pretty good screening process,” said Murphy, “and we generally get the cream of the crop.”

Although a doctor or a physician’s assistant may come along for the ride, the flight times to and from Camp Taji are short, so often it’s just the flight medic taking care of up to six patients. The crew chiefs are Combat Life Saver qualified, and will help the flight medics when possible.

Although the busy schedule keeps the Soldiers in the 50th Med. Co. on their toes, they keep each other focused.

“We’re here for each other, and we’ve all got our game face on,” Murphy said.

Eighty-five percent of the unit has deployed together before.



Spc. Tracy Smith

Medics with the 50th Medical Company (Air Ambulance), from Fort Campbell, Ky., approach a simulated casualty during a recent training exercise near Camp Taji.

“We’re about as tight as we can be,” said Murphy, “and we’re all mission-focused.”

Being there for the guys on the ground is important to the medics, crew chiefs and pilots of the 50th Med. Co.

“To take Soldiers and get

them somewhere to receive medical treatment – it is instant job gratification,” Rath said. “We took them out of the worst possible situation imaginable, and took them somewhere safe and I was a part of that.”

Engineer dreams of being film producer

Sgt David Kerr
70th Eng Bn

BAGHDAD – Is there a future Steven Spielberg hidden among the Army's ranks in Iraq?

Walk into 1st Lt. John Prettyman's room and you might start to think so.

You won't find the normal pictures or calendars hanging on the walls. Instead, Prettyman, of the 70th Engineer Battalion, has news articles that have captured his interest neatly taped to the white fiberboard wall. Piled on a cot, you'll see a computer, editing decks and perhaps the latest issue of Moviemaker magazine.

You'll also find a camera which can fit in the palm of a hand. This is how Prettyman is pursuing a dream that began in junior high.

The Tacoma, Wash., native has devoted his spare time in Iraq to creating a film of Soldiers' experiences in war.

Prettyman was born in California, land of big movie stars and even bigger stary-eyed dreams. Though he had creative aspirations, he majored in biology when he attended Pacific Lutheran University. He said he was an average student, never really fitting in and feeling as though something was missing.

That changed when he attended the Army Officers Basic Course and shot a short film of his classmates.

Prettyman's film was shown during the graduation ceremony and he had his first taste of the future when fellow officers later came up and asked for his autograph.

He filmed another short movie of his unit during his first combat tour in Iraq in 2003. The film, a comedy reminiscent of National Lampoon, was seen by virtually the entire 70th Engineer Battalion upon their return.

"It had a lot of good special effects," said Sgt. Trinidad Rangel, of Oxnard, Calif. "He does good work."

Prettyman thought it was nice to show the families and friends of Soldiers serving in war what the deployed engineers did to burn off steam.

Currently deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom 3, he has not missed the opportunity to work on yet another film showing the day-to-day lives of the Soldiers of the 70th Engineers.

His focus this rotation is showing the surreal environment faced every day, in a multitude of situations, during numerous missions the Soldiers perform.

"I really didn't want to do anything that anybody has seen before," Prettyman said. "The focus is more on the mind of the Soldier. It follows two Soldiers as they go through the year."

Prettyman plans to further his education and seek a degree in film studies. He envisions himself starting out filming independent movies, working toward the day when he can get work as a film producer.

He says the military has given him the confidence and aggression to seek out what he wants. He feels he now has the courage to move into the market with a Soldier's battle cry.



Photos by Sgt. David Kerr (above) Relaxing in his room after work, 1st Lt. John Prettyman, 70th Engineer Battalion, edits his latest film project which follows the combat experiences of two Soldiers. (left) Prettyman even brings his camera on patrols to capture the war-time experience for his short film.

Study group prepares Soldiers for promotion board



Sgt. Victor Soto

Staff Sgt. Everick L. Moore, right, a heavy-wheel vehicle operator with the 104th Transportation Company, 87th Corps Support Battalion, Division Support Brigade, goes over study materials for the promotion board with Spc. Ross P. Woodbury, a transporter from his squad. Woodbury will be Moore's fourth Soldier to appear before the board since deploying to Iraq.

DSB PAO
Media Release

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Task Force Baghdad Soldiers at Camp Taji have the opportunity to advance to sergeant or staff sergeant, even while deployed.

The standard is the same here as it is

back at home station: prospective non-commissioned officers must still appear before a promotion board.

Prior to the board, however, a Soldier must prepare thoroughly.

Preparing Soldiers for advancement is extremely important to Staff Sgt. Everick L. Moore. So much so, that he

devotes much of his spare time helping junior enlisted troops for one of the most important stages of their military career.

"If I send good Soldiers to the board, the Army will have good leaders," said Moore, a heavy-wheel vehicle operator with the 104th Transportation

Company, 87th Corps Support Battalion, Division Support Brigade.

To prepare potential leaders for the board, Moore, a Washington, D.C., native, developed a study club that meets during Soldiers' down time.

"It started out with just our own squad," said Spc. Ross P. Woodbury, a heavy-wheel vehicle operator with Moore's squad in 2nd Platoon. "Then other squads joined. Then other platoons."

Regardless of a Soldier's unit, Moore is glad to help.

"When I was coming up (through the ranks), NCOs helped me," said Moore, a six-year veteran.

The first thing his "students" noticed was his ability to help them prepare.

"He's good at studying," said Woodbury, a Mansfield, Mass., native.

But Moore doesn't just use a standard Army study guide.

"He had us study whole subjects, not just a list of questions," said Sgt. Joseph N. Cusumano, another heavy-wheel vehicle operator with Moore's squad.

Cusumano, who hails from Concord, N.H., said it's more than just memorizing regulations.

"You do a lot of presenting yourself," Cusumano said. "(Moore) helps you with what to do and what to expect."

Woodbury, who is preparing for his upcoming board, said practicing how to report to the board members makes him more comfortable and increases other students' confidence too.

Cusumano, who already appeared for his staff sergeant board, scored the highest points of Moore's club members to date; an incredible 148 out of 150 points. Moore said all the Soldiers from his club score at least 145. He hopes the next student will score the elusive 150.

Hard-charging Soldiers repair vehicles, save bucks

Capt. John Gubitosi
94th Maint. Co.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - As the familiar saying goes, "Waste not, want not."

The 94th Maintenance Company, 87th Corps Support Battalion, Division Support Brigade and the attached Component Repair Platoon, take this kind of frugality to heart.

Their mission is returning serviceable repair parts to the 3rd Infantry Division supply system in order to maintain vehicle and weapon system readiness.

Nicknamed the "Hard Chargers," Soldiers of 94th Maint. Co. have an excellent track record with the repairable exchange program thanks to the combined efforts of personnel from the Shop Office and its four subordinate sections.

The four sections include: automotive repair, service and lift, integrated family of test equipment, and armament.

While supporting the division supply system, the maintainers returned nearly \$6 million worth of repaired parts, ensuring the division's ability to maintain its equipment.

It all starts with the nerve center of the operation known as the Shop Office.

Soldiers of the section proved themselves by handling more than 500 work orders and turning 100 percent of them around on time for 12 consecutive weeks.

In addition to that grueling pace, section personnel conducted a shop stock review resulting in the turn-in of 200 lines of excess parts. By doing this, the Soldiers made room in the storage areas for additional supplies tailored toward their support of missions in Iraq.

Troops from the Automotive Repair Section made major contributions to the repairable exchange program, working on more than 25 Bradley Fighting Vehicle transmissions. The majority of the transmissions were in-house, but there were four on-site repairs done by unit mechanics in three months.

"My duty position affords me the opportunity to make a difference to the readiness of armor units in the division on a daily basis," said Sgt. John B. McBride, the Bradley transmission shop noncommissioned officer in charge and a resident of Peoria, Ill. "Soldiers in 3rd ID armor units can be sure that my shop is doing everything possible to ensure they have functional transmissions on their Bradleys when they roll out."

Subsequently, the repairs conducted in this section maximized the Marne Division's ability to keep those fighting vehicles mission capable during OIF III.

Soldiers in the fuel and electric repair shop have also made significant contributions to the company's repairable exchange mission by repairing more than 60 vehicle generators.

The 94th Maint. Co.'s starter repairs specialists followed suit with nearly 150 work orders completed. Shop personnel were able to keep up with the continuous need for starter items at division motor pools. Repairing and keeping the parts in the system allowed front line motor pools to have what they needed, when they needed them. This success, in turn, kept their armored convoy vehicles operational and on the roads.

Personnel from the diverse Automotive Repair Section also conducted on-system general support repairs.



Sgt. Victor Soto

Sgt. 1st Class Paul Aymond, right, an Integrated Family of Test Equipment operator and maintainer with 94th Maintenance Company, 87th Corps Support Battalion, checks Spc. Glen Spence's work. Aymond, a Division Support Brigade Soldier from Plaquemine, La., said "the driving force in our work ethic is to ensure that field artillery units in the division have the serviceable electronics equipment they need to direct fire on the enemy and destroy them."

A primary example of on-system repair is when humvees are transported in from other service units for vehicle body and wiring harness repairs. The Hard Chargers were able to troubleshoot and return these vehicles to customer units with minimal downtime.

Another critical section, the company's Service and Lift Section, supported the repairable exchange program by fixing radiators while keeping the tactical vehicles fully functional.

The Soldiers in this shop were also able to fabricate repair parts when needed. More significantly, they were able to create a geared steering shaft for a dead-lined Rough Terrain Container Handler belonging to 226th Quartermaster Company's consolidated supply Support Activity. RTCHs are needed to move 20-foot containers of supplies required to sustain division combat operations. The Hard Chargers also fabricated humvee bumpers for division and non-division customers to ensure their convoys were able to safely maneuver through traffic congested areas in Baghdad.

"The deployment to Iraq has given me a chance to work on a lot of different fabrication projects," said Spc. Gerardo Gallardo of San Antonio, a metal worker with the Service and Lift section. "Over the past three months, I have repaired radiators for tracked vehicles and I've also been able to make armor plating for vehicles that are used in convoy escorts. I know jobs like these are making a difference in daily operations and safety of 3rd ID Soldiers."

Respectively, the Integrated Family of Test Equipment Section also executed important repair operations for mission success.

The IFTE Soldiers repaired more than 10 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and several Paladin 155-millimeter self-propelled artillery pieces.



Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick

Pfc. Gerardo Gallardo, a metal worker with the 94th Maintenance Company, welds a bench support at the Service and Lift Section.

These critical repairs assisted Task Force Baghdad field artillery Soldiers by ensuring their weapon systems were functioning and capable of conducting indirect fire.

