

The Marne Express

"Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork"

Volume 2, Issue 17

Serving the Soldiers of Task Force Baghdad

October 9, 2005

In this week's edition of *The Marne Express*



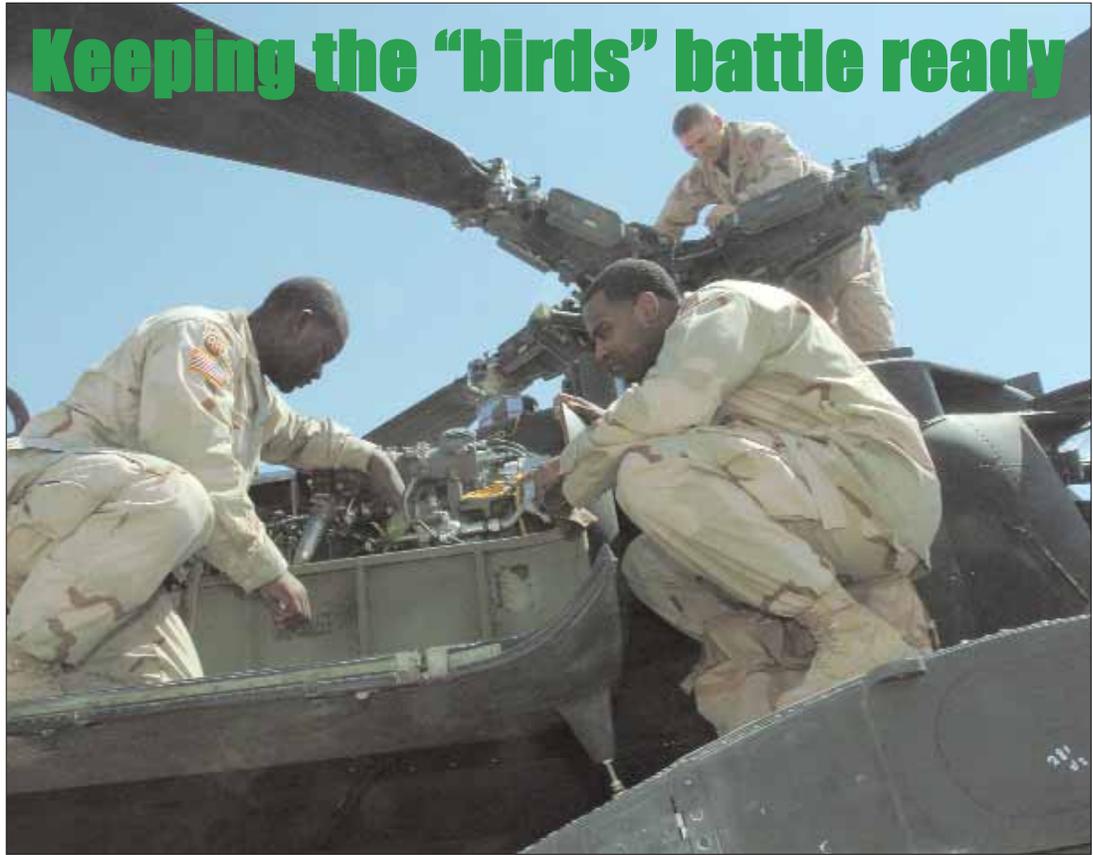
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Spc. Derek Del Rosario

(left to right) Spc. Donald Weatherby and Staff Sgt. Corey Edward inspect an Apache engine while Spc. Edward Davis inspects the rotorhead as part of a pre-phase inspection. All three Soldiers are from D Co., 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance).

Aviation mechanics keep up with battle workload

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
Avn. Bde. PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — The sight of an Apache flying overhead can strike fear into Anti-Iraqi Forces, but when the aircraft mechanics of the 3rd Infantry Division Aviation Brigade get hold of them, what

was once an intimidating aircraft in the sky becomes an empty shell with all its major parts scattered across the floor.

Much like a car that is serviced after 30,000 miles, an Apache that has flown a total of 500 hours must undergo a phase maintenance inspection in which the aircraft is completely broken down and its

main components thoroughly checked for serviceability and quality assurance.

Recently D Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), put their 24th Apache into phase. Phase maintenance is only part

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Tae Bo guru visits Soldiers, leads workout

Spc. Tracy Smith
48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — Billy Blanks grew up with three strikes against him: a late diagnosed learning disorder, limited joint mobility, and shyness. These constrictions typically would not guide a person on a successful path in life.

But now, the actor, author, and fitness expert is world famous for his Tae Bo workout regimen and has helped countless people feel better about themselves.

While visiting Soldiers at

Camp Striker he opened up to the gathering about the value of allowing determination to guide them. He then led the Soldiers in a workout worthy of a warrior. Blanks showed no mercy.

Sweating profusely, Cpl. Kendra Crump Hogans, a logistics supply clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 148th Support Battalion, 48th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, found it easy to smile. Despite stinging eyes and exhaustion, she proclaimed the workout titan "wonderful!"

"It's great that he is doing this," said Hogans, a Macon, Ga. student. "It is always exciting when someone can come to us with such a motivating message."

A sea of synchronized arms and legs moved to the music as Banks took charge of the group. Banks combined the exercise with an inspirational message of driving on when discouraged. Fatigued and breathless, the receptive group participated in Blanks' "school circle," a discussion on drive and what defines a

See BANKS, page 18



Spc. Tracy Smith

Sgt. 1st Class Roger Neal with HHC, 48th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., gets a workout from Tae Bo fitness expert Billy Blanks (right).

m 7 sends

Be sensitive to Ramadan practices

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

Task Force Baghdad has achieved many great accomplishments since we began our mission. We have been strong in our unwavering presence and at the same time shown compassion and a true sense of caring for the Iraqi people.

As I have said before, the two basic responsibilities which are always on my mind are the accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers.

Soldiers who are on missions "outside the wire" will perhaps experience some distractions in the next few weeks. We must stay focused on our mission as Muslims celebrate Ramadan.

For more than a billion Muslims around the world—including some 8 million in North America—Ramadan is a "month of blessing" marked by prayer, fasting, and charity. Lasting for an entire month, Muslims fast during the daylight hours and in the evening eat small meals and visit with friends and family. There are only a few who are exempt, e.g., Soldiers in war, the sick, and the young.

Muslims practice sawm, or fasting for the entire month of Ramadan. This means that they may eat or drink nothing, including water, from sunrise to sunset. Fasting is one of the Five Pillars (duties) of Islam. As with other Islamic duties, all able Muslims take part in fasting from about age 7.

