

The Warrior

August 2005

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"All clear!"

3-15 Infantry and Iraqi Army maintain security in volatile Sadr City

Medic!

Operation Happy Feet

1-64 Buffalo

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China and Iraqi Army in Sadr -

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"Are the people ready?"

Spartan Warriors have been working their tails off for over seven months. We have had 100-plus degree heat since April 23. We have executed the full spectrum of operations ranging from humanitarian aid to combat operations.

We have had ten Spartan Warriors pay the ultimate sacrifice, and thirty-six others endure serious wounds. We have had our share of triumph and tragedy as we enter the most critical phase of our mission - ensuring the constitutional referendum and government elections execute successfully. The obvious question is "Are the people ready?"

Before I answer that question, we need to relook our mission - conduct decisive operations in zone in order to defeat Anti-Iraqi Forces and establish an environment that ensures the formation of a free Iraq. Notice our mission is defeat, not destroy. Defeat means we can successfully execute operations and prevent the enemy from successful mission execution. Destroy means we have eliminated the enemy's capability to conduct missions period. Defeat is a realistic mission especially when the enemy is small, cellular, blends in with the population, and unwilling to confront us directly. Such an enemy is almost impossible to destroy with just our resources; the entire Iraqi population must be actively pursuing this type enemy before it can be eventually destroyed. Anyways, we are very close to defeating the enemy, and get closer each day because the people are giving us better quality intelligence.

The fact that the people are giving us better intelligence is one indicator that the people are ready for a free Iraq. Our HUMINT tips have increased by 70% since March. Because of your hard work in winning over the majority of the population, they are gaining confidence in our intentions and capabilities.

Keep up the rapport and bonds you are forging with the people, it is absolutely necessary.

Another indicator is the people are increasing their support towards us (Spartan BCT) and the Iraqi Security

Forces. Battleking was conducting an operation in an area that was VBIEDed two weeks ago. While Battleking Warriors were executing their mission, locals put out a temporary barrier preventing any possibility of another VBIED from trying to attack Battleking. A small gesture that speaks volumes.

Another indicator that the people are ready is voter registration. The Iraqis have until Sept. 1 to register to vote for the October referendum and the December elections. Voter registration is currently on glide path to be complete by Sept. 1. Another indicator is the District Advisory Councils performances; they continue to demonstrate an improving governance ability, which also demonstrates solid potential to be effective officials in a democracy.

The main indicator everyone is waiting for is the completed constitution. At the time of this writing, the constitution is still in draft form with a three day grace period to get final issues ironed out. I am not sure what the final result will be, but I am confident the process will continue until it is finished; I do not see the constitution process returning to the starting blocks again.

The most important indicator, however, is the people. They are ready. I talk to a lot of people of different religions, social standings, tribes, etc. Not one has told me they are not ready for a free and independent Iraq. Of course they have a lot of concerns and frustrations, but they are determined to stay the course with a free and independent Iraq. That is impressive; despite the terrorist's efforts to intimidate (by wanton murder of innocent adults and children); the people of Iraq are staying the course and will not be subjected to the chains of terrorism.

So the answer is YES, the people are ready thanks to your superb efforts. Keep up the great work and God Bless.

SEND ME,
DiSalvo



The Warrior

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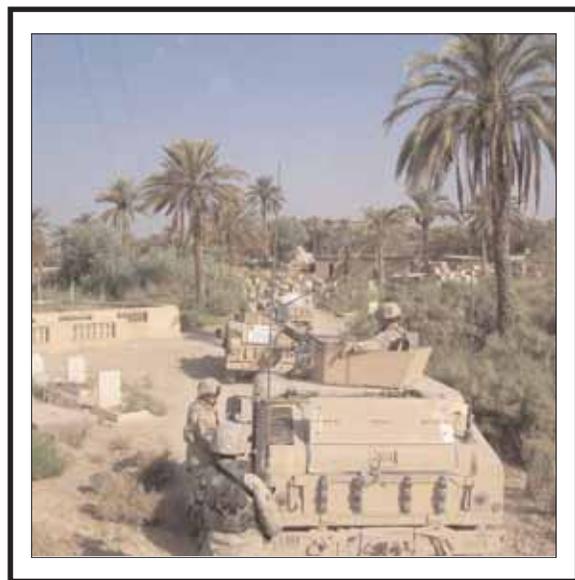
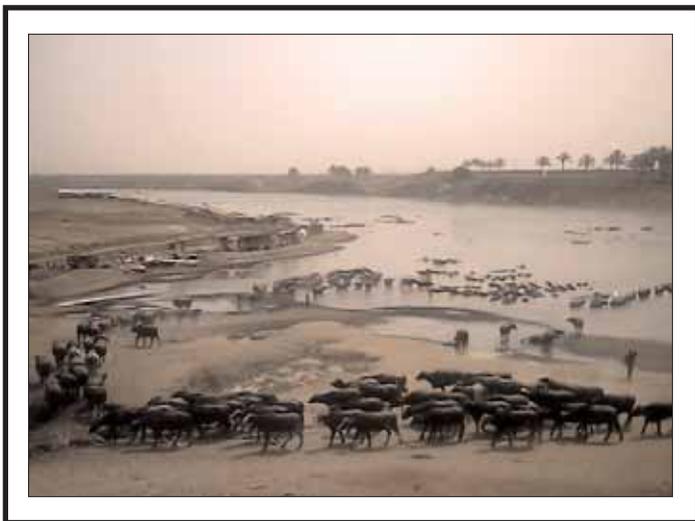
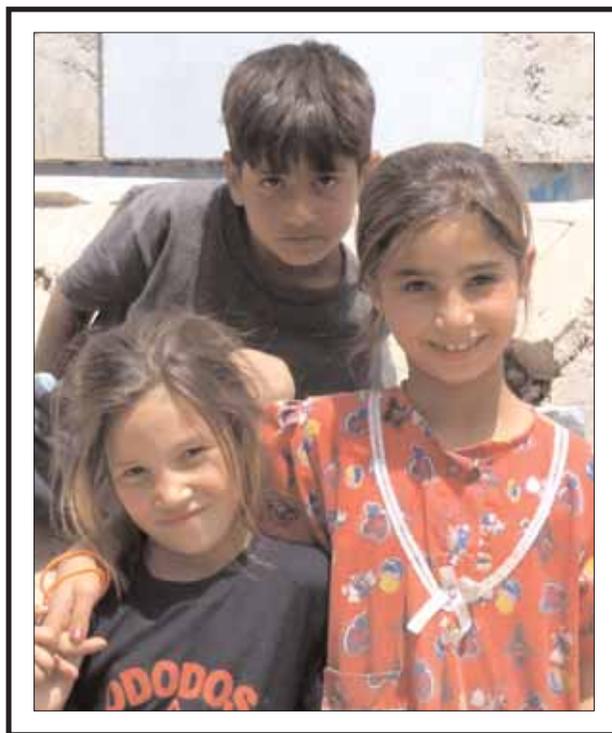
Editor, *The Warrior*
Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich

Staff Writer
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ATTENTION!

“Shots from the field” is always looking for photos taken by Spartan Brigade Combat Team Soldiers serving in Iraq. If you have a good photo, and we have room, we’ll print it. Email your photos via AKO to: craig.zentkovich@us.army.mil. Subject: Shots from the field. Be sure to include your rank, name, and unit as well as a caption for the photograph that includes the subject of the photograph with names and dates. I look forward to receiving your shots.

Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich
Editor, *The Warrior*



Photos by Staff Sgt. Robert Litwalk

Operation Happy Feet

Giving the kids in
Tawaittha something
to smile about

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody



A boy in Tawaittha, Iraq, shows off a teddy bear he received from F Co., 26th FSB Soldiers, July 23 during 1-9 FA's Operation Happy Feet.

TAWAITHA, Iraq – Soldiers from F Company, 26th Forward Support Battalion, brought smiles to Tawaittha children as they distributed hundreds of shoes and toys near a landfill July 23.