"The combination of my Soldiers and NCOs, along with their ability to operate the equipment in my section is a combat multiplier for the 3rd Infantry Division," said Sgt. 1st Class Paul Aymond, an IFTE operator and maintainer. "My IFTE section has provided continuous support to field artillery units ... over the past three months."

Aymond, a Plaquemine, La. native, said the driving force behind his troops' success is their work ethic.

"(We) ensure that field artillery units in the division have the serviceable electronics equipment they need to direct fire on the enemy and destroy them," Aymond said.

Finally, the company's Armament Section intricately joined the other sections through repair of components for the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank and the Bradley.

These repairs allowed armored vehicle Soldiers the ability to maximize a "show of force." Armament Section personnel also repaired Ground/Vehicular Laser Locator Devices for division customer units. These fire control mechanisms are used by artillerymen to accurately conduct their operations.

Hard charging as their befitting nickname illustrates, the Soldiers of 94th Maint. Co. say they're still not satisfied with their high level of productivity. They said their unit success only inspires them to raise the bar a little higher to provide even better maintenance support for the 3rd Inf. Div.

Soldiers enhance career options at GT course

Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker
100th MPAD

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Twenty-eight Soldiers from the Camp Victory complex are anxiously awaiting their test results. Test results that will open doors for the remainder of their military careers.

They've just completed the first of many classes specially designed to improve their General Technical GT scores.

The Aug. 26 graduation ceremony at the Al Faw palace represented the graduates' first crucial step to fulfilling their goals.

These Soldiers, desiring to either reenlist for a different Military Occupational Specialty, enter Officer or Warrant Officer Candidate Schools, or just to improve their GT score were joined by their unit commanders, first sergeants and platoon leaders in celebrating their academic achievements.

During his opening address to the graduates, Command Sgt Maj. Richard D. Hesse, Multi-National Coalition-Iraq, 166th Area Support Group, said, "In the next four or five years you could be officers, warrant officers or you could be in another MOS. That is going to help the Army in its strength. It says a lot about you as individuals to take this test and to move forward."

With such a high interest in the classes and a limited number of instructors, enrollment priority is given to Soldiers with GT scores below 110.

A GT score of 110 is the magic number across the board for many MOSs in the Army. If a Soldier scores a 110 or higher, they are eligible for the majority of job specialties.

The minimum score for OCS and WOCS is also 110.

Chief Warrant Officer Tammi Morrison, an imagery intelligence officer with the 319th Military Intelligence Battalion, played a major role in getting the classes started at Camp Victory.

After reviewing a similar GT improvement course in Balad and discussing the possibilities with her commander, Lt. Col. Lee Stewart, 319th MI Bn., Task Force Hurricane commander, Morrison sent out an e-mail asking for volunteer instructors.

Sgt. Tiffany C. Falk, 175th Engineer Company, 20th Engineer Brigade, 18th Airborne Corps, is a topographical engineer who volunteered her teaching skills to help fellow Soldiers.

Falk, from Miami, Florida, taught English and vocabulary for more than two hours each day.

"It was a challenge trying to discern the different learning



Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker

Soldiers of the GT improvement course following their graduation at the Al Faw Water Palace.

modalities of the students because we had 28 students and 28 different levels of education," Falk said. "I made up individualized crossword puzzles, word searches and anything I could think of to help them remember these words. We did charades, we did Jeopardy, we did all kinds of different activities because different people learn in different ways."

Sgt. Marvin Meertens of Frederick, Md., also from the 319th MI Bn., decided to take the class in order to reenlist with a different MOS.

"The instructors had an extensive knowledge of the subjects they were teaching and the class moved to the slowest-paced person," Meertens said. "If someone didn't get the problem or question, students would help out other students. The class would move with them so no one was left behind."

Spc. Ellen Mason, of the 3rd Infantry Division, wants to reenlist and change her MOS to become a legal specialist. Achieving a score higher than 110 is one step closer to her ultimate goal of becoming a lawyer. She hopes to enter WOCS in a year or two.

Mason, a transmission systems operator with the 3rd Signal Company, 3rd Detachment, Special Troops Battalion, has always had a strong math background, so she concentrated on her vocabulary skills. For her, performing

vocabulary drills and word games using prefixes, suffixes and root words, was the key for her to learn new words.

Pfc. Tiwuanda Thomas, 35th Signal Brigade, from Clarksdale, Miss. hopes to reenlist and change her specialty to a dental hygienist. Currently, she is a cable system specialist also known as a "cable dog."

Thomas heard about the GT improvement classes through her platoon sergeant. When he asked her if she would rather go on a pass or hit the books, Thomas gave the answer that most platoon sergeants wouldn't expect - she elected to pursue her career goal.

"I chose to improve my GT score just in case I wanted to reenlist," she explained. "I wanted to pick up another MOS, one in the dental field."

Lt. Col. Stewart, presented the Soldiers with training certificates during the ceremony.

Stewart encouraged the graduates to continue working toward their goals and not to put their lives on hold during their deployment.

"We should move on in our life," Stewart advised. "Soldiers who are interested in making the Army a part of their life have the opportunity to learn and grow. Through educational opportunities you can decide what you want to do."

Spc. Tashah Miller, from Bridgeport, Conn., works as an automated logistics specialist with the 35th Signal Brigade.

She noticed a flier posted in the company area.

"I took the class because I am going to the board next month and could use the promotion points," she said. "I plan on becoming a sergeant major, so I know I have to increase my GT score for when the DA starts looking at my packet. I decided I should start improving myself at an early stage to progress."

The class is no cake walk.

Morrison said leaders need to understand that the classes are very intense and that students are busy with course work and are not getting off easy by being absent from their normal daily duties. They are working hard and their minds are being challenged.

"I want commanders to think before they sign their name to that (class enrollment) memo," Morrison said. "They should ask themselves if they can afford to lose a person for three weeks straight."

Morrison recommends leaders should basically release their Soldier and tell them their mission is to focus on their studies.

The students weren't the only ones learning something new.

"Aside from teaching the actual vocabulary and strategies, I learned a lot about how students retain information," Falk said. "I learned how they reacted to the positive and the negative and I learned right along with them. You can see it on their faces when they do a good job - it's awesome!"



Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker

Sgt. Tiffany C. Falk, 175th Eng. Co., 20th Eng. Bde., 18th Airborne Corps, a topographical engineer, volunteered her teaching skills and is awarded a commanders coin and certificate from Lt. Col. Lee Stewart, 319th MI Bn., Task Force Hurricane commander.

10th Mtn. Div. Soldiers train on UAVs in Kuwait

By Pfc. Luke Allen
1/10 Inf. PAO

UDAIRI RANGE, Kuwait - Soldiers with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division recently trained on the Army's unmanned aerial vehicle at Udairi Range near Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

The training is designed to prepare the Fort Drum, N.Y., Soldiers for operations in Iraq.

These 1st BCT Soldiers perfected their flying skills, setting up in the middle of the desert at night and flying their small yet sophisticated aircraft which resemble toy airplanes.

"It's funny how the Army pays us to fly model airplanes," joked Maj. Erick Sweet, 1st BCT Aviation Officer. "On a more serious note, we'll do whatever

it takes to save lives and complete the mission."

Sweet said the benefit of having UAVs is that they can achieve the same objectives as Army aircraft without placing pilots' lives and more expensive equipment at risk.

These unmanned aerial vehicles won't replace traditional helicopters and planes for surveillance, but complement them in situations where needed, Sweet said. "It's going to be very difficult for the terrorists to be successful at all, day or night, with our eyes constantly watching their every move."

The UAV operators assigned to this mission range from junior enlisted Soldiers to senior noncommissioned officers. Even though these Soldiers come from different military occupational specialties, ranging from food

service specialists to forward observers, their mission in Iraq is to operate this new technology when the need arises.

"How many other people get to fly in the Army as a junior-enlisted Soldier?" asked Pfc. Keith Cahill of 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment.

Cahill said he's had experience with remote-controlled cars when he was younger, but nothing like this.

The systems are very portable and can be controlled on the ground from anywhere, such as a forward operating base or a moving tactical vehicle. The goal is to field the systems down to individual companies so that leaders at company and platoon levels can obtain situational awareness while reducing the risks associated on the current battlefield environment.

"Unmanned aerial vehicles have

been around for over 20 years, but the technology has increased dramatically since then," said Jack Wallin from Systems Dynamics Inc., the contractor who manages the aircraft.

The 1st BCT was the first brigade to receive this new type of equipment in 2003 in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Steven Smith of 2nd Bn., 22nd Inf. said this training is all about getting re-familiarized with the UAVs and testing live equipment prior to assuming their mission in Iraq.

"We've tested this type of equipment before while at Fort Drum, but it's important to conduct this kind of training in the desert because you just can't experience the same kind of conditions in garrison," Smith said. "These are the type of elements we'll be facing soon."

256th CG thanks leaders, staff

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PAO

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq – “One of the great things about being a general is that you envision (something) and good people make it happen ... and this is just the way I envisioned it.”

Brig. Gen. John Basilica Jr., from Baton Rouge, La., commander of 256th Brigade Combat Team, expressed his gratitude and an overwhelming sense of pride in his Soldiers Aug. 21 in Baghdad.

He honored the Soldiers, leaders, and staff who made the previous 18 months of mobilization and deployment a success.

Battalion and company leadership, as well as brigade staff, filed into the ceremony to the tune of Louisiana State University’s fight song, significant to the lineage of the brigade. The LSU Tigers’ name originally comes from the Washington Artillery, which later evolved into 1st Battalion, 141st Field Artillery of the 256th BCT.

Each leader signed a book about the history of the 156th Infantry Regiment, or “Lee’s Fighting Tigers,” as well as three 256th BCT flags. Basilica greeted each leader with his personal expressions of thanks and presented each with his coin of excellence.

He recognized units attached to the Louisiana brigade, including 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment from New York; B Company, 134th Signal Battalion of Minnesota; B Company, 126th Field Artillery from Wisconsin, attached to 1/141st FA for the duration of the deployment; 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment from California; and 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment from Illinois.

Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack, commander of the 1/69th, said he felt honored and humbled to receive a plaque from the leader of the Tiger Brigade. He said it was the battalions working in sync which made the deployment as successful as it turned out.

Slack thanked the 1088th Engineer Battalion for helping his Soldiers with the Route Irish reconstruction and force protection project, as well as the 199th Forward Support Battalion for their diligent efforts to



Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr., 256th BCT commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Mays present Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack and Command Sgt. Maj. Gerogre Brett a Tiger Bde. plaque Aug. 21.

keep the supply lines moving.