During Ramadan, most restaurants are closed during the daylight hours. Families get up early for suhoor, a meal eaten before the sun rises. After the sun sets, the fast is broken with a meal known as iftar. Iftar usually begins with dates and sweet drinks that provide a quick energy boost.

Fasting serves many purposes. While they are hungry and thirsty, Muslims are reminded of the suffering of the poor. Fasting is also an opportunity to practice self-control and to cleanse the body and mind. And in this most sacred month, fasting helps Muslims feel the peace that comes from spiritual devotion as well as kinship with fellow believers.

During Ramadan, all Coalition Forces should abstain from drinking, eating, and smoking in front of the population. Public eating, drinking, and smoking will be taken as

a sign of disrespect and rudeness.

Females should be careful to be chastely covered. Veils are not necessary, but this would be a good time to abstain from all provocative behavior including public displays of affection for the opposite sex. Even the slightest display of affection may be seen to provoke lust from the males of the population. Coalition Forces will maintain proper military bearing.

During the fast, Muslims will be exhausted, dehydrated, hungry, (many will also be suffering from nicotine withdrawal), and will be easily provoked.

Do not provoke anyone.

Religious fervor is at its peak during the month of Ramadan. Any Muslim who considers himself to be at war with the U.S. forces is more likely to attack than at any other time.

At the time of the sunset call to prayer, some charity-minded citizens will be on the streets offering dates and water to people still on the road. Similar action on our part should be well received. Small packages of dates and cold water will be sufficient. However, we will have to offer these tokens rather than wait to be asked.

During the three days of Eid-al-Fitr, a gift of money to the children is not a bad idea. The amount should not be too much. Preferably the money should be given to the child in the presence of the parent. Chocolates and other small symbolic gifts are likely to be well received.

In many places, a cannon is fired at the time of the sunset call to prayer as a signal that the time to break the fast has come. This is known as the "Madfa al-Iftar" (The Iftar Cannon). In other areas and alleys, a man with a drum will be walking around calling for breaking the fast and suhur before fast. In some of the smaller townships and many neighborhoods of larger cities, some citizens have been known to fire their rifles or pistols for the same purpose. This is not an act of aggression, but the bullets will eventually land somewhere.

The uniform we wear is designed to protect you and has been proven effective. Wear it proudly. Keep your wits about you and maintain an ever-present vigilance.

We are doing great as a Division and I am proud of everyone!

"ROCK OF THE MARNE"

Minimize your exposure to IEDs.



Confirm from as far away as possible.



STAY ALIVE

The Word on the Street

If you could add one activity to the MWR program, what would it be?

"I'd suggest canoeing and kayaking. I look at the lake and miss being able to use a kayak or a canoe."



Maj. Amy Bajus
SJA, HHSC STB
Pittsburgh

"With so many people who ride bikes here, I'd add a bike course with hills, bumps, and jumps to give you a good workout."



Sgt. Paris Pennington
Command Group, HHSC
Monteagle, Tenn.

"What we need here is a fishing tournament. There are quite a few fishermen here."



Sp. Jared Sanders
HHOC, STB
Baton Rouge, La.

"I would add a go-kart track or a track to run the Gators on! There's nothing like the feel of speed to make you forget about everything else."



Sp. Matthew Owens
128th Med. Co.
Muscle Shoals, Ala.

"It would be great if we had a baseball field so we could have tournaments."



Sp. Laurence Juarez
1st Det., 3rd Sig. Co.
Riverside, Calif.

The Marne Express

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Commentary

Soldiers are my family; I could just choke them

I have heard Soldiers called a band of brothers. Nothing could be more true about the men and women serving together in Iraq.

But any of us who grew up with siblings know we didn't always get along with our flesh and blood. I can't tell you how many times I was in a blind rage ready to choke my little brother or sister. They are my family though. If anybody outside of the family threatened them, I would defend them with my life.



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

I have always considered myself a hard worker. At the tender age of 13, I had a small business going door to door mowing grass. I built a nice collection of G.I. Joe action figures and vehicles with the

proceeds of my business.

My darling brother would lie awake at night and dream of getting his grubby paws on my collection. See, I had the toys in formation with their weapons on a shelf in my room.

My brother would offer to do favors for me just to be close to the Joes. I could see his eyes glaze over and grow wide when he was near them.

I kept my room locked. One weekend, I went on a fishing trip by myself, and spent the night camping in the woods. Upon my return home, I parked my bike in the yard. As I was walking up the steps, I saw a sword from my Storm Shadow figure laying in the dirt. I felt a small amount of bile rise in my throat, and ran directly to my room. Sure enough, my brother had illegally gained entry to my quarters and ravaged my collection. In the back yard, our dog had a fighter jet

between his paws and was happily gnawing away. Needless to say, my sweet brother was in the den sitting on the other side of my father to avoid my wrath.

Soldiers are the same way.

We are all looking for ways to forget where we are. Most of us have a large collection of snacks and drinks stashed away in our area of operation. My dear brothers are infamous for pilfering these goods from me when I am away. They can't help it, they just love me so much they feel like what is mine is theirs.

If familiarity breeds contempt then I am the epitome of contemptuousness. I lay awake at night and listen to the firing of automatic weapons and the screams of victory outside my window. Fortunately, these are not real enemy weapons or real heroes' screams, but my room mates playing Halo 2 until four in the morning. I try

to find it in my heart to get out of bed and go yell at them, but I love them and I know they are just trying to blow off steam.

We all try to be civil, but we all want to choke each other at one time or another. Our leaders are like our parents, and when they give us orders during our personal time, we give them a piece of our mind, albeit long after they have left the room. We are truly a band of brothers, and an Army of one.

One thing I wish the Army and my brothers would do is keep away from my drinks, stop making noise, turn the lights off, don't grab the last Gatorade and stop banging on my door at all hours asking me for electrical gadgets.

This will never happen, and I know I will love these people for the rest of my life, just like my family. Let me at 'em!

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane is an Army journalist with 1st BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

Commentary

Looking for some source of wisdom to anchor you down in life

I know what I'm going to do with the millions (give or take) of tax-free money I'm earning here in Iraq when I get back. I've got big plans. My motorcycle, which has been screaming for years now for various upgrades and add-ons, figures highly in those plans. It needs to be lowered, it needs ape-hanger handlebars, and it needs more chrome. Numbers, figures, mathematical equations swim around in my head — can I afford that six-speed transmission I've always wanted and still get the chrome engine covers?

I need retail therapy, after a year in this place, and by golly I'm going to get it.

My wife, though, keeps interjecting a most irritating factor into my retail therapy equations: wisdom.