The community of squatters who live in the landfill, located near the Rasheed Airfield, often suffer foot injuries caused by walking over sharp debris without shoes.

The F Co. troops, who operate in direct support of 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, set up a perimeter to secure the site and quickly began fitting children with sneakers.

“It’s a great thing to come out and do something to raise the standard of living out here a bit,” said Capt. Charles Price, F Co., 26th FSB, commander. “This area is all landfill, and bad guys drop bodies and explosives here all the time – it’s a dangerous place to live.”

The mission was made possible from donations by church groups and family members at Fort Stewart.

A church group in Pennsylvania donated about 300 pairs of sneakers to the effort, while Lt. Col. Steven Merkel, 1-9 FA, commander solicited clothing from Stewart.

Chaplain (Capt.) Charlie Lee, 1-9 FA, brought stuffed animals along on the mission, which were a big hit with residents of all ages.

“This place reminds me somewhat of Korea after the war,” Lee, a native of Korea, said. “As a chaplain, I want to help share what we have with the neediest Iraqi people.”

Lee fitted several ecstatic children with New Balance tennis shoes and watched them dash off to



show their families.

“This kind of thing builds good relationships – you can tell everyone really appreciates it,” Lee said.

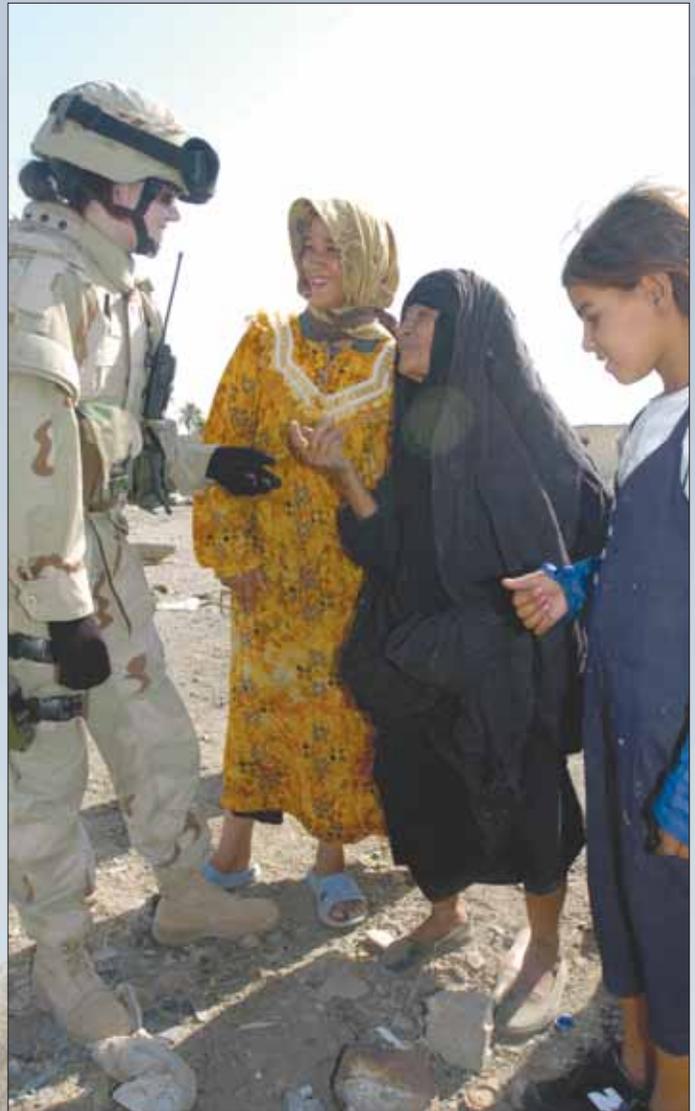
Although it was F Co.’s first purely humanitarian mission in Iraq, Soldiers said they were well prepared for the crowd that quickly gathered around the humvees.

“We never announce these things beforehand, which makes it safer for everyone,” said Staff Sgt. Guillermo Blanco, F Co., 26th FSB, patrol noncommissioned officer in charge. “These people here are just trying to survive – they don’t have anything, so it makes me feel great to see the little kids smile when they see our trucks coming.”

Blanco, from El Salvador, fitted children with shoes and helped keep the crowd orderly as Soldiers tossed water bottles, food rations, clothing and stuffed animals from the cargo bed of a light medium tactical vehicle.

After the operation, Price contemplated the long-term significance of the operation.

“To win this country over to peace and democracy, it all starts with the kids,” Price, of Columbus, Ohio, said. “Ten years from now, these kids will be creating the future direction of Iraq.”



(Top left) Chaplain (Capt.) Charlie Lee, 1-9 FA, helps a boy into his new pair of shoes during the humanitarian aid mission.

(Above) 2nd Lt. Kate Vogel-Mishoe, 1-9 FA, assistant operations officer, takes a break to speak with Iraqi women.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Guillermo Blanco, F Co., 26th FSB, patrol NCOIC, helps a girl into a new pair of shoes while, in the background his company commander, Capt. Charles Price, does the same.

MEDIC!

Charlie Med works to save Soldiers, Iraqi children following VBIED attack

Story by Maj. Russ Goemaere

CAMP RUSTAMIYAH – Since July 13th’s car-bomb attack, which killed more than 20 children and one US Soldier in East Baghdad, many articles were written about what happened in the Iraqi hospital where most of the Iraqi children were treated.

Iraqi doctors, however, were not the only ones working to save the lives of the young innocent victims of the terrorist attack that day.

This is what happened at the medical treatment facility at Camp Rustamiyah.

“At about 10:35 a.m., I heard a boom,” said Capt. Laura DePalma, commander of the medical company for the 26th Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. “I always look at my watch now when I hear a boom. Often it means I have to get my company ready to provide treatment and life-saving care to an American Soldier.”

In this case, a terrorist had deliberately targeted a group of Iraqi children who were standing near an American humvee. What DePalma did not know was the scope of the casualties.

“The first reports that were coming into the aid station said one casualty was on the way. Shortly, the reports kept growing and we really had no idea just how many casualties we would be facing,” she said.

“More than 50 medical personnel were mobilized to prepare for the incoming casualties. All the medics, orderlies and doctors were assembled for one purpose – to save the life of a fellow Soldier,” DePalma said.

The first casualties arrived on Bradley Fighting Vehicles. “You cannot imagine the power of a Bradley Fighting Vehicle charging into a FOB as the crew is fighting for every bit of time to save the life of one of their friends,” she said.

“When the Bradleys dropped their ramps, we were there to start triaging the wounded,” DePalma said. Three American Soldiers had been wounded and evacuated from the bomb site for treatment.

“My crew—medics, doctors, admin folks—immediately

went to work to save the life the most critically injured. Spc. Benyahmin Yahudah was very seriously hurt, and he was our priority. We gave him every bit of attention and care that is possible to give, but were unable to save him. Two other Soldiers, with serious but non-life threatening wounds, were stabilized, and we immediately transitioned to consoling the other Soldiers who brought in their fatally-wounded comrade,” she said.

“A somber tone always fills the aid station when someone dies. We stay professional and focused on treating the living, but losing a life is not easy on us,” said Capt. Jeremy Edwards, a pediatrician and the surgeon for 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry.

In this case, many of the medics had been good friends of the deceased, for Yahudah, too, was a medic, Edwards said.

However, not all the care was focused on life-saving measures.

“Chaplains come in as part of the team. They have a job to do, too. They minister to the dead as well as providing comfort to the living,” he said.

Just as the medical staff began to relax from the trauma of trying to save a fellow Soldier, they were surprised by unannounced casualties.

“Just as we began to catch our breath from treating the wounded Soldiers, other Soldiers started to rush through the doors carrying wounded children in their arms,” Edwards said. “We had no warning that children would be coming through the door, but our philosophy is we will treat anyone who needs us.”

“Two children were being brought in with massive burn wounds, one with more than 90 percent of his little body covered in burns,” DePalma said.