He reflected on the Louisiana Soldiers who perished under his command, as well.

“Guys from Louisiana died on my watch,” he said. “There is no such thing anymore as the 69th without the Tiger Brigade and I’m deeply honored to have served under your command,” he told Basilica.

The 256th commander also recognized outstanding Soldiers whose efforts kept aspects of the deployment running smoothly. Soldiers in food service and communications, as well as the Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Year were singled out for their contributions to the Tiger Brigade.

Lt. Col. Jim Blackburn, commander of 1/11th ACR, said the 256th was “truly a family affair and we’ve managed to marry up.” He thanked Basilica, as well as all leaders and staff, for welcoming him and his Soldiers with outstretched arms and giving them a place in the Tiger Brigade family.

Basilica told his commanders, sergeant majors, and first sergeants, many who led the troops in and out of battle in one of the most hostile and dangerous corners of Baghdad, “We have 200 strong leaders ... this is what it takes to run the best brigade in the Army.”



Photos by Sgt. Thomas Benoit

Lt. Col. Jim Blackburn, from Washington, Pa., commander of 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, signs a 256th Brigade Combat Team flag Aug. 21 at Camp Tigerland during a ceremony recognizing staff and leadership of the 256th BCT.

THE MARNE BLOTTER REPORT

1. Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Bryant, HHC, 2/156 Infantry pled guilty at a special Court-Martial June 21. He was convicted of a violation of a lawful general order and dereliction of duty by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-4, forfeiture of \$300 pay per month for 6 months and confinement for six months.

2. Capt. Joseph Biagas, HHC, 1088th Engineer Battalion pled guilty at a general Court-Martial June 30. He was convicted of violating a lawful general regulation, false official statement, wrongfully disposing of government property,

adultery and fraternization by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to be confined for six months, forfeiture of \$3000 pay per month for 6 months and a dismissal.



3. Spc. Edwin Reynoso, 1/69 Infantry, pled guilty at a special Court-Martial July 1. He was convicted of violating a lawful general order and assault by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-2 and 30 days hard labor without confinement.

4. Sgt. Herbert Finley, HHSC, STB, pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial July 1. He was convicted of larceny and attempted larceny by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-2 and 30 days confinement.

5. Staff Sgt. James Crumling, 2/156th Infantry, pled guilty at a special Court-Martial Aug. 4. He was convicted of violation of a general order for possessing and distributing alcohol in accordance with his plea by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-3, forfeiture of two-thirds pay for five months, and to perform hard labor without confinement for 90 days.

6. Pvt. Delarrius Hunter, HHC, 1/156 Armor, pled guilty at a general Court-Martial Aug. 5. He

was convicted of violation of a general order for possessing alcohol and privately owned ammunition, wrongful use of marijuana, possession of marijuana, wrongful damage to private property, wrongful appropriation, larceny and housebreaking by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, confinement for five years, and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

7. Spc. Kevin Mock, HSC, 92nd Engineer Battalion, pled guilty at a general Court-Martial Aug. 7. He was convicted of conspiracy to commit larceny, false official statement, wrongful use of valium, larceny, housebreaking and solicitation to distribute valium by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, confinement for 29 months and a Bad-Conduct Discharge

8. Spc Steve Scully, HHC, 2/156 Infantry, pled guilty at a special Court-Martial Aug. 8. He was convicted of possessing and selling alcohol in violation of a general order by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1 and 60 days confinement.

Iraqi, U.S. Army units partner for success

Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th BCT PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MICHAEL, Iraq – It has been nearly two months since the Soldiers from 48th Brigade Combat Team have put “boots-on-the-ground” at Forward Operating Base Michael.

Soldiers from Troop E, 108th Cavalry, 48th BCT, 3rd Infantry Division knew immediately what to do in order to become successful in accomplishing their mission: make the region safe for the Iraqi citizens south of Baghdad.

To do this, they have worked on building a relationship based on trust with Iraq Army’s 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Division, said Capt. John H. Alderman, commander of the Griffin, Ga. based 108th Cav.

“We have been successful,” said Alderman, a resident of Dawsonville, Ga. “When we meet with our IA counterparts, they feel comfortable saying ‘Here’s what I know.’ We are both able to identify assets available to do the job and then we do it. This allows the IA Soldiers who know this area to put their stamp on planning and implementation.”

This relationship was recently proven when two hastily-planned missions resulted in the apprehension of suspects and the collection of bomb-making materials by the IA with fire support, if needed, from U.S. forces.

The first mission on July 21 was a short one. A meeting between the 108th Cav. and IA 3rd Bn. Intelligence and Operations officers was interrupted when a local resident who had previously given reliable information about terrorist activity came forward to tell the military officials about a group of Anti-Iraqi Forces

conducting murders.

Coupling this valuable information with confirmed search efforts by the IA, the team was able to roll into the seemingly benign farming community without incident and arrest 15 suspected terrorists.

With additional air and ground support from the 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and aviation elements, a show of united force minimized the likelihood of any resistance from combatants.

“It’s dangerous for us and even more dangerous for a local citizen to come forward,” Alderman said, recognizing the bravery of Iraqi citizens for taking such risks.

Seventeen hours later, motivated by the success of their joint mission, the military teams re-grouped and concentrated on an area notorious for heavy terrorist activity just outside of Mahmudiyah. The information they gathered was used to reinforce plans for an aggressive investigation and search by the Iraq Army.

The 3/3 ACR Soldiers went on a benevolent patrol with families in the downtown Mahmudiyah area, handing out toys to children and speaking with adults about their concerns.

Suddenly, there was a loud boom less than 300 meters from the patrol. The peaceful procession through the neighborhood took on a posture of heightened alert and protectiveness as the convoy headed toward a cloud of smoke which had suddenly appeared.

Four IA Soldiers were killed in the attack and several others were wounded.

U.S. Soldiers immediately cordoned the area and helped the Iraqi Army with their investigation of the bombing,



Photos by Spc. Tracy J. Smith
(above) Soldiers from 108th Cav. Regt., 48th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. provide assistance to 4th Bde., 6th IA Soldiers as they investigate a vehicle-borne IED attack that killed four IA Soldiers and wounded several civilians July 21. (left) Capt. John H. Alderman, speaks with an operations planning officer from the IA 2nd Bn., 4th Bde.

adding additional backup and questioning locals in the vicinity. Two individuals were taken into custody during the investigation.

Alderman pointed out the importance of trust in this relationship of Soldiers from two culturally different armies.

“We learn from each other,” he said. “(The IA) teach us how to do ... actually

targeting by showing us the identifiers of what is normal and what is not during patrols. Our common goals dictate the success of our mission.”

Continued cooperation between the two entities has progressively minimized activity in what is considered one of the more dangerous areas for terrorist activity in the region.

Military Police provide security for bomb squad

Sgt. David Bill
48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - When the call comes in for the 447th Explosive Ordnance Disposal team, the bomb squad Soldiers are not the only ones rushing for the door.

The 48th Brigade Combat Team’s Military Police platoon follows on EOD’s heels to ensure the team can conduct its mission in a safe environment.

These two units have developed a strong bond and excellent working relationship in the six weeks they have been together. They have completed more than 115 missions together, of which more than 90 percent have been the real deal - live ordnance.

On one recent mission, the units responded to a call to dispose of unexploded ordnance placed along the median of a road.

The MPs met with EOD Soldiers at a checkpoint, reviewed the location and moved out swiftly toward the

location of the device.

While traffic was held back from the site, the MPs quickly set out a security perimeter, checking the area for other possible devices.

Meanwhile, the EOD team went about its job of identifying the device and placing plastic explosives on top of the mine to blow it up.

The countdown for the controlled detonation began.

Someone yelled “Fire in the hole!” three times just before the explosives detonated with a deafening blast.

After the debris settled, EOD team members verified there were no other devices in the vicinity.

“That was a good mission,” said Staff Sgt. Joseph Vamper, of Macon, Ga. “I like these type of missions. Everyone gets home safe.”

As the squad leader, it is Vamper’s responsibility to coordinate the convoys and supervise their security as the two units learn how to function as one team.

“We’ve worked with the EOD for the past six weeks and we know what is required



(left) Boom! The results of a successful mission. A controlled detonation by the 447th EOD team.

Sgt. David Bill

of us, and they can trust us to do the job right.” Vamper said.

Over time, the two units have developed a synergy that

keeps everyone alive on this very dangerous mission.

“We don’t want to leave the EOD out there unprotected,”

said Spc. Casey Lipscomb, of Bartlesville, Okla. “We feel obligated to stick with them until they leave.”

Save your eyesight!! Wear protective goggles or safety glasses during appropriate tasks. Be smart!

Faces and Places



1 Lt. Chad Lawrence
Soldiers with 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment finish their 50 cal. weapon test firing at Udari Range, Kuwait, and load up their vehicles to return to Camp Beuring.

Pfc. Laura M. Bigenho
Sgt. Stephanie White, a military police officer with the 64th Military Police Company, 720th Military Police Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas, teaches an Iraqi boy, 13-year-old Mohammed, how to "thumb wrestle." Mohammed was one of several children who eagerly ran over to Soldiers during their visit to al-Zohour in Baghdad.



photos (above) Pfc. Laura M. Bigenho and (left) Sgt. Thomas Benoit (above) Sgt. Jenna Tankersley, of the 64th Military Police Company, 720th Military Police Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas, pulls security on a rooftop in Baghdad. (left) Running several flights of stairs during a cordon and search mission is a demanding job in 120 degree temperatures during July. A Soldier with 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, stationed at Camp Hawk, savors a refreshing class of cold water. The water was offered by a young resident after his home was just searched. By being polite and professional, the IA Soldiers are gaining great respect from the people they are trying to protect from the insurgents.

Sgt. Kevin Bromley
Spc. Victor Montellano, a Glen Rose, Texas, native, and civil affairs specialist from Team A, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, claps as children of a rural village near Taji, sing and dance Aug. 13. His battalion, along with 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery Regiment, and personnel from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted a civil affairs survey of the rural areas around Camp Taji.



A Soldier with 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, remembers fallen comrade Spc. Brian Derks, during his memorial service Aug. 17.

Photos by Spc. Chris Foster

256th Brigade mourns loss of Soldier, friend

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PAO

CAMP TIGERLAND, Iraq – Friends and fellow Soldiers of Spc. Brian Keith Derks gathered in a small chapel in Baghdad Aug. 17 to remember him and honor his life.

Derks enlisted in the Army in 2003, and his buddies in F Troop, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, said he would not want to change anything, even if he knew the outcome. They said Derks loved the Army, and it is all he ever wanted to do.