Things don't swim in her mind. They line up nicely and do her bidding. Roth IRAs, Thrift Savings Plans, savings accounts and bonds are prioritized and categorized. She has a month-by-month budget that looks 12 months out!

People assume that, as a Staff Sergeant I rent a small house somewhere. "No," I tell them, "we own a house."

And their next question is, "Oh, really? Where does your wife work?"

"In that house," I say.

People are amazed that she doesn't have a paying job; that we are a single-income family. How can you have a big van, a Harley-Davidson, a big house, three kids, and two big hungry Golden Retrievers, they want to know. It's easy, I tell them...I guess.

To tell you the truth, with all the times I've been overseas or deployed, I really don't know how we do it!

My wife is a homemaker, true, and she works hard to make that home while I'm away. But she's also my financial advisor, my conscience and my wisdom. I'm in short supply of any of those skill sets in my brain. If I were single, making the same money I am now, I can guarantee you that I would be dirt poor, barely able to make ends meet.

Instead of planning meals week by week, I would eat out whenever I wanted. Instead of putting massive restrictions on credit card use I'd shrug and whip out the plastic at a moment's notice with a weak promise that I won't use it the next time, a promise that I would break, of course. My bike would be gorgeous. I'd live in a shack and pay a ridiculous rent. I'd probably wear a Rolex watch, instead of a nice Seiko, but I would also starve the last five days of each month.

A couple of years ago, I sold my old Harley while at Fort Polk and when I went to Fort Bragg, I started looking for another one. My wife went with me to the Harley dealer and took me straight to a new bike from the previous model year that was being sold for below MSRP. Everything was rosy and sweet-smelling until we got to the financing stage. My wife had found some obscure financial institution in Texas that could offer us a low rate. Harley said they'd beat it, but during the financing stage the guy behind the desk gave us a rate that was .1 percent higher. My wife picked up her purse

and said, "Well we can't do it." Then she looked at me and said, shrugging, "Sorry, honey."

Sorry honey! I had tears rolling down my cheeks. The guy behind the desk had tears rolling down his cheeks. She would not budge. Harley finally budged and I got my bike.

We all need a source of wisdom in our lives; for me it's my wife, or some it's the chaplain, or their parents, or their noncommissioned officer. Some turn to Army Community Service for advice on how to take care of the everyday business of living. We all need someone with financial, spiritual or emotional strength, to keep us on track.

I'd like to think that everyone in 1st Brigade Combat Team has a source of wisdom to turn to, but I know that isn't true. Some folks are floating around out there without an anchor to tie to, just like I'd be if I didn't have my source of wisdom.

I would like everyone to think about it, though, and beware. In the next few months we'll be redeploying back home to friends and family and those of us who don't have an anchor will have some problems.

Start looking now for that source of wisdom. If you can't find one, though, I'd really like a nice set of leather saddlebags and my budget won't cover it so maybe you could float a loan?

Staff Sgt. Thomas Mills is an Army journalist with 1st BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

Unsung Heroes

Command Sgt. Maj. Grant

3rd Inf. Div. command sergeant major

Today we are recognizing a group of professionals who are as prepared to battle in a courtroom, as they are on a battlefield.

Congress exercised its responsibilities over military justice by enacting the Uniform Code of Military Justice, - the "UCMJ," in 1950.

We are lucky to have a group of legal professionals who dedicate themselves to the spirit and letter of the UCMJ.

The Staff Judge Advocate plays an extremely important role in ensuring today's Soldiers are prepared legally before, during, and after our missions.

Regardless of the legal situation, there is a section that can provide counsel and direction.

Each of the sections, legal assistance, claims, military justice, operational law, administrative

law, detainee operations, and trial defense service, has a team of experienced professionals made up of judge advocates, paralegal specialists and noncommissioned officers who are there for the Soldiers.

It takes more than just rifles to be a Soldier in today's Army. The SJA helps us to ensure we are doing the right thing, fairly and legally. In addition to Soldiers following the fundamental rules of the discipline we live by, the SJA helps us hold up the pillars of discipline and to follow the laws of the UCMJ.

Today's "Shout Out," goes to all of our legal teammates who play an important role in this mission.

Your efforts are deeply appreciated.

Thanks for your commitment, dedication, attention to detail, and for providing us with sound legal advice and guidance.

"Rock of the Marne"



Col. William A. Hudson Jr., SJA, MND-B, discusses the "Citizen and the Law" radio show at Radio Sawa. (From left to right) Hussain Alnahi, OSJA, MND-B Iraqi Attorney Advisor, Col. Hudson, Capt Gary McNeal, 2nd BCT Trial Counsel, Iraqi attorneys, Radio Sawa station manager.

Postal Companies deliver customer service

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – America has come a long way with its' postal service. Long gone are the days of the Pony Express and times when Soldiers would read letters from loved ones dated months earlier.

Technology has paved the way for increased communication through telephone calls and electronic mail. Despite these advancements, postal service remains an important service for Soldiers and plays an integral role in their morale.

Soldiers at Camp Liberty depend on their Division post office for their mail, and when it comes to this service, these Soldiers have delivered.

The Division post office is comprised of Army Reserve Soldiers from the 365th Adjutant General Postal Company of Athens, Ga., and the 155th Adjutant General Postal Company based out of Salt Lake City.

According to East Rutherford, N.Y. native 1st Lt. Kirk Kouzis, post office officer in charge, the companies' goal is simple.

"We ensure that the mail gets to the Soldiers," Kouzis said. "We provide this service to the troops stationed in the area, and we also process the outgoing mail for these Soldiers."

While the goal is simple, the process of getting mail from one point to another is very intricate. Packages must be inspected and shipping costs must be assessed before they can be separated, then shipped to their final destination.

Miami native Sgt. Claudin Butler, 341st AG Postal Co., inspects the mail and ensures packages are free of contraband.

"The post office is separated in different work tasks. We have Soldiers receiving and sending mail, working at the finance section and handling shipping costs, and also inspecting packages so any non-mail able items aren't leaving theater," Butler said. "It is very important to do a thorough inspection,

because we don't get a second opportunity."

Mail inspectors look through every outgoing package for such things as weapons, ammunition, TA-50 (issued field equipment) and other contraband.

"Everything that is confiscated is logged and then destroyed," said Denver native Staff Sgt. Miranda Smith, 155th AG Postal Co. "If the confiscated item is a weapon or ammunition, we get the CID (U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command) involved and inform the chain of command."

Soldiers working at the post office find it hard to predict when a busy day might come.

Sgt. Joshua Nunally, 341st Adjutant General Postal Company and Jacksonville, Fla. native, says redeploing Soldiers play a part in their work schedule.