Three children between the ages of 7 and 9 were eventually brought to the aid station. Edwards said two of the injured children were in very critical condition. The third child had serious, but not life-threatening, wounds.





26th FSB

26th Forward Support Battalion medicals carry a wounded Soldier from a Bradley Fighting Vehicle to the medical treatment facility at Camp Rustimiyah July 13 following a vehicle bomb attack in Baghdad.

“Fifteen minutes until air evacuation,” someone yells. “Fifteen minutes,” echoes the entire staff.

At Charlie Med, situational awareness is mandatory for those working trauma. Commands are often echoed so everyone knows what is happening, DePalma said.

The aid station was focused on stabilizing and treating the wounded while preparing them for air evacuation to a better-equipped hospital.

“Patients need eye protection and other measures before we put them on a flight,” Edwards said.

“Two of the children were unconscious while one child was awake, scared and in pain while we were treating them. I stroked his head and talked to him in soothing tones and he was able to calm down and let the pediatricians work on his wounds,” she said.



26th FSB

26th FSB doctors and medics work to save the life of an Iraqi child wounded during the attack.

“Ten Minutes for MEDEVAC,” one Soldier said. “Ten minutes for MEDEVAC,” the entire aid station echoed.

“The work to treat the wounded continued. It looked like everything was happening in chaos, but it was all part of a well-orchestrated tempo,” said Capt. Julie Burmeister, incoming commander of the 26th FSB maintenance company. She was visiting her friend, DePalma, that day, and was able to observe the activity from an unused corner of the aid station.

“It was simply amazing to watch the care being provided to the Soldiers and children. Every worker in the aid station knew exactly what to do and no one got in anyone’s way,” Burmeister said. After the patients were stabilized, a sense of quiet and calm came over the aid station as they awaited the air ambulance.

“Five minutes for MEDEVAC,” one Soldier said. “Five minutes for MEDEVAC,” the entire aid station echoed.

As the personnel in the aid station continued to work, the MEDEVAC arrived. Out of the dusty haze of Baghdad, the helicopter swooped down on FOB Rustamiyah to take all five of the wounded to higher level medical care.

Fifteen minutes after the children arrived at the aid station, they were whisked away.

As the MEDEVAC lifted off, the staff of the aid station did what they always do when a fellow Soldier is being evacuated to a higher level of medical care – they saluted.

The two Soldiers who were hurt moved on to Germany for more treatment. Two of the wounded children died and one survived. He will soon be returned to his parents.

“It was a difficult day for the Soldiers of Charlie Med, but they can be proud they did every thing they could to save the lives of Soldiers and Iraqi civilians. The terrorists committed an unspeakable crime but the Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces Soldiers who worked to save Iraqi lives are heroes,” said Col. Joseph DiSalvo, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, commander.

Safer streets in Sadr,

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody

SADR CITY, Iraq – Soldiers from both 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry, and the Iraqi Army patrol Sadr City independently, and the result is safer streets in what was once a hotly contested area.

B Company learns new Sadr neighborhood

After a change in their area of operations, troops from B Company, 3-15 Inf., got to know their new neighborhood during a patrol July 28.

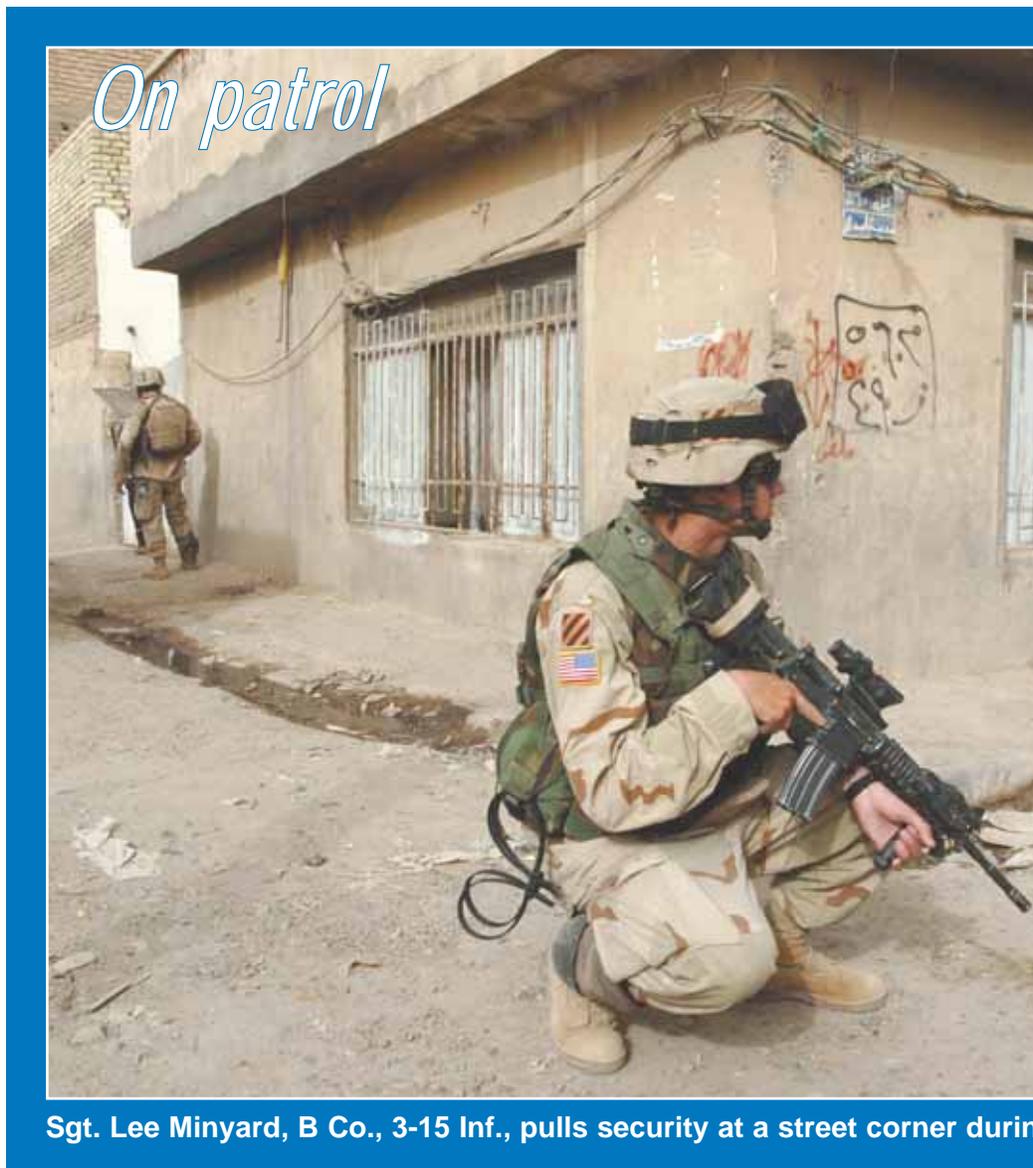
“It’s a lot of work, getting to know a new sector. We gather intel on insurgent operations, assess how receptive the locals are to our presence and develop informants,” said 1st Lt. Jason Schwab, B Co., 3-15 Inf, platoon leader. “We try and impress upon them that it’s in their best interests to help us, because the people that kidnap and extort them are the same ones planting bombs in the roads.”

During the patrol, Schwab, from Gillette, Wyo., stopped into the Al-Kanasa Police Station and spoke with a warrant officer about the neighborhood.

“The people we talk to in the neighborhood have been pretty helpful and want things to get better in Sadr,” said Sgt. Lee Minyard, B Co., 3-15 Inf. “They’re starting to realize we’re here to help them.”

Minyard, from Augusta, Ga., pulled security throughout the patrol, which took the dismounted infantrymen through the streets and alleys of Sadr.

“We tell people that it’s up to them to make a difference in their communities,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher Brisley, B Co., 3-15 Inf., section leader. “They’re so used to relying on one leader to make all the decisions, but they’re gradually taking the initiative. Once Iraq makes it through all this, it’ll be a great country.”