“Spc. Derks went to the Army recruiter and tried to join, but was over the weight limit,” said Capt. Brian Hansen, commander of F Troop. “When the recruiter turned him down, Derks took that as a personal challenge and proceeded to lose more than 100 pounds in less than three months.”

When Derks stepped back into the office, the recruiter did not recognize him, Hansen added.

“This type of determination and desire is rare – and all of this, so he could join the ranks of the United States Army Infantrymen,” the commander mused.

Fellow 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers on patrol with Derks during his last moments will not forget the events which took their friend’s life.

They were patrolling the Abu Ghraib area to keep main supply roads open when their vehicle hit an improvised explosive device. Intelligence gathered after the attack led 1/11th ACR to the suspected terrorist, and he was promptly detained.

Spc. Sean Dinnell, also with F Troop, was in the vehicle with Derks that day. He believes his friend will always be remembered as a brother and fellow Soldier.

“He’s a part of every one of us, and I know he’s grateful for what we’re doing right now,” Dinnell said. “He was a great person and friend and he would only want for us to be happy.”

Spc. Richard Wagoner, who was also present that fateful day, said Derks’ friendship meant so much to him, that he used to wait up for him to return from a patrol so they could talk.



Soldiers with 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, grieve the loss of their friend Aug. 17. Spc. Brian Derks, was killed Aug. 13 in an improvised explosive device attack in Abu Ghraib.

“We talked about everything,” he reflected. “We talked about him, about me, about life, and different things.”

Wagoner recalled how Derks’ intelligence quickly became apparent, as did his faith.

“He was one of the most religious guys I knew, and I know he was well prepared to leave this world,” he said.

Friends also added, as his tremendous weight loss showed, he never knew the meaning of the word “can’t.” They said if someone told Derks he could not accomplish a task, he did what he had to do in order to prove them wrong. Either he did it on his own, or he got help, but he always got the job done.

Lt. Col. Jim Blackburn, commander of 1/11th ACR, summed up what most Soldiers collectively felt about Derks.

“He was one of those people who knew you can only live a full life, when you are truly full of life,” he said.

Iraqi civilian tips lead to weapons stash

Spc. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq - Sometimes Soldiers perform best when they are in the most stressful situations.

That was true of troops from B Company, 1st Battalion, 115th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division on the morning of Aug. 28.

Through quick and decisive action, the Maryland National Guard Soldiers diverted a car bomb from its intended target and saved many lives.

According to B Co. commander, Capt. Brian S. Borakove, an Arlington, Va., native, Soldiers from his company’s 1st Platoon were conducting a mounted patrol when they noticed a suspicious vehicle driving through the town of Saba Al Bor.

B Co. runs patrols in the area around the clock and has become very familiar with the residents and traffic patterns.

“By ‘living’ there, you know what should and shouldn’t be there,” Borakove said.

The platoon leader, 1st Lt. Michael Kirtland, from Burtonsville, Md., decided to search the car and another car traveling with it. He directed the drivers to pull to the side of the road.

When the Soldiers were preparing to search the rear car, the driver detonated the explosives-laden vehicle.

The dismounted Soldiers were wounded and their vehicle became a burning hulk.

Their comrades sprang into action, securing the area and aiding the wounded.

“One of the guys ran through a cloud of black smoke, found his buddy, pulled him to safety and started treatment,” said Sgt. 1st Class Patrick M. Carey, platoon sergeant for 1st Plt. and a Silver Spring, Md., resident. “Everybody did a great job. The lieutenant’s driver (Spc. Ernest Miller IV, from Baltimore) was still working the radio while the vehicle was on fire.”

Kirtland pulled the vehicle’s gunner out of the burning humvee.

If the Soldiers hadn’t stopped the two cars, “it would have been a mass casualty incident,” Carey said. “The cars were completely destroyed, so we know they were packing a lot of explosives.”

“We believe (the car bomber) was headed to another target,” Borakove said. “I believe the Soldiers on the patrol saved the lives of others at checkpoints in the area.”

The senior leaders of the company praised the performance of their troops.

“Our Soldiers performed well during crisis,” said 1st Sgt. Donald R. Connolly, from Silver Spring, Md. “Their training and skill showed through, and they all made us very proud.”

“I’m extremely proud of how they handled themselves after contact with the enemy,” Borakove said. “Their actions showed the great confidence they have in each other.”

The two Soldiers wounded in the attack were evacuated to a medical facility in Germany and are recovering from their wounds.

In Memory of ...

- Sgt. 1st Class Lonnie J. Parson, 3/7 Cav.
- Staff Sgt. George R. Draughn Jr., 108 Cav.
- Staff Sgt. Robert L. Hollar Jr., 108 Cav.
- Staff Sgt. Jeremy W. Doyle, 3/69 Armor
- Sgt. Nathan K. Brouchard, 3/69 Armor
- Spc. Ray M. Fuhrmann II, 3/69 Armor
- Pfc. Timothy J. Seamans, 3/69 Armor
- Sgt. Willard T. Partridge, 170 MP
- Spc. Hatim S. Kathiria, 703 FSB
- 1 Lt. Carlos J. Diaz, 2/69 Armor
- Sgt. Monta S. Ruth, 1/15 Inf.



You may be gone, but you're not forgotten.
We will continue the fight.

48th Brigade selects Soldier, NCO of Quarter

Sgt David Bill
48th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – The board has met and the final votes are in. The 48th Brigade Combat Team has selected its top Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter.

Spc. Nicholas Ives of the 648th Engineer Battalion and Sgt. Eric Lynn of the 248th Military Intelligence Company were named the best among the best.

The selection process allowed each of the battalions and separate units within the brigade to send their top troops to address a board of senior NCOs in their attempt to vie for the honor of being named Soldier and NCO of the Quarter.

"It gives the Soldiers a break from the rigors of deployment," said 48th BCT Command Sgt. Maj. James Nelson Jr. "It strengthens their bonds through friendly competition."

Six candidates for Soldier of the Quarter appeared individually before the board of sergeants major and first ser-

geants who represented major battalions and separate companies assigned to the 48th BCT. The candidates were questioned on topics ranging from military customs and courtesies; awards and decorations; brigade history; Army programs; the Army chain of command; and the Enlisted Promotion System.

After executing a series of facing movements, each can-



Courtesy Photo
Sgt. Eric Lynn, 48th BCT NCO of the Quarter. Lynn is an analyst with the 248th Military Intelligence Company.

didate sat in front of board members who watched their every move and listened to every response.

"It feels good to have your skills tested," said Ives who was able to successfully answer the majority of the questions fired at him. "It is an honor to be selected. I studied mostly at night and between missions," added the college student from Statesboro, Ga. and driver for Company A.

As a finance major at Georgia Southern University, Ives plans for a career in real estate as well as a long career in the National Guard.

The NCO of the Quarter, Sgt. Eric Lynn, an active-duty Soldier augmenting the 248th Military Intelligence Company as an analyst, hit the study guides more frequently.

"I've been studying for a month preparing for the active duty E-6 promotion board and this was a good rehearsal for that board," Lynn said.

Lynn, of Flint, Mich., was eloquent as he responded sharply to each question with a quick, clear-cut answer as if



Courtesy Photo

Soldier of the Quarter Spc. Nicholas Ives (right) of Company A, 648th Engineer Battalion, 48th Brigade Combat Team, is congratulated by Command Sgt. Maj. John Smiley, command sergeant major of the 648th Eng. Bn.

he were reading it directly from a field manual or Army regulation.

His confidence and candor impressed the panel of senior NCOs.

"It was a very close competition until we got to him," said one panel member.

"I'll help others in the company prepare for the next

board," Lynn said.

"The purpose of these boards is to allow Soldiers to keep up their general knowledge while participating in friendly competition," Nelson said. "The brigade commander and I want to continue to foster friendly competition between the units. This is a good way to do that."

U.S. Soldiers respond to coordinated attacks against IPs, civilians

Spc. Erin Robicheaux
256th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD- Task Force Baghdad Soldiers responded to coordinated attacks against Iraqi Police and civilians Aug. 24.

The attacks began just before 3 p.m. when eight individuals wearing camouflage clothing shot at a house just northwest of the Al Khadra Police Station. They went inside, and moments later, fled the scene. The house then exploded, killing several civil-

ians.

Only 25 minutes after the initial attack on the house, 3rd Platoon, A Company, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, responded to a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack which killed IPs and civilians.

"As we were investigating the VBIED, we heard another explosion," said 2nd Lt. Joshua Guillory from Lafayette, La., the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, A Co., 1st Bn., 156th Armor

Regiment, 256th BCT.

Anti-Iraqi Forces had attacked another IP unit, but this time with multiple VBIEDs designed to block escape routes in the area. These attacks also caused multiple police and civilian casualties.

The terrorists prepared several more ambushes with small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades against IPs responding to the attacks.

"At that point, we knew that it was an assault targeting the IPs," Guillory said.

The platoon joined up with a patrol from 3rd Bn., 156th Inf. Reg., and laid down suppressive fire. Eventually, the 1/156th AR platoon engaged a team of terrorists with RPGs. In the end, two terrorists were killed and four were wounded, with no American casualties.

Guillory said his Soldiers played a large role in disrupting a coordinated attack on the Iraqi Police.

"We stopped six AIF from continuing their mission against the IPs and in the process collected a weapons

cache from their attack," he said.

Soldiers of 1/156th AR discovered an improvised explosive device strategically placed at a blocking position toward the west side of the VBIED attacks.

Shortly afterward, they also found a four-door sedan, suspected of belonging to one of the AIF killed or detained by the 1/156th. The car contained an RPG launcher, four RPG rounds, one rifle, one pistol, one assault rifle, an IP uniform and a ski mask.

Iraqi Security Forces nab terrorist, defuse bomb

2nd BCT PAO
Media Release

BAGHDAD — Two incidents in Rusafa Aug. 28 showed the continuing success of Iraqi Security Forces in their fight against terrorists.

In the first incident, 1st Battalion, 2nd Iraqi Army Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, captured a terrorist known for making and emplacing roadside bombs, as well as involvement in car bomb operations.

"The Iraqi Army Battalion developed the intelligence on this target," said Capt. Michael Dick, an advisor to the Iraqi Army Battalion. "They planned and executed the operation to detain him and disrupt car bomb operations in Baghdad."

"The performance of the ISF in this operation demonstrates their capability to conduct independent

operations," added Dick, who is a native of Cincinnati.