"During holidays and when units are coming and going, we get a large volume of traffic in here," Nunally said. "If we have Soldiers on additional duties such as guard duty, we can get really busy."

If customers want to expedite their trip to the post office, Kouzis says having correct forms will help ensure a customer's visit is as quick as possible. He also advises people to ensure they have the correct Army post office address when sending packages into theater.

"Filling out forms before entering the post office, and making sure the address and ZIP code are correct will help things move along quicker," Kouzis said. "Also, be sure not to put 'Baghdad' or 'Iraq' on mail, because it can sometimes cause mail to be mixed in with the Iraqi mail system. Doing so could cause mail to get to its recipient slower."

Along with the task of ensuring outgoing mail, all incoming mail is handled as well. The company receives approximately 40,000 pounds of mail daily.

Spc. Roberto Batista, 341st AG Postal Co. and Miami native, says much like outgoing mail, it is hard to

"Teamwork is an important key factor. You cannot do it on your own., you need cooperation. We have roles that play a part in the big picture."

Sgt. Claudin Butler
341st AG Postal Co.



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Sgt. Jon Gassaway, a Denver, Colo. native, with the 155th Adjutant General Postal Co., inspects a Soldier's footlocker prior to it being mailed.

foresee when big shipments are coming in.

"We usually get two or three trucks coming in, but one time we had six trucks of mail a day for a week straight," Batista said. "Sometimes it can get busy like that, and some days we only have one or two trucks. Every day is new."

Since each day is unpredictable in terms of activity, Pfc. Vacia Morrison, 341st AG Postal Co. and Stone Mountain, Ga., native, says that versatility is a very important trait for the Soldiers to have.

"The operation of the post office is a very hands-on process, and everyone has to pitch in to get the mail delivered," Morrison said. "Everyone is required to know how to work in each different section in case we have to fill in for another Soldier."

Being able to work in different sections plays a direct part in the teamwork of the postal company; something that Butler feels is an integral part of their operations.

"Teamwork is a very important key factor. You cannot do it on your own, you need cooperation," Butler said. "We all have roles that play a part in the big picture."

Seeing other Soldiers shipping items

home during redeployment might be disheartening for some, but helping these Soldiers is what gives Smith the most gratification.

"When we first got here and were helping Soldiers who were going home, it was great to see how happy they were," Smith said. "When I see a Soldier getting ready to go home, you can see it on their faces—it's a good feeling helping them to get their mail where it needs to go."

For those Soldiers who still have some time in theater, mail remains to be a significant morale booster, despite the immediacy of e-mails.

"Increased communications through technology is good, but writing an e-mail is not the same as writing a letter," Butler said. "When someone writes a letter, they are showing the really care by taking the time and thinking about what to say before putting down their thoughts."

For Soldiers coming or going, the impact that mail has on the Soldier morale in theater is unquestionable. Mail continues to receive the attention it deserves, due to the hard work of the 365th and 155th AG Postal Co., and their Soldiers who continue to deliver customer service that Soldiers can rely on.

**No
Soldier
left
behind**

Sgt. Matthew Maupin

"I will not leave a fallen comrade"

These 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.



Terrorist activity nevermore

Raven helps nab terrorists near Taji

Spc. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Edgar Allan Poe’s ghostly black bird uttered the word “nevermore” over and over in the famous poem “The Raven.”

Soldiers have their own “Raven” making sure terrorist activities northwest of Baghdad will “nevermore” be hidden from Coalition Forces.

Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division use a Raven plane to provide real-time intelligence and surveillance for troops on the ground.

“We can search out anything, keep eyes on people who are doing cordon and searches, and we can also look at a house or anything in the area that seems suspicious,” said Sgt. Brock B. Savelkoul, a Raven operator for 4th Bn., 1st FA Reg.’s Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

“We can provide support for anybody who needs it,” said Spc. Brad Kley, a Winthrop, Minn., native, who is also a Raven operator with HHB. Savelkoul and Kley see several advantages to using a Raven to supplement ground operations.

“Using the Raven allows the ground troops to be supported by air. We’re protecting them from the sky.”

Sgt. Brock B. Savelkoul
4th Bn., 1st FA Regt.

“We are on top of it.”

“We can see things most people on the ground can’t see,” Savelkoul added.

Capt. Ryan Hofstra, from Sheldon, Iowa, intelligence officer for 4/1 FA Bn., said the Raven is a valuable tool in the war on terror.

“If we have any questions about a target site, they check it out for us,” he said. “We get a good look at the target.”

Often, the operators see more than stationary target buildings.

During one routine flight, Kley noticed a suspicious vehicle parked in a palm grove and notified his superiors at Camp Taji.

The next week, a vehicle was spotted in the same location and the people in the vehicle were detained. There haven’t been any attacks from the area since.

“It’s been real quiet there,” Hofstra said.

The two Raven pilots received intense training to learn how to operate the plane, but Savelkoul said he has learned more by flying the vehicle than he could ever learn in a classroom.

The operators are proud of the Raven team’s success and they are enjoying their jobs.

“I get to do something different. Every day there is a different mission, and there is always something that is going to come up while we’re in the air,” Savelkoul said. “It’s very exciting to be out and flying the Raven.”

At the end of their tour, the two operators will have logged hundreds of hours of flight time, and won’t stop piloting planes when they get home.

They both plan to buy model airplanes and keep flying for fun.



Spc. Brad Kley, a Winthrop, Minn., native, with 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, launches the Raven at Camp Taji.

Spc. Matthew Wester



Sgt. Brock Savelkoul, a Raven operator for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 1st Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, prepares a Raven for flight.

116th BCT celebrates 650-plus re-enlistments at ceremony

116th BCT PAO
Media Release

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq – The 116th Brigade Combat Team held a special ceremony Sept. 14 to celebrate achieving more than 650 re-enlistments while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

Soldiers in the 116th BCT, 42nd Infantry Division, have re-enlisted in record numbers, beating previous theater re-enlistment records by a large margin. The unit has achieved 654 combat zone re-enlistments as of Sept. 11.

“On April 14, we had (re-enlisted) 237 Soldiers since we arrived in December 2004,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jim Blake, the noncommissioned officer in charge of retention for the Brigade. “We decided to double that by Sept. 14 and established our goal, ‘The Record 500’, or simply, ‘RS.’ All concerned picked up on the challenge and by Aug. 11 we were at 511.”

Blake said reaching the goal was inspired by another National Guard unit that attained record

breaking numbers of combat re-enlistments earlier this year.