Sgt. Lee Minyard, B Co., 3-15 Inf., pulls security at a street corner during

Along Sadr’s dusty streets, Brisley remarked that the streets had rivers of sewage running through them six months ago.

“People see the improvements, and it makes them happier to see us than they were when we arrived in Iraq,” Brisley, from Glennville, Ga., said.

Troops stopped at a high school to assess its condition and to see if insurgents were storing weapons inside.

Finding the school clear, Schwab spoke to the principal about insurgent

groups in the area. Later, he gave a child some candy to bring him to a local leader for a similar conversation.

“Building a rapport with influential people here is the best thing we can do right now,” Schwab said.

“Intelligence from the locals is the most effective means of deterring terrorist activity in sector.”

China QRF ready for action

While China and Iraqi Security

courtesy of 3-15 Inf.



ing a patrol in Sadr City July 28.

Forces plan and conduct missions independently in Sadr City, the quick reaction force always stands ready to aid either unit if they need additional firepower.

Soldiers from C Company, 3-15 Inf., staff the QRF and maintain a constant state of readiness.

“We’re expected to be out the gate in 15 minutes, but our record is six,” said Sgt. Tim Wing, C Co., 3-15 Inf., gunner. “It’s exciting – no one else can do that.”



1st Lt. Jason Schwab, B Co., 3-15 Inf., platoon leader, speaks with Iraqi Police officers at Al-Karama IP Station in Sadr City.



Schwab speaks to a local leader about trash collection in Sadr City.

Wing, from Ashtaville, Ohio, and his team can usually be found at the motor pool, waiting for the call.

The QRF has both M1 Abrams battle tanks and humvees at its disposal. In spite of Sadr's narrow streets, some Soldiers prefer the tanks.

"The Abrams drives like a big Cadillac – it's smooth as can be, even over rough terrain," said Spc.

Christopher Hyde, C Co., 3-15 Inf., driver. "Traffic parts like Moses at the Red Sea when a tank is coming through."

Hyde is from Poteet, Texas.

The QRF is in constant communication with their own unit as well as the Iraqi Army Battalion, but they work much more with 3-15 Inf., according to 1st Lt.

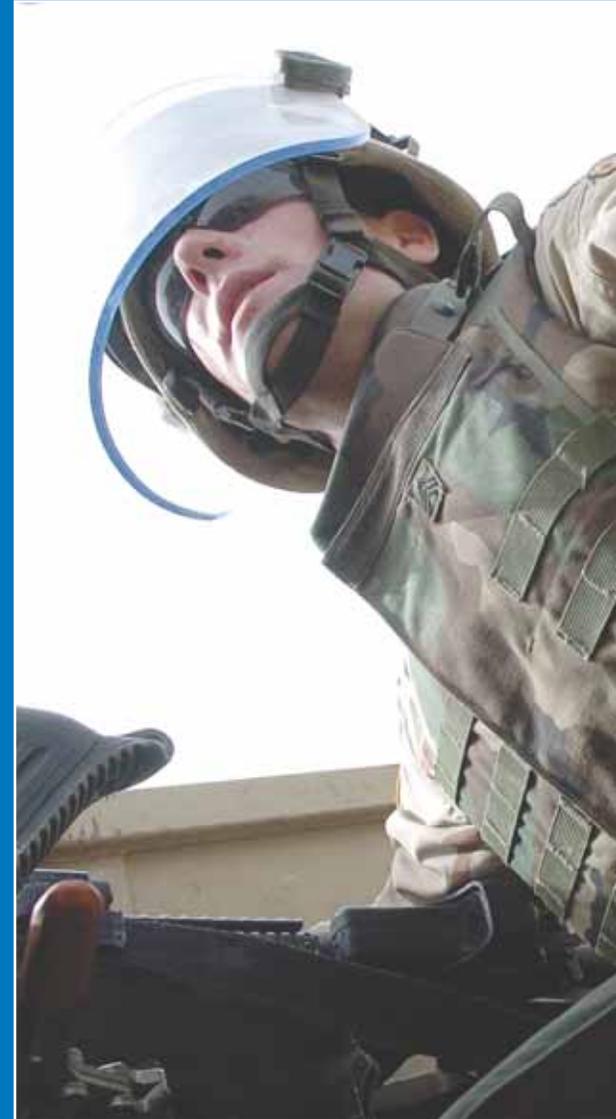
Timothy Martin, C Co., 3-15 Inf., platoon leader.

"The IAB has their own QRF, and they've been launched several times," Martin, of Wilson, Okla., said. "We've only been out to help them once – they can pretty much take care of themselves out there."

Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3-15 Inf., have spent months helping to prepare Iraqi troops for duty in Sadr City, and the progress is showing.

"They've come a long way in the past six months," said Capt. Zan Hornbuckle, HHC, 3-15 Inf., commander. "They're now a fairly proficient infantry battalion."

Hornbuckle, from Tifton, Ga., has overseen much of the IAB's training, and said they consistently perform



(Above) Wearing a ballistic face shield on his helmet, platoon leader, scans for trouble during a patrol in Sadr City. (Left) Schwab speaks with the principal of a school in Sadr City for greater protection for gunners from projectiles. (Right) A soldier in a ballistic face shield scans for trouble during a patrol in Sadr City.

complex missions well.

“In the last two weeks, they’ve done two large cordon-and-knock operations which were big successes,” he said.

“They’re building relationships with the local Iraqi Police, which is crucial to operating effectively in Sadr.”

Hornbuckle said the IAB leaders are working hard to reach a common goal – to get the IAB to the level of expertise where U.S. guidance is unnecessary.

“It’s been a lot of work to get them where they are today, so it’s a rewarding feeling to see them taking initiative and operating on their own,” Hornbuckle said.

“They’re proud of what they’ve accomplished, and that pride makes them a stronger unit.”



his helmet, Sgt. Chad Vallance, B Co., 3-15 Inf., team Sadr City. The recently-issued face shields offer tiles and improvised explosive devices. a girls school in Sadr City, July 28.

Sadr City Info

- **Gen. Abd al-Karim Qasim, the leader of the Iraq Republic in 1958, initiated the building of permanent structures in the area to house settlers who started migrating from the south in 1940**
- **Following the 1963 Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party rebellion, all government-sponsored construction ceased**
- **Originally known as Al Thawra, then Saddam City, Sadr City is named for Imam Mohammed Sadr, an Iraqi religious leader killed by Saddam Hussein**
- **The population consists primarily of Shiite Muslims**
- **Sadr City is roughly 27 square kilometers and has approximately 2.5 million residents**
- **According to reports, Saddam Hussein ordered a municipal building be constructed in the early ‘80s, gave one speech from it’s balcony, and never set foot in the district again**



Saber troopers

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody

TAWAITHA, Iraq – Units from Spartan Brigade Combat Team are trading areas of operation in Baghdad, and for troopers of 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, that means they get to do what cavalymen do best – reconnaissance and scouting missions.

Troopers from B Troop, 3-7 Cav., scouted new routes in Tawaitha, gaining familiarity with their new AO, July 27.

“We’re looking for any suspicious activity in the area

and interviewing people to get a sense of the security situation here,” said Staff Sgt. Zak Ingle, B Troop, 3-7 Cav., section sergeant. “Talking to people of influence in town also gets you a good idea of what infrastructure projects are needed. Sewer, water and electricity are the main needs around here.”

Looking at a map, the area B Troop searched appeared to be a desolate network of farmers’ fields, but the recon revealed a maze of dirt roads and collections



(Above) Sgt. 1st Class Mike Karsky, B Troop, 3-7 Cav., platoon sergeant, examines ruins near a road in Tawitha, Iraq, July 27. This building had been marked by another unit for unexploded ordnance, which turned out to be two dud mortar fuzes.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Zak Ingle, B Troop, 3-7 Cav., section sergeant, calls to an Iraqi man to open a gate during a recon mission.



scout Tawaita

of homes along a canal.