The terrorist was discovered with remote detonation equipment and other bomb-making paraphernalia.

The second incident involved the discovery of a car bomb before it could be detonated. The car bomb was found by Iraqi Police near a school and was loaded with rockets and anti-tank mines.

"The car bomb would have been devastating to anyone who was nearby," said Staff Sgt. Mark Morse, of Olivia, Minn., and an advisor to the Iraqi Police. "That the terrorists placed the car bomb near a school house shows their absolute disregard for even the most innocent lives."

An Iraqi explosive ordnance disposal team was called to the site of the car bomb and disabled the device before it could be detonated.



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The Mission of the Multi-National Corps-Iraq Army Reserve Affairs.

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Camp Victory, Iraq APO AE 09342
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Warrior Support Center
LSA Anaconda, Iraq APO AE 09391
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GOODWILL, continued from page 1

responsibility over to Iraqi Security Forces as part of the overall picture, to allow citizens to see and feel more comfortable with many of the new faces," said Capt. Darrell Retherford, a 490th Civil Affairs Battalion team leader during a briefing to his Soldiers.

Pointing to Iraqi Soldiers unloading supplies into the rear of a utility pickup, the Abilene, Texas, resident continued, "They are the ones who will be here long

after we leave, and when that happens, the people here need to know who is responsible for them, doing the patrols and protecting them."

On this day it wasn't the

U.S. Soldiers but Soldiers from the Iraqi Army POB who distributed the goods directly to the people.

The Iraqi Soldiers will soon become responsible for security in this area as Americans begin to limit their presence.

The town sits removed from the steady stream of images

"(The ISF) are the ones who will be here long after we leave, and when that happens, the people here need to know who is responsible for ... protecting them."

Capt. Darrell Retherford

coming out of more familiar parts of Baghdad. It's located a few miles south of the city and west of the Tigris River — a postcard image of what one

might imagine the Fertile Crescent to be with rows upon rows of orchards, date trees and watermelon fields.

This southern-most area of Al Rashid is generally considered an agricultural area.

Lately however, there has been a reduced presence of Coalition Forces.

Concerned local leaders and Iraqi Security Forces fear an increasing number of terrorists have moved into the area.

That's one reason why Retherford helped orchestrate this mission named appropriately, Operation Thunder Goodwill, a mission geared toward entrusting local authorities and showing they are in charge.

The local Imam of the town met with the POB commander for the first time Aug. 17 and the two exchanged a warm greeting as they stood next to the trucks loaded with food and supplies.

The POB Soldiers were in the background shouting "Emshee, emshee," as they tried to run off the horde of smiling children clutching their newly acquired soccer balls and T-shirts.

The Imam offered to work with the new POB to keep terrorist activity away from Horajeb, which has been without major incident for nearly five months.

The humanitarian mission was conducted during the early-morning hours as Soldiers delivered rice, canned chicken, tomato sauce and medical supplies donated by organizations in the United States. The toys and soccer balls were donated by friends and family members of 3/3 ACR and collected by the 490th CA Bn. for distribution.

"Our operations are not always about cordon and searches or raids," said Maj. Eric Carpenter, chief of plans for 4th BCT. "Operation Thunder Goodwill allows us to support the ISF and get them on the streets so they can talk to the residents and let them know we are working to make their neighborhoods safer."

Retherford commanded the humanitarian mission and



Spc. David Kobi

An Iraqi girl holds a Beanie Baby and a handbill given to her by Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade during Operation Thunder Goodwill Aug. 17.



Spc. Christopher Mallard

A Soldier from 1st Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade hands a bag of goods to an Iraqi family during a humanitarian assistance drop to the residents of Horajeb as part of Operation Thunder Goodwill Aug. 17.

began by contacting friends from a local non-profit organization back home in Oklahoma City.

Many Americans would be surprised to learn how scarce many of these basic resources are and how difficult they are to get through normal Army supply channels.

"You can see that much of that early effort of what we did here back in Operation Iraqi Freedom I had a significant

impact on the daily lives of Iraqis living in the area today. The food distribution today is mostly a goodwill gesture," said Sgt. First Class Vester Bland, also from the 490th CA Bn. and an Abilene, Texas, native.

Coalition Forces understand that to beat back terrorism, humanitarian assistance operations must go forward as part of a larger strategy of using generosity to encourage peace.

1/10 MTN., continued from page 1

over the past year.

"As we prepare to head into Iraq, I want you to keep your head up and your mind open," Maj. Christopher Laneave, 1st BCT operations officer, told Soldiers as they readied to enter the country. "We still have a lot to learn before taking over this operation," he said.

"These guys (256th BCT) have been doing it for a year and they've been doing it right," added Laneave, of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Already, the Iraqi citizens in the area are noticing the Fort Drum Soldiers and reacting to their presence.

"The Iraqi people in this area recognize the 10th Mountain patch, and they are excited to see it again," said 1st Lt. Ronnie Mildren, from Davenport, Ohio, with 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment Fire Support Officer and S-5. "They know the history and capability of our Soldiers to get things done, and they are glad to

have us back."

Soldiers from each 1st BCT unit will remain busy during their deployment, especially with essential services projects in the country.

"There is much work to be done with things like electricity and the sewage system, but with the proper resources and cooperation among all the organizations here, I am confident that we can leave this place better off for the Iraqi people when we leave," Mildren said.

"The cooperation between 1st BCT Soldiers and their 256th counterparts has been smooth so far, and our Soldiers will be ready to take over the operation and run with it," said Sgt. 1st Class William Hobgood.

"Shadowing our counterparts for the hand-off has been very beneficial," Mildren said. "They have been very receptive and helpful. That, along with productive projects, will set us up for success."



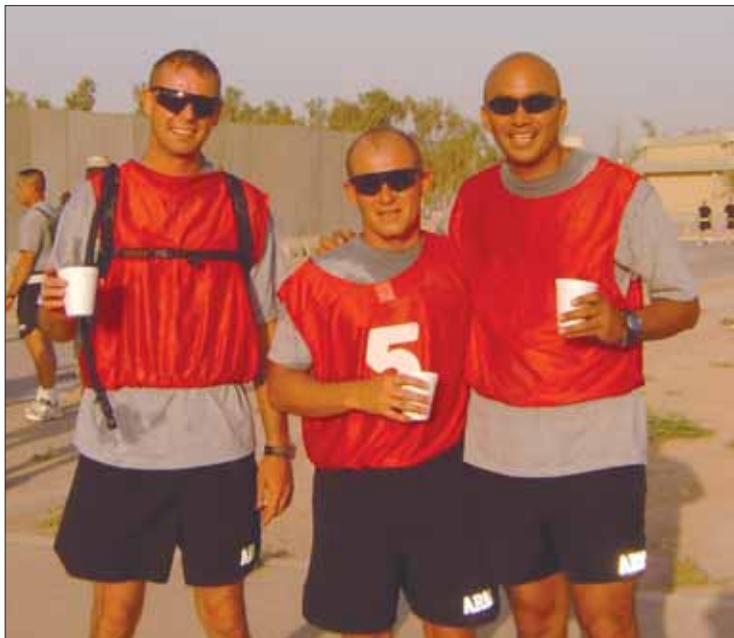
Staff Sgt. John R. Rozean

1st Lt. Brandon Shelley, left, and Maj. Chad Sullivan, center, both of 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, talk with local Iraqi children Aug. 20 in the Kadamiyah district, north of Baghdad, as part of an orientation convey with their 256th Brigade Combat Team counterparts.



Photos by Santiago Ortiz

(above) 1st Sgt. Roger Nickel, HHC 4-3 AHB, endures the 10K bike ride, the second event of the Balad Triathlon Aug. 26. (right) Maj. Kelly Donna, 1st Sgt. Roger Nickel and Chief Warrant Officer Jose Marquez, all of 4-3 AHB, cool off with some much deserved water after recording top 10 finishes in the Balad Triathlon.



Soldiers represent Avn. Bde. in Balad triathlon

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

BALAD, Iraq - They had been running for almost an hour, and with sweat running down their faces, the Soldiers continued to run through the streets of Balad with fierce determination to reach their goal.

While running around an urban area in Iraq during the summer might seem like a situation most Soldiers would want to avoid, three Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Assault Helicopter) made the conscious choice to do it. These Soldiers, along with 40 other US and coalition forces and civilian contractors, all converged in this Iraqi city to compete in the Balad Triathlon on Aug. 26.

The event consisted of an 800 meter swim, followed by a 10K bike ride and concluded with a 5K run. Maj. Kelly Donna, Chief Warrant Officer Jose Marquez and 1st Sgt. Roger Nickel represented 4-3 AHB proudly, with all three finishing in the top 10. Donna, a Danville, Ill. native, finished 3rd overall with a finishing time of 53 minutes, 31 seconds, followed by Nickel from Saginaw, Mich., who placed 5th overall with a time of 55 minutes, 2 seconds, and Los Angeles native Marquez finished shortly after in 56 minutes, earning him a 7th overall finish.

While the places were determined on an individual basis, the three Soldiers of 4-3 AHB went in support of each other.

"We all have different jobs and various schedules, so work requirements prevented us from really training together (in person)," Marquez said. "We did meet on certain days, and I was able to get tips on things such as how to prep my bike."

"We went together as a team," Donna said. "We helped each other out and supported each other. I helped (Nickel) with the swim portion of the event—I helped him with technique, breathing and stroke."

Nickel knew that the 800 meter swim would be the most difficult event for him, so he trained vigorously for that event and welcomed advice from Donna, who has been participating in triathlons for nearly 20 years.

"It was my goal for two months prior to really learn how to swim competitively. I basically swam twice a day for two months," Nickel said. "Maj. Donna really helped me out with my breathing and technique—

it really helped me go the distance. Working with a team got me where I was."

Being able to receive advice from a tri-athlete like Donna was of great assistance to the team, but even a veteran like Donna gets nervous prior to an event.

"I'm nervous every time I compete," Donna said. "I had butterflies for the first 400 meters of the swim, but I think you always get excited for something you love."

Nickel shared the same feelings going into the competition.

"The competition was so fierce, you could see it in their eyes. It felt like I was at the Olympics," Nickel said. "It's the equivalent to going to your first board—you get the same butterflies because you want to perform well."

"The competition was so fierce, you could see it in their eyes. It felt like I was at the Olympics."

1st Sgt. Roger Nickel
4-3 AHB

One of the most important factors in doing well in a Triathlon is an athlete's ability to transition from one event to another. Since there is no break in between events, being able to transition quickly can make all the difference for a tri-athlete.