“Part of our motivation was the 256th Brigade Combat Team from Louisiana,” Blake said. “On the 20th of July, they made the Stars and Stripes (newspaper) with what was at the time a new theater record of 400 Soldiers extending. We knew we could beat that and we have!”

The ceremonial swearing in was held in front of the 116th BCT headquarters with one Soldier designated to represent all Soldiers participating. The oath was administered by Brig. Gen. Alan Gayhart, the 116th BCT commander in front of a large unit formation.

“I am proud to stand with each of you — American patriots who know that the protection of democracy

requires personal commitment and sacrifice,” Gayhart said during his remarks following the swearing in. “Your continued service brings great credit upon you, but most importantly honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.”

“Part of our motivation was the 256th Brigade Combat Team from Louisiana. On the 20th of July, they made the Stars and Stripes with ... 400 Soldiers extending.”

Sgt. 1st Class Jim Blake
116th BCT, 42nd Inf. Div.

Other distinguished guests at the event also included 42nd Inf. Div. Commander Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the 42nd Inf. Div. Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Fearnside, and 116th BCT Command Sgt. Maj. Leroy Lewis along with other 116th BCT task force commanders and command sergeants major.

As part of Task Force Liberty, 116th BCT has had the lead since February for the security, governance, econom-

ics and communications of Iraqi citizens living in the Kirkuk Province.

Keeping the ear to the people

Soldiers record mosque messages to ensure anti-coalition messages aforce

Staff Sgt. Matthew Acosta
22nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PALIWODA, Balad, Iraq – An integral part of the new Iraqi Security Forces' success lies in the very people they have vowed to protect.

Without the support of those who live in Iraq, the effort to rebuild this country could be severely hindered; hence the importance of assessing the opinion of those who may have influence over the population.

One way to determine the opinion of those with this power is to listen to and trans-

late the mosque messages broadcast for the townspeople to hear. "We conduct mosque missions

where we go out and record the messages that are preached in town," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Bush, platoon sergeant, B Company, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, Task Force Liberty. "Listening to the messages is a good way to see how the religious leaders perceive us and our efforts."

Bush said that although many of the messages broadcast are innocent in nature — preaching "good things" — there have been reports of mosques preaching anti-Coalition messages.

"It annoys the Iraqi Army and policemen because their actions are being undermined by these few people who are trying to recruit (insurgents) or upset their progress," said Pfc. Aaron Schindewolf, a medic assigned to B Co., 5/7.

Sometimes, the Soldiers have driven right up to the mosque during the broadcast and recorded the message from within its secure perimeter. However, that is not

always the case. There have been times the message stops as soon as the Soldiers arrive.

"It's hard to say what was being said but it makes me think they were preaching anti-Coalition messages because when they see us coming, they stop the message," Bush said.

The Coalition Forces have had to change their tactics to counter this action.

"We decided to start approaching the mosques unseen when possible," Bush said. "We determine what mosque we are going to record and see what cover is available around the area. On

late the mosque messages broadcast for the townspeople to hear. "We conduct mosque missions

"We determine what mosque we are going to record and see what cover is available around the area."

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Bush
5th Bn., 7th Cav.

some missions, we get within several meters of it using the trees as cover."

On one particular mis-

sion, the Soldiers crept through a garden containing orchids prior to the broadcast and waited for the broadcast to begin.

"We got close to the speaker mounted on the roof of the mosque; close enough to hear the message loud and clear," Bush said. "An interpreter translates to let us know if there was an anti-Coalition message being played."

After the message is recorded and translated into the English language it is then used for intelligence purposes.

Although there may be anti-Coalition messages preached, there may also be pro-Coalition messages as well.

"Since we're not allowed to enter the mosques, all we can do is record the messages," Bush said. "It's a good gauge in seeing what kind of positive support or negative influence is preached and it gives us a heads up on what to expect from that area."



Staff Sgt. Matthew Acosta

Army Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Bush, a platoon sergeant, with 2nd Bn., 7th Cav., 1st BCT, Task Force Liberty, records a mosque message from the concealment of trees next to a mosque in Balad, while "Jack" translates the message and writes down the basic ideas of the broadcast.

Soldier awarded Bronze Star for saving two Soldiers in canal

Spc. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – A routine mission turned into a moment of courage for one Task Force Baghdad Soldier last April. In the blink of an eye, a non-commissioned officer was forced to make several quick decisions, even as enemy bullets were raining down on him.

Sgt. Cory J. Scott, a squad leader with A Company, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, was recently awarded a Bronze Star Medal with a "V" Device for valor for his actions on April 3 during a mission south of Baghdad.

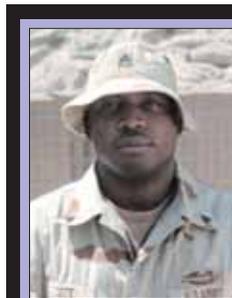
Scott and nine other Soldiers were on a mission to conduct a census of a rural area. They completed the survey, but an enemy ambush was waiting for them when their convoy rolled out of the neighborhood.

"We heard some noise like some people screaming out, and they started firing (rocket-propelled grenades) at us," said Scott, a Reynolds, Ga., native. "My guys immediately started firing toward the enemy. By this time, I was looking around, trying to assess the situation."

His squad spread out, sought cover near a concrete canal and took up firing positions.

"My A and B Team leaders were on the right side hugging the canal, and all of a sudden, they disappeared. Then, the third rifleman disappeared," he said.

The Soldiers were out of sight because they had fallen down the steep sides of the



"The rounds were landing about five to six feet from me. Then they tried to shoot the guys in the water."

Sgt. Cory J. Scott
1st Bn., 41st Inf.

canal and were struggling to stay afloat in the swift current.

Scott quickly organized an attempt to get them out of the water.

He removed his belt and told two other Soldiers to remove their belts as well. Scott tied the belts together and made a makeshift rope.

He threw the lifeline into the canal, but the first of the Soldiers in the canal couldn't hold on and was pulled underwater by the current.

"He grabbed the belt and it just slipped out of his hands," Scott said. "He went under."

The other two Soldiers couldn't get a grip on the belts either, so Scott improvised again by breaking a long antenna off a radio and dangling it near the troops.

Scott said the enemy noticed the squad's efforts to rescue their buddies and focused small-arms fire on the sides of the canal. Now, he had to contend with not only the raging canal water, but also more bullets and grenades.

"The rounds were landing about five to six feet from me. Then they tried to shoot the

guys in the water," he said.

Shrugging off the AK-47 fire, Scott fished out two of the three stranded Soldiers. Spc. William D. Richardson, the Soldier who went underwater, was lost in the current and died.