“We definitely became familiar with a lot of roads that aren’t on the maps,” Ingle, from Sisters, Ore., said. “The maps we have are pretty inaccurate, so these recons are crucial to understanding the area. I like to know every nook and cranny of my AO – if we have to run down some dirt path to engage a mortar team, I don’t want to have to look at a map or a plugger and wonder where I am.”

Troopers on recon missions are also responsible for marking mosques and schools using global positioning systems, or “pluggers.” The information is used during mission planning to ensure the safety of residents.

Driving armored humvees bearing the scars of previous attacks, the troopers examined a number of suspicious objects to ensure there were no improvised explosive devices on the route.

One crumbling building was spray-painted “UXO,” a military acronym for unexploded ordnance. Troopers found two deactivated mortar fuses inside.

“We look for IEDs, not just so we don’t hit them, but so the next convoy doesn’t either and so they don’t injure any civilians,” said Spc. Cory Fincher, B Troop, 3-7 Cav., driver. “We’ll try and find the village leaders to talk to about insurgents, but we’ll also hand out some candy to the kids and let them know we’re here to help.”

Fincher is from Dallas, Texas.

As the convoy drove past homes in the dusty fields, children waved and held their thumbs up.

Farmers cheerfully let the troopers look through their fields and not a single rock was thrown, a far cry from some areas in Baghdad.

“I like being out here in the country, going down roads no one’s gone down before,” Ingle said. “It’s great doing what we’re trained to do – recon is what every cav scout loves best.”



Ingle examines ruins near a road in Tawitha, Iraq, July 27. Ruins and abandoned buildings are often used by insurgents to store weapons.

Rogue's Buffalo joins hunt

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Looking like a creation from “Monster Garage,” 1st Battalion, 64th Armor’s Buffalo lumbers down the streets of Baghdad, searching for improvised explosive devices.

The Buffalo stands far taller than a tank, and boasts a robotic arm, tipped with a pitchfork-like hand and a camera for seeing into hard-to-reach areas.

“We travel slowly along our routes, looking out the windows for anything suspicious,” said Spc. Fred Cotten, E Company, 1-64 Armor, driver. “We know the routes like the backs of our hands – we’re out there every day so it’s pretty obvious when something is out

of place.”

A departure from typical military vehicles, the Buffalo has large windows of armored glass that offer much better side visibility than humvees or armored personnel carriers.

The engineer company’s Buffalo team spotted several IEDs in their old sector, and although they have not found one yet in their new sector, they boast of the Buffalo’s effectiveness.

“IEDs have never gone off in the areas we’ve swept,” said Cpl. Jason Nolen, E Co., 1-64 Armor, Buffalo arm operator. “Every time an IED explodes in our sector, it’s on a route we didn’t patrol that day.”

On a patrol July 27, the Buffalo team inspected several bags in the street, and poked through piles of rubble on the shoulder, common hiding places for IEDs.

Using the hydraulic arm’s electronic controller, Nolen, from Florence, Ala., guided the arm’s sharp tines into a garbage bag and lifted it, revealing... garbage.

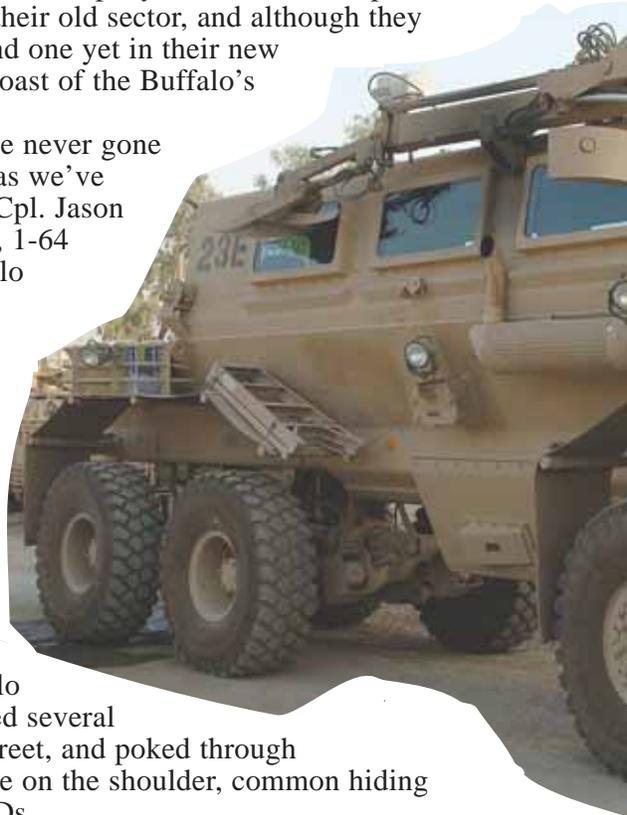
“There’s so much trash on the roads, it’s very time-consuming to clear all the pieces that could hide an explosive,” Nolen said.

Soldiers in humvees travel with the Buffalo and pull security for the slow-moving convoy.

“We’re out there looking primarily for IEDs, but anything that catches our eye we’ll investigate,” said Staff Sgt. Perre Echolz, E Co., 1-64 Armor, obstacle



(Top) Cpl. Jason Nolen, E Co., 1-64 Armor, uses the Buffalo's robotic arm to inspect a metal box alongside a Baghdad road and later (above) uses it to pick up a suspicious bag left on a road. The arm is also equipped with a camera that transmits to a display in the Buffalo's cabin.



for IEDs

section sergeant. “Being in the lead vehicle – you’ve got to be a leader, you can’t be nervous at all.”

Echolz is from Brooklyn, N.Y.

Soldiers speak highly of the Buffalo’s reliability and durability under fire.



“Every Buffalo we’ve heard of getting hit has rolled back to base under its own power,” Cotten, from Charleston, Miss., said.

“It’s tough as nails.

Between driving either this or a tracked vehicle, I’d take the Buffalo, hands down.”

The

E Co.

team picked up their

Buffalo in April after receiving a

class from 612th

Engineers, an Ohio

National Guard unit stationed in

Baghdad.

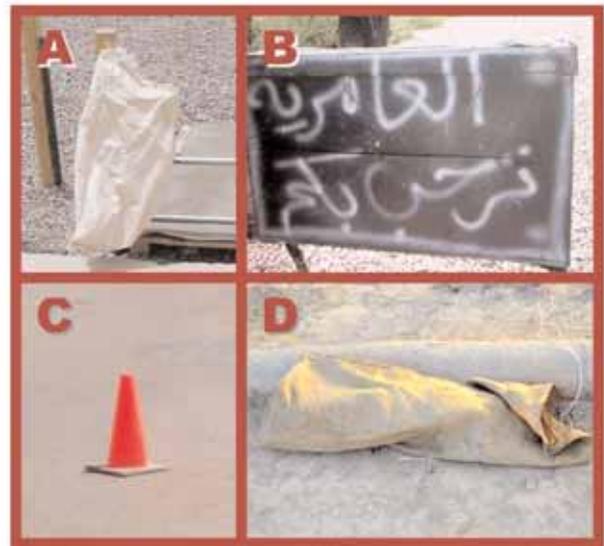
“It was a good class – we learned how to identify an IED, what to look for and where to look,” Cotten said. “Since then, we’ve learned quite a bit on our own that is helping us to keep the roadways safe.”

Nolen said the group changes up their routes and departure times constantly to avoid setting patterns for potential ambushers to follow.

“We know when we go out and clear a route, we’re responsible for the safety of our fellow Soldiers in the area,” Nolen said. “We go out every day and do what we can to keep the routes safe for our guys.”