"In a close race, transitions could make or break you," Donna said. "Transitions are hard because of the lactic acid build up in your muscles—it can make you feel wobbly when you are moving to another event. I did a lot of running and jumping on the bike to practice my transitions."

Marquez advises that endurance and form is the key to doing well in a triathlon. Despite receiving short notice of the event, Marquez still accomplished a high finish, something he attributes to his focused training.

"If you want to compete, you have to have your endurance level high enough. You need to save strength from event to event because you need to have enough reserve energy," Marquez said. "Form during the swim is important as well. You can be giving it 110 percent, but if you don't have form, you won't do as well."

Another advice if you are considering participating in a triathlon is to be cognizant of your environment and equipment.

"We were running in an urban area with hardball roads which was very helpful," Nickel said. "During the bike race however, the chain on my bike broke, but luckily I was prepared for it—it took me only a second to grab and fix the chain."

While the triathlon truly pushes ones physical ability to the limits, it was something that the tri-athletes of 4-3 AHB enjoyed and can't wait to do again.

"Physical training is the perfect outlet. I look for gaps in my schedule so I can work out," Donna said. "Being physical fit raises the team's spirit and gives them something to look forward to."

Nickel does physical training at 5 a.m. every morning. His commitment to physical fitness is something he feels the entire team follows.

"When others are sleeping, I'm working. I do my job and put in a full day's work and still make time for PT," Nickel said. "These are the type of people—hard working, A-type personality, strong work ethic—that we (the team) are."

For Marquez, participating in events like the Balad triathlon is a great way to keep his mind occupied, and the preparation and training leading up to such events is a great way to stay physically fit.

"Events like the triathlon are motivating; especially when you go as a team, because you don't want to let your teammates down," he said. "It also makes you feel better about yourself. When you finish an event like that, all you can think about is doing better at the next one."

For the future, Nickel is planning a triathlon at Camp Taji, and wants to coordinate a simultaneous marathon run with a race in Chicago, a race his Dad and Aunt will be running. Marquez would like to continue to participate in triathlons and Donna would like to stay competitive and someday compete in the master's circuit.

Attention weightlifters: Never attempt to lift more than you should. Don't compare yourself to others. It's a slow, steady process to get the body you want. An injury will quickly end that dream.

Marne Medical Mentor ... a prescription for good health from your Docs in the Rock

The ABCs of early skin cancer self-detection

Dr. (Maj.) Christopher Littell
Deputy Division Surgeon

Do you know what the most common form of cancer in the United States is?

I'll give you a hint.

What part of the body is willingly exposed to the harmful rays of the sun by millions of people each summer in search of a tan?

According to the American Cancer Society, skin cancer is actually the most common form of cancer and the number of new cases continues to rise each year. In fact, according to ACS estimates, during 2004 more than one million people were newly diagnosed with some form of skin cancer.

Nearly 10,000 died from the disease.

The three basic types of skin cancer are squamous cell carcinoma, basal cell carcinoma, and malignant melanoma.

Basal cell carcinoma is the most common with a rate of 75 percent of total skin cancer cases.

Malignant melanoma is the most

deadly.

Sun-safe guidelines have not changed and include the following:

1. Avoid sun exposure when possible, especially between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

2. Apply sunscreen with a protection factor of at least SPF15. Apply it before sun exposure and reapply as often as every hour if sweating.

3. Wear protective clothing to cover as much sun-exposed skin as possible.

Changes associated with skin cancer can often be seen with the naked eye, and more than 90 percent of skin cancers can be cured if diagnosed and treated early. The key therefore is early detection, particularly of the most deadly form of skin cancer, malignant melanoma.

To identify suspicious marks and moles on your skin, simply use your ABCs to help you look for the following characteristics:

A for asymmetry. When each half of the skin mark or mole looks different from the other.

B for border. Moles with irregular outside edges which are blurry or

jagged.

C for color. Different shades within the mark such as darkening, a spreading of color, a loss of previous color, or the appearance of multiple colors.

D for diameter. Moles or discolored marks which measure, at their widest point, more than six millimeters (mm) or approximately the size of a pencil eraser.

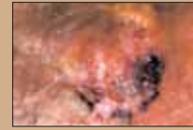
E for evolving. Marks or moles which have noticeably increased in size.

You should seek medical attention for all skin marks and moles that concern you, particularly those showing any combination of these characteristics. Beware of those that bleed or don't appear to be healing properly.

For those areas that receive lots of sun exposure, such as the back of your head, neck or ears, get a buddy to take notice of any suspicious moles or discolored marks.

Everyday, we take precautions by using safety equipment to help save our lives. Don't let something as preventable as sun-induced skin cancer take your life.

Examples of skin tumors



Squamous Cell Carcinoma



Malignant Melanoma



Basal Cell Carcinoma

DoD announces SGLI coverage took effect Sept. 1

News Release

U.S. Department of Defense

The Department of Defense recently announced the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance maximum coverage increased to \$400,000 on Sept. 1.

All members eligible for SGLI are automatically insured for the maximum coverage of \$400,000. The monthly SGLI premium remains \$3.25 per \$50,000 of coverage. The monthly premium for the new increased full coverage is \$26.00.

These changes will not affect coverage under Family SGLI, which will continue under previously existing elections.

A member who wishes to

retain the \$400,000 of coverage with beneficiary designations as before Sept. 1, does not need to take any action. The \$400,000 of coverage will apply along with the new premiums and beneficiary designations will remain the same as those previously in effect.

Even members who had previously declined SGLI coverage or elected less than the maximum coverage will automatically be covered for \$400,000. If they wish to again decline or reduce the coverage, they must complete a new SGLV 8286 form (September 2005 version) indicating the amount of coverage desired including no coverage if applicable.

If the member properly completes and submits the form

before Sept. 30, 2005, the member will not be liable for the September premium associated with the reduced or declined portion of coverage.

Units will be asked to process elections as expeditiously as possible to avoid the necessity for corrections in financial transactions.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service will refund premiums deducted for coverage in September when the member files a valid election to reduce or decline the coverage between Sept. 1-30, 2005.

The new SGLV 8286 form is now available on the Department of Veterans Affairs Web site at <http://www.insurance.va.gov>. Entries can be made on the page and then downloaded.

Valid SGLI elections become effective the first day of the month after properly submitting the election form. All members of the uniformed services will be fully insured for \$400,000 throughout the month of September, regardless of any election filed before or during September.

If a member dies in September after completing an election for reduced coverage or no coverage, the member's beneficiaries will still receive a \$400,000 payment.

Those electing to decline or reduce coverage during September will essentially receive the September automatic coverage at no cost.

Members who do not make an election to reduce or decline coverage from the

\$400,000 level before Oct. 1 will pay the premium for the full \$400,000 of coverage for September as well as for any other month in which the level of coverage remains in effect.

When a member properly completes and submits SGLV Form 8286 on or after Oct. 1 to reduce or decline coverage, the reduction is effective the first day of the month after the form is properly submitted.

Changes to the SGLI program, such as an increase in the maximum level of coverage, are a matter of law. This change was made in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Defense, the Global War on Terror and Tsunami Relief 2005 (Public Law 109-13, May 11, 2005).

Negligent discharges: A simple way to kill your battle buddy

Sgt Maj. Kenneth A. Hinckley
STB Safety sergeant major

There are two types of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines carrying loaded weapons in Iraq. Those who are new arrivals to theater, and those who have been here for a while. Both types of troops are the most prone to having a negligent discharge.

In other words, ALL troops!

Troops who are not used to carrying loaded weapons are prone to forget they are loaded and are unfamiliar with proper weapon clearing procedures. Those individuals who have been in theater for months might have become complacent and thus are not practicing muzzle awareness and the proper weapon clearing procedures.

Both types of troops can be seen violating basic muzzle awareness in the post exchange, the dining facilities, and in most any other area.

While sitting down at your next meal, take a look at troops who are finishing up. Watch them sling their weapons on their backs, the muzzle pointing in every direction but the right one, which is down!

Count the number of personnel who could be maimed or killed by just one weapon. Multiply that by the number of personnel in the DFAC.

How many tragedies are waiting to happen?

This is not to say every troop does this.

Remember, it only takes one person to forget muzzle awareness for a shot to be fired into the head of one of our own.

All of us have been taught from the first day we were handed a weapon by the military that hard and fast rule of never pointing a weapon at anyone you do not intend to kill. That did not mean only then.

It does not mean only now when you're "outside the wire."

The rule applies AT ALL TIMES!

We must treat a weapon for what it is, an instrument of death. The only brain a bullet has is the one centered in the skull of the troop who wields the weapon. Bullets are mission oriented. They will go straight to the target every time they are pointed and fired. Unsurprisingly, they do the damage they are programmed to do. Being stupid, being lazy, and being complacent ... these are the "weapons of accidents."

Many troops have been hurt and killed by negligent discharges.

The wounded and dead are not the only tragedies involved in this. The shooter is headed for a life of self-misery, forever living with the fact he or she shot a comrade, maybe even killed them. For the shooter, the 15-6 investigation and UCMJ action will be the easiest aspect of the negligent discharge.

Negligent discharges are one of the easiest acci-

dents to prevent.

It takes merely two simple steps to stop them.

Step one: Remember the end of the weapon with the hole in it is where the bullet launches from. don't ever point it at something you do not intend to kill.

Step two: When re-entering a Camp or Forward Operating Base ... don't become lazy and skip the proper clearing procedures.

You should be watched by a battle-buddy while clearing your weapon, insuring the magazine is ejected first.

The clearing barrel is intended for exactly what its name implies ... a barrel used to absorb a fired round. Skipping the barrel is not only negligence, it's a crime!

Noncommissioned officers, you are charged with training and with making on-the-spot corrections.

Every negligent discharge can be traced directly back to an NCO failing in his mission. You are not only responsible for the men and women assigned to you, but all troops. Think about it and take action.

Abraham Lincoln said, "To sin by silence when they should protest, makes cowards out of men."

These are strong words.

Negligent discharges have been the cause of maiming wounds and dead Coalition Forces troops.

The time has come for strong action, not just words.

DESERT JUSTICE

Reporting wrongful job terminations

1st Lt. Jason Wong
3rd Inf. Div.

With growing numbers of service members needed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, an increasing number of Soldiers from the National Guard and Army Reserve components are being activated for service.

For many of these citizen-soldiers, activation requires leaving a civilian job until their mobilization is complete. As members of the National Guard or Reserve are released from active duty to return to their civilian lives, questions about re-employment rights with former employers arise.