Sgt. Dustin Garner, one of the Soldiers Scott pulled out of the canal, said he would have drowned if Scott did not think on his feet and use the antenna to help him out of the water.

Garner, a Fort Riley, Kan., resident and team leader for 2nd Platoon, thinks Scott's actions were worthy of the Bronze Star. "He does deserve it," Garner said. "If he hadn't been on his toes thinking, or been concerned about where we were, he might not have noticed us out there in the canal."

Although he was the recipient of the Bronze Star, Scott said the medal was a reminder of his whole squad's efforts to save their comrades.

"If we didn't work as a team, then we would have had a lot more casualties," he said. "Everybody went beyond the call of duty that day."

U.S. Soldiers, Iraqis repair Karradah sewage facilities

4th BCT PAO
Media Release

BAGHDAD – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers are working closely with local leaders from the Karradah District Council to improve sewage treatment facilities throughout south Baghdad.

Soldiers assigned to 4th Brigade Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division sponsored a media event Sept. 15 showcasing recent accomplishments and progress made over the last six months at three sewage pump stations in Karradah.

"The local sewer department completed several previous projects to control leakage at one of the pump stations prior to our efforts," said Lt. Col. Vincent Quarles, the 4/3 BTB commander. "We worked closely with professors from Baghdad University, the Baghdad Sewer design department, and our contractor to carefully study problems and develop a design to correct them. Today, we are able to

begin executing this design because of our joint efforts."

Recent ground excavation at another of the stations has revealed the damages that lie beneath the facility. Coalition Forces will provide this pump station with the necessary mechanical and electrical utilities.

At least 40 skilled workers from the community will be hired to rebuild and repair this pump station.

Quarles also spoke about coordination between his unit and the Karradah District Council. "Dr. Mohammed Al-Rubaie, the Karradah District Council chairman, worked closely with us to overcome many challenges and to keep the local residents informed of our efforts. It is important to repair the pump station because of the large number of residents it will support."

"The station is working in an area that previously had sewage system problems and would not have been possible without help from the U.S. Army," Dr. Mohammed said.

PREVENTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT
is also a Soldier's job



Courtesy Photo (above, left)
(above) Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment 48th Brigade Combat Team guard a weapons cache Sept. 17.
(left) A Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 130th Inf., 48 BCT, digs up a weapons cache which was found after local residents provided information about its location.

Citizens' tips lead to large weapons cache

48th BCT PAO
 Media Release

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – Thanks to tips from local residents, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers on a dismounted patrol discovered a significant weapons cache in the Radwiniyah area Sept. 17.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, 48th Brigade Combat Team received information from local citizens about a field with buried

weapons. The Soldiers searched the area and uncovered the cache of weapons. The search was then expanded and two other caches were discovered in the immediate area.

“The relationship between the Iraqi Army, Coalition Forces and the local populace grows stronger every day,” said Brig. Gen. Stewart Rodeheaver, 48th BCT commander. “This find will significantly decrease the amount of rocket and mortar attacks against the community

and Coalition Forces. I am extremely proud of our Soldiers.”

Included in the weapons cache were 63 rocket-propelled grenades, 23 RPG mortars, 904 RPG fuses and primers, 33 68-millimeter rockets, 23 82-millimeter mortar rounds, two 60-millimeter mortar tubes, 12 60-millimeter mortars, 80 mortar fuses, three mortar sights and five crates of TNT.

The cache was turned over to an explosive ordnance disposal team. U.S.

Soldiers will continue to have a strong presence in the area to assist Iraqi Security Forces in deterring terrorist acts.

One suspected terrorist was detained in connection with the cache.

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



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
Iraqi Soldiers load a mock casualty into an ambulance after a simulated VBIED attack at FOB Vanguard. IA Soldiers practiced dealing with casualties and reinforcing their security during the exercise.

Coalition prepares Iraqi Soldiers to take control of FOB

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
 1st BCT PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE VANGUARD, Iraq – Insurgents in Iraq have only one goal in mind; to target Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces Soldiers.

As part of the training the IA Soldiers receive before Iraq's security is turned over to the IA, Coalition Forces train and prepare them for reacting to attacks on their installations.

Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment and 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Vanguard held a training exercise for the 4th Battalion, 1st IA Brigade.

The training showed IA Soldiers how to react to a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. IA Soldiers were taught how to treat casualties while at the same time reinforce security at the point of the attack, said Capt. David Jerkins, E Company, 100th Bn., 442nd Inf. commander.

The training is part of the relief-in-place training CF Soldiers are performing with the IA before a transfer of authority scheduled in the near future. CF and the IA have worked together for some time on FOB Vanguard.

“When we first came here, we only had (limited) Coalition Forces,” Jerkins said. “We knew

we couldn't protect the FOB on our own, so we had to integrate the IA.”

Besides the training aspect for the IA, the exercise helped CF leaders evaluate the IA Soldiers' performance. It will not be long before the IA will be in total command of the FOB.

“We want to make sure they are running everything on their own,” Jerkins said. “If they are not actively performing these missions right now, at least they know what their duties and responsibilities are.”

IA Soldiers said they are benefiting from the training, and they are eager to display their abilities to the CF Soldiers.

“It's a very good idea,” said Pvt. Azhar Maher, Security Platoon, 4th Bn, 1st IA Bde. “We are going to be running the FOB by ourselves. We will have a chance to prove ourselves by doing well during this exercise and in the future doing the operations without any help from the Coalition.”

CF Soldiers have worked with the IA as part of a military training team since the beginning of their deployment, and say they are sad to be leaving after living and working with the Iraqis.

“I am really going to miss these guys,” said Staff Sgt. Rene Balisco, a 100/442 Inf. MiTT medic. “We have been working with them this whole time, and some of them are like brothers to us.”

“When we got here, we only had limited Coalition Forces. We knew we couldn't protect the FOB on our own, so we had to integrate the IA.”

Capt. David Jerkins
 100 Bn., 442nd Inf. commander



Spc. Adam Phelps

Iraqi Army Soldiers, with the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade pull security while the rest of their team searches suspected insurgent meeting places.

Prepared to take over

Iraqi Army Soldiers conduct missions without Coalition help

Spc. Adam Phelps
22nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Tikrit, Iraq – With a trained and watchful eye, Task Force Liberty Soldiers observe the determined Iraqi Army conduct missions without their help.

Iraqi Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division are now planning and conducting their own missions, the Iraqi battalion commander said.

“The operation that we conducted is according to information and intelligence that our battalion gathered,” said Col. Dakhel Hassen Mahoumoud. “The targets are wanted for conducting (terrorist activity) against Iraqi Police, the Iraqi Army, and their families. We watched the targets, verified information and found out they meet in certain houses. We conducted this operation to detain these people.”