Remember: Scan your sector

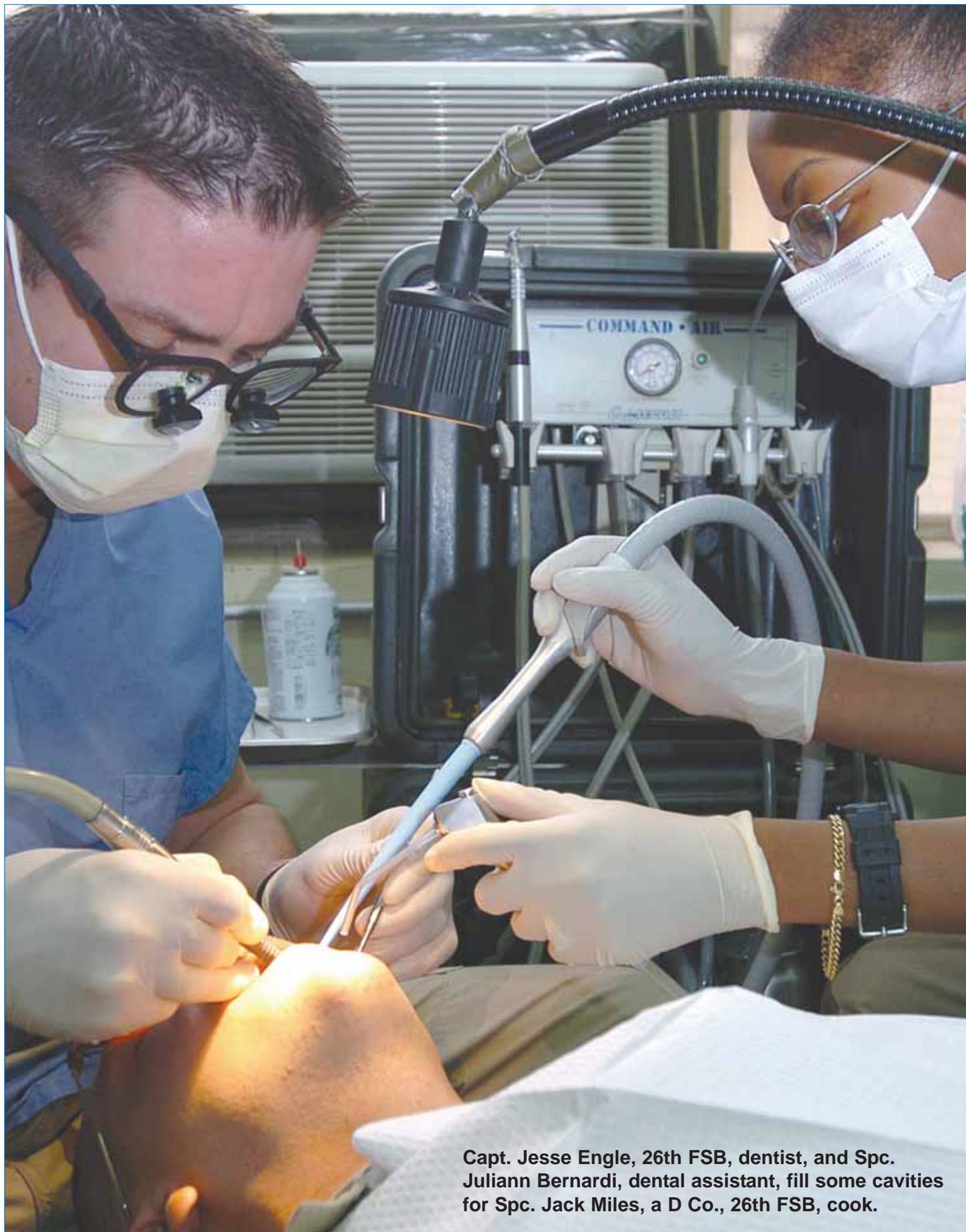
Which one is not an IED?



E: None of the above.



STAY ALIVE



Capt. Jesse Engle, 26th FSB, dentist, and Spc. Juliann Bernardi, dental assistant, fill some cavities for Spc. Jack Miles, a D Co., 26th FSB, cook.

A visit to everybody's favorite place...

The Dentist

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Brody

CAMP RUSTIMIYAH, Iraq – Soldiers have a well-earned reputation for having filthy mouths, but two Army dentists at Camp Rustimiyah aim to change that.

“Just raise your left arm if you need me to stop,” said Capt. Jesse Engle, 26th Forward Support Battalion, dentist, as he went to work filling a Soldier’s cavities June 26.

Engle and Capt. Philip Livingood, of the 464th Medical Company, are available to over 10,000 Spartan Brigade Combat Team troops, National Guard and Reserve Soldiers, and civilian military personnel in Eastern Baghdad.

“It can be a madhouse sometimes, but we are able to provide Soldiers with a very high level of care here,” Engle, from Tucson, Ariz., said. “We run a sick call, which is walk-in, and take appointments in the afternoon.”

Engle and Livingood provide what they refer to as “definitive care,” which means that patients who come to them with dental conditions leave with the problem fixed, not just with an interim solution to hold them over until they redeploy.

“A lot of deployed troops don’t have access to this level of care, so they just get patched up well enough to ease the pain,” Livingood, of Phoenix, Ariz., said. “Anything we start here, we finish.”

Both are doctors of dentistry who came into the Army through a scholarship program. The Army paid for four years of dental school, in return for a

four-year service obligation.

Livingood and Spc. Jerry Richard, dental hygienist, are assigned to 464th Medical Co., from Landstuhl, Germany. They are deployed in support of Spartan BCT.

Richard and Spc. Juliann Bernardi, 26th FSB, Engle’s dental assistant, play a crucial role in the day-to-day dental operations at Rustimiyah, according to the two dentists.

“Without our assistants, the dental clinic would fall apart – they do every-



thing,” Engle said.

Their duties include assisting with procedures, sterilizing equipment, preparing X-rays and procuring supplies.

Bernardi, from Chicago, Ill., said she joined the career field because she enjoys dealing with teeth.

Richard, from Dallas, Texas, is a dental assistant who received additional training to become a dental hygien-

ist. He said the most common problems he sees are caused by Soldiers not brushing their teeth properly.

“Most people brush in a haphazard manner, which doesn’t do your teeth much good,” Richard said. “You need to look at what you’re trying to brush, and take the time to get every surface with a soft bristle brush. Especially the rear molars – hardly anyone sticks the brush back far enough to clean those well.”

Livingood said the primary procedures he performs are fillings, root canals and wisdom teeth extractions.

“It’s hot outside, and Soldiers are drinking a lot of sugary drinks, which increase the risk of cavities,” Livingood said. “Compounding the problem, Soldiers are sometimes too tired from the day’s missions to brush their teeth regularly.”

Engle said he is sometimes called upon to assist in case of casualties coming onto Rustimiyah after an attack. Since sewing stitches in the mouth is notoriously difficult to do, his skills are often in demand when Soldiers come in with facial wounds.

“I’m the officer in charge of triage, if the situation ever arose, but in reality, I just do whatever’s needed when wounded troops come in,” Engle said. “It’s happened before – I just run around like a medic, and help whoever I can. If a litter needs carrying, or if a Soldier needs someone to talk to, that’s what I do.”

Livingood and Engle said they are both concerned about Soldiers’ dental health and welcome anyone to come in for a checkup.

REDUX: How to beat taxes on your CSB

Sgt. Christian Stephenson

2nd BCT Finance NCOIC

The Military Reform Act of 1986 created the REDUX retirement system and it applied to all members who joined on or after August 1, 1986. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY2000 amended this system. The NDAA made two major changes: 1) it allows those in this group to choose between the High-3 retirement system and the REDUX retirement system and 2) it added a \$30,000 Career Status Bonus as part of the REDUX retirement system.

The CSB/REDUX retirement system applies to those who entered Service on or after August 1, 1986, AND who elected to receive the \$30,000 Career Status Bonus at their 15th year of service.

The REDUX retirement system and Career Status Bonus is a "package deal." It is the combination of these two items that can be advantageous to many individuals.

The REDUX portion determines retirement income (the longer one's career, the higher that income) and the \$30,000 Career Status Bonus provides current cash—available for investing, major purchases, or setting up a business after retirement. If you invest these funds in something as simple as a mutual fund you could double this by the time you retire.