The Uniformed Service Employment and Reemployment Rights Act provides specific protections for service members in this situation. Upon release from active duty, the service member must satisfy four conditions to return to the job position held prior to mobilization.

Have a civilian job to return to?

Give notice that you want your old job back.

Be discharged under honorable conditions.

Report back in a timely manner.

First of all, you must have had a job before you were activated. Upon release from active duty, you must notify your civilian employer that you were employed prior to being activated, you have completed your term of service, and you want to return to your job.

The notice does not need to be in writing, but it would be smart to do so. If you worked for a large company, do not expect your employer to remember you. Put your reemployment notice in writing!

You must have been released from active duty under honorable conditions.

For most of us, this will not be an issue. If however, you were discharged from active duty under less than honorable conditions, you will not be protected by USERRA, and you may not be entitled to get your

old job back. Your employer may ask to see a copy of your DD-214 to verify honorable service.

Finally, report back in a timely manner. If your period of service was between 31 and 180 days, you must notify your employer within 14 days of being released from active duty that you wish to return. If you served for more than 181 days, you must notify your employer within 90 days of being released from active duty that you wish to return.

If all four conditions are met, you should be rehired with minimal delay.

Upon returning to your old job, you are entitled to seven rights:

1. Assuming you met the above four requirements, your employer must rehire you promptly.

2. You must be hired into the same level job you held before you left. If you were a supervisor when you left, you should be re-hired as a supervisor.

3. You must be given accrued seniority that you held prior to your mobilization.

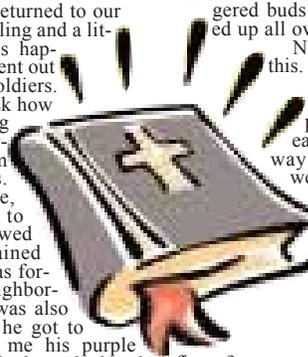
4. Health insurance coverage must be reinstated immediately upon reemployment. Employers may not require a waiting period for health insurance to take effect.

5. You are entitled to receive training, re-training, or other accommodations required for you to do your job. If new developments have occurred in your field during your absence, your employer must allow re-training for you to do your job.

6. You must be allowed to keep all non-seniority based benefits you possessed prior to being activated.

7. Finally, you have special protection from discharge. If you served for less than 180 days on active duty, you may not be terminated (except for cause) within the first 180 days of returning to work. If you served more than 180 days, you may not be terminated (except for cause) within the first year.

You may be entitled to additional legal rights, depending upon your situation. For more information, contact your nearest Judge Advocate General legal assistance office or visit The National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's website at: www.esgr.org



Chaplain's Corner

Leaders: Color yourselves purple

Chaplain (Maj.) James Lucas
2/156 Inf. Battalion Chaplain

One of my vivid memories of serving in Iraq happened during a particular mission that took place on Election Day, back at the end of January.

I was stationed at a temporary patrol base in one of the neighborhoods in the northwest quarter of Baghdad. My battalion had the mission of making sure no suicide bombers or gun-toting terrorists could harass voters. Patrols went out to set up road barriers, set up check points, and keep an eye on the neighborhood. Most patrols included an interpreter from Iraq.

One such patrol returned to our patrol base for refueling and a little rest. When this happened, I normally went out to visit with the Soldiers.

As I walked up to ask how things were going out there, an interpreter emerged from one of the trucks.

Coming up to me, smiling from ear to ear, he proudly showed me his purple stained index finger. He was fortunate that the neighborhood we patrolled was also where he lived, so he got to vote. He showed me his purple stained finger and then declared, "Look, I voted!"

He was part of making history. His purple finger marked him as one of the eight million or so other Iraqi citizens who wanted a new government, a government that was of the people and for the people.

But there is more.

Consider the courage it took for this man to do something we take for granted back home. The same purple finger that marked him as a patriot

also marked him as an enemy of the insurgents who opposed the election. Previous to the election, these rebels went about plastering up posters all over the place – not like the kind we see back home such as "Vote for Joe, Mike Is a Crook."

No, these posters warned, "You Vote, You Die!"

The interpreter's purple finger raised high was a lightning rod that invited murder and mayhem on himself and his family. Yet, when it was all said and done, that interpreter and nearly one third of all the people across Iraq shared in that baptism of democracy. Despite the malicious efforts of the terrorists, purple fingered buds of democracy sprouted up all over Iraq.

Now, let me ask you this.

How many of you would proudly show a purple stained finger each Monday if the only way you could attend weekend chapel services was to baptize your finger in ink as you entered?

How many battalion or company commanders, how many staff officers – how many leaders would have a purple

finger? Do you set the standard for your Soldiers?

Yet there are no death threats for doing so, no bombs along the way.

Not only so, but something greater than democracy happens at the chapel, God and man meet!

We are baptized into something more than ink – it's the grace and mercy of God.

So color me purple and join with me in going to chapel services!

Camp Liberty religious services

Division Chapel

Mon. – Fri.

12 p.m. Catholic

Mon., Wed., Fri.

6 p.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief

Saturday

10 a.m. Seventh Day Adventist

Sunday

9 a.m. Contemporary Protestant

10:30 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass

1 p.m. Lutheran

3 p.m. Gospel Protestant

5 p.m. Church of Christ (non-instrumental)

8 p.m. Collective Protestant

Engineer Chapel

Wednesday

7 p.m. Bible Study

Friday

9 p.m. Prayer & Praise

Saturday

10 a.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief

Sunday

8:45 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass

10 a.m. Traditional Protestant

12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Latter Day Saints

7 p.m. Traditional Protestant

Tiger Chapel

Wednesday

7:30 p.m. Wicca Circle – briefing tent

Wed & Sat

10:30 a.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief

Saturday

7 p.m. Catholic Mass

Sunday

9 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass

10:30 a.m. Contemporary Mass

1 p.m. Gospel Protestant

3 p.m. Traditional Protestant

7 p.m. Non Denominational Christian

9:30 p.m. Evening Christian Service

2005 Holiday Greetings Program

All military personnel, and DoD civilians are eligible to participate by recording a holiday greeting.

Be a part of this year's program. Last year 14,700 greetings were distributed to 1,100 commercial TV and 1,200 radio stations across the U.S. and its territories. You must appear in the uniform of the day if you're in the military.

Greetings are recorded on a first come first serve basis.

The holiday greeting team will be at the following locations:

Camp Victory DFAC/ PX: Sept. 19, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Camp Striker, Camp Slayer: Sept. 20, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Camp Liberty DFAC/ PX: Sept. 21-22, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Don't miss this opportunity to tell your family and friends how much you miss them over this upcoming holiday season.

NFL season preview: Part two

Sp. **Derek Del Rosario**
100th MPAD

The Philadelphia Eagles broke their jinx last season, finally making it to the Super Bowl, only to lose to the dynasty-destined Patriots. Can the Eagles return to the big dance again this season? The NFC is wide open, and you can almost draw a name out of a hat and you might just pick out the NFC champ. Every season seems to bring a new breakout team from the NFC, but this is how I see it turning out:

NFC Teams to watch:

Top of their game: Philadelphia Eagles — The Eagles have the offensive and defensive tools to post another winning season and first round bye. It definitely helps that they are in the NFC East, and should roll over their rivals easily. Quarterback Donovan McNabb will have another standout season, and despite training camp and contract problems with some of the Eagles' key players, this team is still very dangerous and is a practical shoe-in for a post-season berth.

Stock rising: Minnesota Vikings, Detroit Lions — The Vikings lost Moss, but watch out, they went out and boosted their 'D' with Napoleon Harris, Pat Williams, Sam Cowart, Darren Sharper and Fred Smoot to name a few. Culpepper is still one of the NFL elite QBs that could have Minnesota rolling to the post season.



Courtesy Photo

Marc Bulger

Can the Lions finally break through to the post season? They are in the same division as the aforementioned Vikings, but I think they have the tools to surpass the Packers this season and get a wild card berth. The QB situation is still questionable, but Jeff Garcia is ready to step in if Harrington falters, and the wide receiving corps is young and talented. The Lions defense has a lot of potential.

Quarterbacks to watch

Top of their game: Dante Culpepper (Vikings) — He doesn't need Randy Moss to be talented, Culpepper is still the man in Minnesota, and this year will be no different. He put an amazing 39 touchdown passes on the scoreboard last season with over 4700 passing yards. Even without Moss, he should have another standout year.

Stock Rising: Jake Delhomme (Panthers), Marc Bulger (Rams) — These two pocket passers both suffered from weak offensive line protection last season, resulting in quite a beating. But both remained durable and both have the tools to be very effective passers. Bulger has put up better numbers over the last few years, and his touchdown to interception ratio has gotten better, which should next season. Delhomme threw 29 touchdowns last season despite not having wide receiver Steve Smith and losing running backs Stephen Davis and DeShaun Foster. Even with wide receiver Mushin Muhammad going to the Bears, Delhomme might have more options with some of the prime players back.

Running Backs to watch

Top of their game: Shaun Alexander (Seahawks) — What I like most about Alexander is his durability.

Unlike superstar running backs like Clinton Portis or Deuce McAlister, Alexander stays healthy. His numbers have increased over the last three seasons, improving in total yards and yards per carry. He consistently puts up 15 touchdowns per season.

Stock Rising: Julius Jones (Cowboys) — Dallas' defense aims to play a more field position game. This means Coach Parcells will lead a very run-favored offense in Dallas. I expect QB Drew Bledsoe to be far from spectacular, so expect Jones to get a lot of carries and production.

Wide Receivers to watch

Top of their game: Terrell Owens (Eagles) — T.O. equals TDs in Philly. Owens had 14 touchdowns in only 14 starts in his first season with the Eagles. Even if you question his work ethic or trash talking, his talent is undeniable. He had an outstanding performance in the Super Bowl, playing against doctors orders. T.O. might be hungry enough to put up a career best year.

Stock Rising: Roy Williams (Lions) — Williams started immediately as a rookie and started and finished the season strong (five TDs in the first five games, three TDs in the last two games). He's a talented receiver with amazing leaping ability and good hands, and with the addition of another Williams, rookie Mike Williams out of USC, the Lions have the potential of having a dangerous passing threat in the future.

Defensive Players to watch

Top of their game: Julius Peppers (Panthers) — Peppers was a monster on the line last season with 65 tackles, 11 sacks, four forced fumbles and two interceptions. He is still young and improving, and it will show in 2005.

Stock Rising: Brian Urlacher (Bears) — This all-pro player missed half of last season due to injury. Despite this, Urlacher still posted 72 tackles in nine games as one of the games top tackling machines.