The recent mission not only achieved its goal on detaining high value targets, but the Soldiers also worked together, said Capt. David Byrne, an intelligence offi-

cer who works with 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, and a native of Redhook, N.Y.

“It went really well,” said Byrne. “They moved through the objectives quickly and they’re reporting well through their chain of command, so their battalion commander is aware of what’s going on. They also used their own communication, moved quickly and had good situational awareness.”

The Iraqi Army did not have Coalition Forces help in preparing for this mission.

“We’re here for quality assurance and quality control purposes,” Byrne said. “We watch them and help them when they are doing their after action review and give them some tips for how they can improve and what they really did well.”

“We’ve been working with them since we arrived here back in January,” Byrne continued. “We’ve developed our relationship since then and have given them more freedom. The more missions they execute, the less supervision from us they need.”

“My whole battalion went

through special training from the Special Forces Soldiers in the Coalition Forces,” Mahoumoud said. “Every mission done with CF, we get more experience and training. Every Soldier has gained special skills during the training cycles they conducted with CF, which makes the battalion stronger and more effective.”

The Iraqi Soldiers are learning from their training and continue to improve after every mission, he added.

“It’s great to see them doing their own mission based on their own planning and (for me to) be able to assist as they become more autonomous,” Byrne said. “It’s the future of Iraq.”

For many Iraqi Soldiers, serving in the army is about protecting their friends’ and families’ freedom Mahoumoud said.

“This is a responsibility that I’m proud to have for my battalion, because I’m allowing the families of my Soldiers and my family to move around safely without being scared of insurgents,” the commander said. “Our main mission is to protect and serve the people.”

Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers give supplies to Radwiniyah school children

Sgt. David Bill
48th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Students at the Al-Sayad Primary School are now able to carry their school work home in new book bags, thanks to the efforts of Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers.

Iraqi Army and Task Force Baghdad Soldiers provided school supplies to children from the Radwiniyah area Sept. 13; however, the biggest hit of the day was the book bag give away.

The smiles on the faces of the children as they left the school were proof enough that the gifts provided by Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, 48th Brigade

Combat Team; C Company, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion; and the 4th Iraqi Army Brigade were well received.

Other donated supplies include pens, pencils, and even authentic Hawaiian leis which were provided by Maj. Chriz Caraang, a member of the 490th CA Bn. who hails from Honolulu.

These efforts are a continuation of support for the more than 200 students of the school. Previously, other supplies including a desktop computer and printer for use by the director and faculty of the school were delivered.

This partnership between Iraq Army and U.S. Soldiers will help the school succeed and help the community.

Mechanic goes beyond call of duty by helping others

Capt. Andrew Lane
TF 1-118 FA

BAGHDAD – Since arriving in Iraq, mechanics of the Headquarters and Service Battery, 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery have been working hard to keep the units’ vehicles fully mission capable.

Among these hard charging, wrench-turners is Sgt. David Phillips of Augusta, Ga., who has been putting in overtime hours to make sure not only his battalion’s vehicles are up and running, but also those of sister services without their own support units.

The Estonian Army’s Tagalapataljon Logistic Battalion recently presented Phillips with a rare and coveted unit coin to thank him for his help.

Additionally, the U.S. Marine Corps’ Military Transition Team for the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, Iraqi Intervention

Force, capable even though it was not his job to support them.

The commander of the Marine MiTT, Lt. Col. Tom Rodgers, wrote that Phillips “displayed a can-do attitude and professional demeanor in getting things done for the Marines with the MiTT. The result of which has made our equipment more secure and safer to complete our mission.”

The helping hand Phillips offered the Marines attracted the gratitude of Mary Stucken, the mother of Marine MiTT 1st Sgt. Henry Stucken, who wrote Phillips a letter thanking him.

“From the bottom of my heart I cannot thank you enough,” she wrote. “I have spent many sleepless nights worrying about my son, as I am sure your family has. You have given me a little peace, knowing that someone cared enough to help him out.”

At first Phillips concentrated his efforts on giving the

“I’m not just a Soldier, I’m a patriot. I love to do what I am doing because I know what I’m doing is right.”

Sgt. David Phillips
1st Bn., 118th FA

Achievement Medal for his efforts.

“I am giving them the systems they need to perform their missions in a more efficient manner by building bumpers and secondary weapons systems,” Phillips said. “They give me an idea, and I build it; whatever it takes, so that we get the mission done and we go home safe.”

Phillips volunteered his own time to ensure all of the Marines’ vehicles were mission

capable even though it was not his job to support them. The commander of the Marine MiTT, Lt. Col. Tom Rodgers, wrote that Phillips “displayed a can-do attitude and professional demeanor in getting things done for the Marines with the MiTT. The result of which has made our equipment more secure and safer to complete our mission.” The helping hand Phillips offered the Marines attracted the gratitude of Mary Stucken, the mother of Marine MiTT 1st Sgt. Henry Stucken, who wrote Phillips a letter thanking him. “From the bottom of my heart I cannot thank you enough,” she wrote. “I have spent many sleepless nights worrying about my son, as I am sure your family has. You have given me a little peace, knowing that someone cared enough to help him out.” At first Phillips concentrated his efforts on giving the humvees a formidable front bumper and adding a secondary gun port where they can use their smaller caliber weapons when the situation calls for it instead of the heavy machine gun mounted there.

However, Phillips did not think the Marine humvees’ armor was secure enough to travel outside the base’s perimeter. So, he then suggested beefing up the gunner turret’s armor plating.

Phillips seemed to take it all in stride. “I’m not just a Soldier, I’m a patriot. I love to do what I am doing because I know what I’m doing is right.”

Soldiers foil ambush, find weapons cache in Al-Rashid

4th BCT PAO
Media Release

BAGHDAD – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers thwarted a potential ambush and found a weapons cache after investigating suspicious vehicles on a southwest Baghdad road Sept. 16.

The patrol from 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team spotted two stationary vehicles with seven dismounted individuals nearby and moved in closer to investigate. One vehicle attempted to drive off, crashed into the lead humvee in the patrol, and fled the area.

The remaining six men, who ran away from the van, scaled a fence and fled the scene. The patrol could not find them.

The ambush was discovered by 3/7 Inf. Soldiers in the vicinity of a checkpoint they established to control access into the city from the south.

“The insurgents had two machine gun positions set up, hidden behind the guardrails,” said Sgt. 1st Class Rony Michel, an acting platoon leader from C Company, 3/7 Inf. “It was unclear whether the ambush was intended for us or Iraqi Security Force Soldiers who operate in the area.”