Each of the first 20 years of service is worth 2.0% toward the retirement multiplier. But each year after the 20th is worth

3.5%. Hence, $2.0\% \times 20 \text{ years} = 40\%$. But a 30-year career is computed by 2.0% times the first 20 years plus 3.5% for the 10 years beyond 20, resulting in the maximum of 75%. The table below summarizes the initial multiplier at various years of service under REDUX.

TIS	20	22	24	26	28	30
REDUX	40%	47%	54%	61%	68%	75%



There are two ways in which a member may reduce or eliminate taxes withheld from CSB. You can elect to participate in the Federal Thrift Savings Program (TSP), or file for the bonus in a Combat Tax Exclusion zone.

Under the TSP program, a member may contribute up to the IRS limit into a federal tax-deferred savings program (\$14,000.00 limit in 2005).

Contributions to TSP may be 10% of base pay salary payments, and 100% of bonuses, incentive pay, and special pay amounts, up to a combined maximum of the IRS limit.

The second and, best way is to elect the CSB in a Combat Tax Exclusion Zone. This is by far the better option if your eligibility date falls into a deployment window. You will save over 10,000.00 in Federal and State taxes by doing so (based on the 28% federal and a, 6% state income tax rate).

Combat Focus

From the Chaplain

Chaplain (Capt.) Steve Balog

3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, Chaplain

History has taught us many lessons as we look back upon the many battles our nation has fought. We are a blessed nation and have won freedom for countless people throughout our history. We see examples of courage, heroism and selfless service, history itself and the stories of soldiers who have gone on before us can help shape the values we live by on a day to day basis. In World War II the Army Air Corps made a huge impact on the battle field often bringing aid to units in dire need. Many times a unit would find themselves overwhelmed and the mere presence of a P-47 attack plane would turn the battle and bring victory. The fighter would pin point enemy strongholds go into a dive and unleash a massive barrage of gunfire and ordinance. There was a danger, however, to the pilots of these aircraft other than simple ground fire. The term was called "target fixation." At a glance, the term sounds like a good expression - the pilot fixed on the target would be able to place maximum firepower on the enemy. The reality was that most pilots avoided target fixation. It often led to death. Target fixation meant that as the plane dove on its target and fired upon it, the pilot was so focused on the attack he lost his perception of reality and would continue to descend toward the target until it was too late to pull out of the dive. The result of this was a large hole in the ground and one less pilot in the air. The well rounded pilot would always keep perspective and situational awareness on all elements around him, even if it took

several passes to destroy the enemy.

We can learn a big lesson from our brothers in the Army Air Corps of World War II. In the battle we face here in Iraq we also can fall prey to target fixation of a more personal nature. The midway point has come and for many, day to day patrols have become routine, soldiers face the possibility of complacency which in turn causes us to lose our battle focus and perspective. One area which is always overlooked is our spiritual focus. If it is enhanced in our lives, it can greatly improve our combat focus. Faith is an element that serves as a combat multiplier for it can help break complacency and routine and bring hope to the forefront.

Psalm 91 is a popular scripture here in theater, many have it written on cards or underlined in their bibles. The first verse states, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty." Most people tend to toss God to the side when life becomes routine and complacency strikes. They then begin a downward spiral and they become fixated on pressures of life, they lose perspective and thus lose combat effectiveness. The problem is that we fail at times to dwell in the presence of God. The verse states that when we dwell in the shelter of God we "rest" in him. God brings to the fight many powerful assets if we learn to dwell in him, among the greatest is hope and the perspective that he has all things in His hand. As we begin this leg of our deployment seek God on a day to day basis, enhance your faith and build this element of your personal life. With proper faith perspective each and every soldier will maintain a sure combat focus.

Healthy eating, weight loss

Tools to help Soldiers in the 2nd BCT live healthier

Sgt. 1st Class David Brissett

2nd BCT Medical Operations NCOIC

Did you know that in order to lose one pound of fat, 3,500 calories must be used and not replaced? How can I lose some weight? That is a question that millions of Americans ask themselves and others daily.

Soldiers of the 2 BCT are also asking that same question and probably will be asking that question more frequently as we approach the time to conduct the fall APFT.

Here are some suggestions that may assist you in attaining your goal.

The first thing that Soldiers can do to manage their weight effectively is to eat a well balanced meal consisting of the newly released (Jan. 12) Food Guide Pyramid. Visit: www.MyPyramid.gov.

The old food pyramid emphasis was placed on “variety” but didn’t adequately reflect the importance of restricting fat, and increasing vitamins and fiber.

The new pyramid also allows you to input your specific information such as age and sex to tailor to your individual needs. The other component in eating healthy and healthy weight loss is to increase activity and exercise. Here are some ideas.

Ensure that you eat several balanced meals a day; eating once a day causes the body’s metabolism to slow down and store foods as fat.

Eat healthy snacks such as carrots or nuts throughout the day.

It is better to eat several small meals throughout the day than one large meal once a day.

Do not eat large meals prior to going to sleep, if you must, eat fruits instead

Drink at least 5-6 liters of water per day (more as your activity level increases). Bottom line up front: If you use thirst as an indicator for being hydrated, you are behind the power curve.

Stay away from carbonated drinks, they are loaded with calories.

Try to get 6-7 hours of sleep as mission permits.

Conduct exercises at least three times a week (at least 30 minutes), maintaining a balance of aerobic (jogging,

sprints) and anaerobic (weight training, brisk walking) exercises.

Add variety to your fitness plan, and ensure to incorporate “rest” days to allow muscles and muscle fibers to build back up particularly after very intense PT sessions.

Stay away from “fad” diets that promise to make you lose a lot of pounds in a short period of time without exercising. Remember you didn’t get those “Love Handles” overnight, don’t expect to lose them that way either.

Avoid herbal supplements or other similar products for weight loss, you do not need them and they can potentially be harmful in this environment. It may be a good idea talk to your healthcare professionals before taking pills, drinks etc.

AR 600-9 (Army weight Control Program) states that a weight loss goal of 3 to 8 pounds per month is considered a safely attainable goal to enable soldiers to lose excess body fat and meet the body fat standards for their age group.

Individuals who have not/cannot make satisfactory progress after any two consecutive monthly weigh-ins may be referred by the commander or supervisor to health care personnel for evaluation or reevaluation.

Be realistic in your expectations for losing weight. When soldiers fail to meet unrealistic expectations it tends to cause them to give up.

Set short term goals, meet them then move on to something more challenging. Use the Buddy system, Unit Master Fitness Trainers or your NCO chain to assist you in reaching those goals.

Here are some internet sites and references to assist you:

<https://chppm-ss1.apgea.army.mil> , type in weight loss; <http://www.apd.army.mil> for AR 600-9 (Army Weight Control Program and other reference material.

Your Chain of Command , unit NCOs and health care personnel are available to educate, train and support you in your quest to reach the “Promised land of good health and nutrition,” but you must take the first step in taking care of yourself. I’ll see you on the high ground.

If you have any questions I can be reached via VOIP 242-7012, DSN (318) 856-0578.



Stateside

Court throws out prison grooming policy

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - The California prison system acted improperly when it tried to trim the hair of an American Indian inmate who said a haircut violated his religious beliefs, a U.S. appeals court ruled on Friday.

Billy Soza Warsoldier, who had not cut his hair in 25 years, filed a lawsuit after a minimum-security prison punished him for refusing to comply with a rule that men's hair be no longer than 3 inches (8 cm) long.

The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, reversing a lower court decision, said the state had failed to show the grooming policy was the least restrictive way to ensure prison safety and security.

"It applies to all male inmates, but to no female inmates regardless of a female inmate's security threat; it does nothing to distinguish between inmates housed at maximum security facilities and those low level offenders in minimum security institutions; and it provides absolutely no accommodation for religious belief," Judge Harry Pregerson wrote for a three-judge panel.

Warsoldier, who was released from prison last year, called the decision an important precedent for American Indians.