How they will finish:

NFC North
Minnesota Vikings
Detroit Lions
Green Bay Packers
Chicago Bears

NFC South
Atlanta Falcons
Carolina Panthers
New Orleans Saints
Tampa Bay Buccaneers

NFC East
Philadelphia Eagles
Dallas Cowboys
Washington Redskins
New York Giants

NFC West
St. Louis Rams
Seattle Seahawks
Arizona Cardinals
San Francisco 49ers

NFC Champions: Minnesota Vikings.

I'm going to go out on a limb and choosing the Vikings over Philly to make it the Super Bowl. After boosting their defense, the Vikings will have enough on both sides of the ball to make it to the big game.

With that said, I am predicting a gun-slinging Super Bowl shootout, featuring two offensive powerhouses who call a dome their home: the Vikings vs. the Colts.



Courtesy Photo

Shaun Alexander

Nemechek earns 12th-place finish at Bristol

David Ferroni
Army News Service

BRISTOL, Tenn. (Aug. 27, 2005) -- Joe Nemechek saved the best for last Saturday night at Bristol Motor Speedway. The U.S. Army driver made a late-race charge from the middle of the pack to post a 12th-place finish in the Sharpie 500.

The final result was Nemechek's career-best finish at the half-mile track.

"I'm the first to admit that Bristol hasn't been one of my better tracks," offered Nemechek, whose previous best finish at the high-banked short track was 16th in the 1995 summer race. "But tonight I kind of broke the jinx. It's been crazy for me here in the past and I will take this 12th-place finish with a smile."

Nemechek, who started 35th, was positioned in the low to mid 20s for the majority of the 500-lap race. But with 28 laps remaining, the veteran driver kicked it into high gear.

When the race restarted following a caution on Lap 472, Nemechek was running in 20th place. He gained seven positions before the yellow flag flew for the last time on Lap 495. His U.S. Army Chevrolet managed to pick off one more position in the closing laps.

Nemechek said that he knew he had a good car, but considering his past history at the all-concrete bullring, he drove a semi-conservative race until the end.

"I got collected in too many wrecks here in the past so the mindset was a little different tonight," said Nemechek. "The Army Chevy was competitive, but we were stuck in the back for most of the race. I just had to be patient and use my head about what I did. I wanted to avoid the wrecks and take care of the equipment so I would have something at the end."

Nemechek was also quick to credit the Soldiers for the inspiration they continue to offer him.

"I had a great week, a very inspiring one," said Nemechek. "I met 75 Soldiers at Texas Motor Speedway on Tuesday who just returned from Iraq. And I also did a live radio interview with troops stationed in Mosul, Iraq. Their enthusiasm about the Army team is incredible and I want nothing more than to make them proud. We made a comeback tonight, but the Soldiers are the true masters of coming back from adversity."



Courtesy Photo

Joe Nemechek speeds around the track at Bristol Motor Speedway in his U.S. Army Chevrolet.

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BY CHRIS ASHBY - WWW.ELUSIVE-CONCEPT.COM

COMICS



In the Movies



Five classic college movies to help forget missed semester

Sp. Brian P. Henretta
100th MPAD

With so many Task Force Baghdad Soldiers coming from Reserve components, there are, no doubt, many deployed college students who are missing their fall semester.

I felt myself feeling sad on the day that I knew classes were beginning without me and that all of my friends were enjoying themselves back on campus in San Marcos, Texas. I decided if I couldn't be there with them, I can at least watch a few movies that will remind me of the good times I had at school.

Therefore, I would like to submit to all of you displaced students, as well as former and future college-goers, some of the funniest college movies of all time.



"National Lampoon's Animal House" (1978)

I might as well start with the most obvious one.

"Animal House" is the film that made toga parties cool, college deans evil and John Belushi a legend. Set in 1962 at Faber College, we are introduced to Delta House, the rowdiest fraternity on campus. After two freshmen misfits are rejected by the prestigious Omega frat, they join the Deltas who are led by their president, Hoover the womanizer, Otter, and Bluto the lovable drunken slob.

Dean Wormer, tired of all the trouble the Deltas are causing, conspires with the Omegas to sabotage them. The Deltas try to steal answers for an exam, but the Omegas learn of this and allow them to find the wrong answers, causing everyone to fail.

Learning they are about to have their charter revoked, the Deltas throw a wild toga party that turns into a memorable night for everyone, including the mayor's daughter and the dean's wife. The dean becomes furious between their party and the brothers' low grades and expels them all from school.

As a final payback, the Deltas seek their revenge at the big homecoming parade. This movie set the mold for all college movies to come. What really makes it memorable is the boorish behavior of Bluto (played by John Belushi). His whiskey-chugging, party-animal character is still what so many students strive to be when they're enjoying a night out.

Classic line:
"Was it over when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor? Hell no!"

"Revenge of the Nerds" (1984)
Whether you're a nerd or a jock, this hilarious 80s comedy about a group of nerds who are forced to start their own fraternity to prevent their harassment by the jocks is just as funny now as it was 20 years ago. Set at Adams College, two nerds, Gilbert (a before "ER" Anthony Edwards) and Lewis



(Robert Carradine) begin their first semester at school, only to realize that they are still the favorite target of bullies. After the jock fraternity, the Alpha Betas accidentally burn down their house. They kick the freshmen out of their dorm so they can move in. The nerds are stuck living in the school gymnasium. Their only way out is to be accepted into a frat, but who would want to take in a bunch of nerds?

Their solution? Start their own fraternity chapter, Lambda Lambda Lambda. This starts a war for chairmanship of the Greek Council between the Tri Lams and the Alpha Betas. Some of the movie's best moments come from Ogre, a beer-swilling, nerd abusing jock whose hatred for nerds runs so deep that he'll spit beer at them or throw one off a balcony.

Classic line:
"Those nerds are a threat to our way of life."

"Dead Man on Campus" (1998)
This underrated dark-comedy follows two opposite-minded college roommates.

Josh (Tom Everett Scott) is an excellent student attending school on a full scholarship. He wants to make his mother proud by continuing to get good grades at med-school, but he finds the workload much harder than he thought.

Cooper (played by Mark-Paul Gosselaar) is a fun-loving ladies-man who doesn't even know which classes he takes and would rather take bong hits and drink beer than worry about grades. Cooper becomes a bad influence on Josh and soon both of them spend every night at parties and bars.

By the time mid-terms roll around, Josh realizes it's impossible for him to make the minimum grades to keep his scholarship, while Cooper gets a visit from his rich daddy to inform him that if he fails another semester, he won't pay for anymore school and Cooper will be forced to work at the family toilet cleaning business.

Thinking things are hopeless for both of them, the guys discover a little known rule in the college charter stating if one of your roommates kill themselves, the other roommates are awarded automatic As to help them deal with their grief. Now it's up to the two buddies to search the school for the most unstable student and convince that person to move in with them.

It is hilarious to see former "Saved by the Bell" star Gosselaar in this role. With his dyed black hair, he looks quite a bit different from his days as Zach.



Some of the funniest scenes and best lines involve the insane potential new roommate Cliff O'Malley, whose life is so out of control he accidentally lights a girl's hair on fire and gets the guys into a high speed police chase.

Classic line:
"I've got some beers; let's drink 'em. That one's not beer."



"National Lampoon's Van Wilder" (2002)

Van Wilder (Ryan Reynolds) is a seventh-year student who loves college, and all that it offers, so much that earning his degree in leisure studies is the last thing on his mind. He is the most popular person on campus, every girl wants to date him, and every guy wants to hang out with him. He is such an enigmatic character that Gwen (Tara Reid), a journalist for the school newspaper is assigned to write a feature about him.

Van ends up falling for her, but she is already engaged to Richard, the self-absorbed, overbearing president of the Delta Iota Kappa, DIK, fraternity.

When Van's father decides to stop paying his tuition, Van uses his party-throwing skills and other creative ways to continue making payments. Some gross-out antics ensue as Van tries to win Gwen's heart from her fiancée, until Richard is able to get Van arrested and thrown out of school.

Van tries to find his motivation to prove that he belongs back in school to the dean, to Gwen and to himself, all while exacting revenge on his nemesis, Richard.

Besides the charm in which Reynolds plays his character, another enjoyable part of this movie is Taj,

Van's Indian assistant, whose eagerness to experience a woman provides some great moments.

Classic line:
"You can't treat everything like a life or death situation, because you'll die a lot of times."

"Old School" (2003)
If ever there was an "Animal House" for this generation, "Old School" is it.

Mitch (Luke Wilson) discovers his girlfriend cheating on him. His buddies, Frank (Will Ferrell) and Beanie (Vince Vaughn), help him recover by finding him a house near their old college. The 30-something-year-old guys revert back to their old college ways after a house warming party turns into a huge blow out bash with an appearance by Snoop Dogg. They decide to turn their house into a fraternity so they can party all the time. Word of the group spreads, especially hard-partying Frank "the Tank," and soon people from all backgrounds and ages try to pledge the frat.

The dean soon shows up to put a stop to all the fun as payback for when he was younger and Mitch, Frank and Beanie made fun of him.

Through it all, they meet all kinds of beautiful female students and throw some of the best parties in school history. Ferrell steals the show as Frank the Tank and Vaughn is in his usual funny form as the ring-leader of the group.

Classic line:
"We're going streaking!"
So don't let the fact that fall semester has passed you by bother you.

Find these movies and you will feel like you never left that non-stop good time we call college.



Stephen King's 'Desperation' will leave you desperate for more

Sp. Maria Mengrone
100th MPAD

Imagine driving cross-country on a remote stretch of highway when suddenly you spot a mutilated cat's lifeless body dangling from a highway sign.

Would you stop?
No, probably not. You'd keep on driving, but not if Tak, an evil spirit possessing the body of a policeman, has you in his sights.

Meet Johnny Marinville, a famous novelist, and David Carver, a boy who can speak to God, and a slew of other characters who have been deceived and taken captive by the crazed policeman. Through acts of gruesome atrocities, Tak unleashes pure evil against the residents of Desperation, Nevada.

Johnny, David, and all the other characters must now band together in order to survive the nightmarish reality that surrounds them. As the story

develops, it is discovered that maybe Tak, the evil spirit, had nothing to do with selecting his victims, but rather their misfortunate encounters may have been predestined by some higher being.

Stephen King carefully orchestrates this horrific story so that you are taken on an emotional rollercoaster ride of good versus evil, but once the ride stops you'll want to get on again.

And for those of you who prefer your entertainment on a screen instead of in a book, as with most Stephen King novels, "Desperation" is now a movie and is set to air on ABC in the coming months.