"This is a really good win for us because now all Indian men behind me and the ones still here, now have the right to keep our traditions and let hair grow long," the Cahuilla Native American said in an interview. "They don't like the fact that we're going to stand up against them."

Last year, a separate three-judge panel came down on the opposite side of a similar issue, saying the California Department of Corrections' reasons for requiring short hair — such as making inmates easier to detect if they try to escape — were justified.

Town approves pigeon coop for Mike Tyson

PHOENIX (Reuters) - Boxer Mike Tyson's best bird buddies are getting a

new home.

A \$12,000 pigeon coop that will provide Tyson's pets with 100 square feet of air-conditioned comfort was given the go-ahead on Tuesday by officials in the posh Phoenix suburb of Paradise Valley, Arizona.

The coop will be built behind a nearly one-acre (0.4-hectare) residence Tyson recently bought there.

Town officials last month halted construction of the coop after a neighbor complained it was being built without permission. An application for a permit was then filed.

Officials said there is nothing on the town's books limiting the number of birds a homeowner can have on the property. Tyson plans to house 85 to 100 birds.

The troubled ex-heavyweight champion's love for pigeons is well documented. Tyson gained a reputation as a fighter while growing up in New York after pummeling a bully who killed one of his pigeons, according to several accounts of his career.

Last month, Tyson made an unannounced visit to a Phoenix City Council subcommittee to argue against a proposal that would limit residential properties to 40 birds.

"They're pretty harmless," Tyson was quoted as saying in *The Arizona Republic*. "I don't understand why people would want to get rid of pigeons. They don't bother no one." Tyson could not be immediately reached for comment.

Drug dealer must forfeit lottery winnings

HOUSTON (Reuters) - A Mexican citizen must forfeit about \$2.75 million in Texas lottery winnings because of his drug-trafficking conviction, a federal appeals court said on Wednesday.

Jose Luis Betancourt, 52, was arrested after making a cocaine delivery shortly after accepting \$5.5 million for having the winning ticket in the December 11, 2002, lottery drawing, according to court documents.

A jury convicted Betancourt, who was living in the border city of Brownsville, Texas, of conspiracy and two counts of possession with intent

to distribute cocaine in May 2003 and also found he must forfeit his one-half interest in the lottery ticket.

A three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed with the trial court judge's ruling that Betancourt bought his share of the ticket with drug proceeds because that was his only apparent source of income.

The court also upheld his punishment of more than 24 years in prison without parole.

Planner quits to fight wife's deportation

HOUSTON (Reuters) - A wealthy Dallas developer who dumped his wife of 30 years to marry a younger Chinese woman gave up an influential city post and has headed to New York to fight her deportation, his lawyer said on Tuesday.

Ralph Isenberg, 53, and his wife, Nicole, who turns 41 on Friday, ignored a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement order that she leave the country by August 15 and are fighting it in New York, attorney Ted Cox said.

"We believe she's entitled to stay here and file for a green card," Cox said.

The juicy story began unfolding publicly earlier this month when Isenberg resigned from the City Plan Commission after telling local reporters his soap opera-like story.

Isenberg said he left his wife of 30 years upon meeting Nicole, previously known as Yanhong Hu, who had been arrested for prostitution at a Dallas massage parlor, according to *The Dallas Morning News*.

The charge eventually was dismissed, although Nicole Isenberg's immigration problems persisted. U.S. immigration spokesman Carl Rusnok said she had lost her chance to apply for residency.

"She would have had that opportunity had she left the country," he said, noting that the government has given her three extensions over 18 months.

Ralph Isenberg has adopted his wife's 14-year-old daughter from a previous marriage and the couple has a six-week-old daughter.

Around the world

Eleven holes-in-one in a single round...

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea's Dear Leader Kim Jong-il never forgets a phone number, a cadre's career or a line of computer code.

According to an article posted Tuesday on a Web site run by North Korea, Kim wakes up early every day for intensive memory training where he sits down and commits to his keen mind items such as the phone numbers of workers in his Stalinist state.

"I remember all computer codes and telephones that workers are using now," Kim was quoted as saying on the Web Site "Uri-Min-jok-kiri" (www.uriminzokkiri.dprkorea.com), or "Among our People."

Kim surprised a group of North Korean officials attending a meeting in 2002 by recalling all their phone numbers "with lightning speed," the site said.

On a day Kim visited a cemetery, he looked around at the tombs and he remembered the achievements, characteristics, tastes and bereaved family members for hundreds of the dead by a quick glance at the names on tombstones, it said.

"All the attendants were surprised at his incredible memory," the site says.

North Korean propaganda is ripe with the amazing achievements of its Dear Leader. The highly controlled state also closely monitors its citizens to make sure they do not speak out against Kim or challenge his rule.

Kim pilots jet fighters, pens operas, produces movies and accomplished a feat unmatched in the annals of professional golf by shooting 11 holes-in-one on the first round he ever played.

The Web Site said Kim told all workers they should develop their ability to memorize. "The memory of a person gets better when a person uses their brain often," he was quoted as saying.

Four dead in cockfight grenade fight

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Angry gamblers threw two hand grenades

into a crowd at a cockfight in western Mexico, killing four men and seriously injuring at least 11 others, authorities said Monday.

TV images showed doctors wrapping bandages around the bloody limbs of the victims of the late-night attack in the tequila-making state of Jalisco.

"Two men died at the cockfight and two more died in nearby hospitals," said Jose Ramirez, spokesman for the Jalisco Attorney General's office. "It appears that some men lost money and then they lost control." Local media reported that shots were also fired at the cockfight in the town of Tonalá, just outside the state capital, Guadalajara. About 300 people attended the fight.

Six men were arrested at a hospital when five of them tried to carry off the sixth, who was being treated for injuries sustained at the cockfight, online newspapers reported.

Cockfighting is popular in Mexico, especially in rural areas, and huge sums of money are often gambled on the outcome.

My Lips are sealed...

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - A jailed businessman who is accused of bribing some of Mexico City's most powerful politicians sewed his lips shut Monday to protest the criminal charges against him.

Carlos Ahumada, an Argentine nationalized in Mexico, was arrested in Cuba and has been jailed since last year when a local television station broadcast video of him giving bundles of cash to Mexico City politicians. He allegedly was trying to win lucrative government contracts.

The scandal ended the political career of a leading left-wing politician who was his lover at the time. It also hurt the left-wing Party of the Democratic Revolution, or PRD, whose politicians were shown taking money from Ahumada.

The scandal could prove damaging to Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who was the popular Mexico City mayor at the time of the payoffs and a leader of the PRD.

Ahumada, who is also on a hunger

strike, had pledged to sew his lips shut if his case was not resolved before Lopez Obrador, Mexico's most popular politician, stepped down to seek the presidency.

Lopez Obrador left office Friday and is the current favorite in next year's race to replace conservative President Vicente Fox, who is barred by the constitution from seeking reelection at the end of his six-year term.

Last month a judge threw out money laundering charges against one of the officials shown on tape taking money from Ahumada. Leftist Mexico City lawmaker Rene Bejarano has said he took the cash for a political campaign and never pocketed any of it. The judge ordered Bejarano released, though he faces lesser charges.

First-hand experience of the Trinidad health system

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad (Reuters) - The head of a commission investigating Trinidad and Tobago's public health care sector said she almost died from food poisoning after eating at a government-run hospital.

Gladys Gaffoor said she fell ill last week after eating at the general hospital in the southern city of San Fernando following a commission meeting there.

"I almost died. I spent one night on drips and oxygen," Gaffoor said Monday, explaining why she aborted a visit by the commission to another hospital.

Man's finger makes the train

BERLIN (Reuters) - A German man's severed finger traveled 60 kilometers by rail after its owner trapped his hand in the door trying to board a train at the last minute, police said Tuesday.

Passengers traveling from Freiburg to Cologne Sunday noticed the finger lying on the floor and alerted police, who collected it at the next station. Doctors said they were confident they could reattach the finger to its 34-year-old owner after it was rushed back to Freiburg in an ambulance.