The patrol searched the van and confiscated three rocket-propelled grenade rounds, one RPG launcher, seven hand grenades, three fully-loaded AK-47 assault rifles, and two fully-loaded PKC machine guns.

Soldiers take pulse of Iraq with 'atmospherics'

Spc. Christopher Mallard
425th CA Bn.

BAGHDAD – What does the price of eggs have to do with the Global War on Terrorism?

For some Coalition Forces, it has a lot to do with helping commanders assess their areas of responsibility. Progress in the Iraq theater of operations is measured differently than in former conflicts. CF routinely collect information that may seem mundane as they assist the Iraqi government on all levels in its efforts to revive civil institutions.

Civil affairs teams are trained to conduct assessments, also known as "atmospherics." Raw data such as measuring the price of eggs weekly is continuously being compiled, charted, and then transformed into reliable information for commanders to use.

Commanders need to have a much greater understanding today than in previous conflicts, not just of the ongoing battle space, but how the opinion of a grocer across the street ties into a much larger framework of the conflict.

Atmospherics are just one of many tools available to leaders to gain a greater understanding of the overall dynamics that are the lifeblood of the community.

A Civil Military Operations Center uses several guidelines to collect and analyze critical information streaming in daily. As assessments and atmospherics are being conducted by civil affairs teams out in the field, the maneuver element tries to piece this information together so priorities can be set for future projects.

Sgt. Matthew See of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, said civil-military operators are primarily responsible for providing commanders with courses of action in all areas of civil military operations, including essential services, economic development and governance.

"Circumstances change on a daily basis around here," said See, a native of Roseville, Calif., who is on a one-year contract with the National Guard and holds a Masters degree in public policy from Pepperdine University. "Continuity of vision is the key to ensuring that all these efforts contribute to Iraq's progress toward not only a free society, but one in which the people here can take pride in an economically, socially, and politically sustainable homeland," See said.

On one morning in late August, See accompanied Maj. Mike Ellis, Civil Affairs Team 3, A Company, 425th Civil Affairs Battalion, to conduct an atmospherics mission in nearby Hor Rajeb.

Ellis and See interviewed the manager of a local grocery store regarding the price of lamb, heating oil, perishables and security. Standing underneath an awning of rippled aluminum slabs, Ellis stepped into the shade to ask several questions of the grocer through his assigned interpreter. Meanwhile, See went across the street to speak to the butcher.

Civil affairs Soldiers spend many hours learning the proper tech-

niques for conducting an atmospherics interview.

"It is important to make an introduction and greet these people using local customs and gestures before jumping right into the interview," explained Ellis, a resident of Atlanta. "The people seem to relax and share more of their problems and concerns instead of feeling that they are being interrogated."

Grocer Kareem Arabi told Ellis that he believes there are potential agricultural jobs in the area.

"There is a lack of irrigation water and more importantly, electricity, which is critical to making sure the irrigation pumps work," repeated Ellis, listening intently to the storekeeper explain his concerns. "Young men and women in the town could be gainfully employed if the pumps were working and the farms fully utilized."

"Unfortunately, this community will remain underemployed and a lot of people in this sector will remain jobless until these problems are addressed by local government," Ellis said. "If CA can help, we certainly would like to participate in those discussions."

For now, the team would have to return to Hor Rajeb, Iraq to reassess irrigation and electricity issues that were brought up from the interviews. When a project is funded, CA will return to follow up on the progress of work requests that were submitted.

Atmospherics is a relatively new methodology and cannot be statistically verified like a detailed study or various methods of American style polling. Until there is greater stability and more secure conditions in Iraq, atmospherics is the most reliable method available for acquiring knowledge on people's thoughts concerning the government and CFs.

There are several institutions that are normally reliable places to look for these studies. In the case of Iraq, the Department of Defense has been working with U.S. Agency for International Development, which for decades has collected information on issues related to sustained development.

So, even though atmospherics are used to gather information and determine which way the wind is blowing in a particular muhalla, people's attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs may be entirely different across the street," explained See. "There needs to be long-term continuity, not only of vision, but also of the means to achieve it, including information gathering."

These Soldiers have had extensive Middle Eastern studies course work and in many cases are encouraged to become functional in the Arabic language. Commanders rely on them and their unique ability to discern what is actually being said, especially in the densely populated areas around Baghdad.

CA teams' ability to glean information from atmospherics and then use that data to aid the Iraqi people and unit commanders in daily operations makes them an invaluable and sometimes untapped resource in the Operation Iraqi Freedom mission.



Spc. Tracy Smith
Brig. Gen. Mahdi, commander of 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, reaches out to students at a school Sept. 14. "These children are the future of Iraq," Mahdi said. "The children of Iraq are going to lead the future."

Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers bring hope to poor neighborhood

Spc. Tracy Smith
48th BCT PAO

MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq – Iraqi Army Soldiers accompanied their U.S. counterparts from Forward Operating Base Michael as they delivered school supplies in downtown Mahmudiyah to one of the poorest communities in the neighborhood.

The visit is an important part of the IA's community outreach efforts to positively influence and establish a mutual trust within the citizens they protect.

"The fine Soldiers of the 4th Brigade know they must take good care of the people of this region," said Brig. Gen. Mahdi, commander of 4th Brigade, 6th IA Division.

"The mission is simple," Mahdi added, "to provide a good, safe environment for the citizens of this region, the children, and our future leaders to study, grow up and do the right things."

As the Soldiers walked into the school, children and staff peered curiously around doors and windows.

"They are growing up in a very difficult time," Mahdi explained. "But they will rebuild Iraq again. We are now creating a good environment for them by supplying them with the basics to succeed."

Capt. Bryan S. Mitchell, a military integration training team officer with the 48th Brigade Combat Team and a resident of Columbus, Ga., was noticeably impressed with the handling of the mission and the reception the IA Soldiers received from the community.

"It is a goodwill mission that helps

inspire the local population to have faith in the intentions of the Iraqi Army," Mitchell said.

Many of the IA Soldiers took the opportunity to speak candidly to the young students. The children were justifiably excited by the visit. They listened attentively as a new IA recruit talked with the students.

"Respect your lessons," Pvt. Mahmud said. "These opportunities are given to you as a gift from God so that you can become great leaders, scientists and teachers or future leaders of our country."

As the pencils, crayons, books and learning games were distributed, Mahdi promised it would not be the last time they paid a visit to the neighborhood. "My hope is that we will have this experience at least monthly or twice a month," he said. "I could not be more pleased that we, as Soldiers, have this privilege. We must become friends with

the people of Mahmudiyah and this region."

Walking through the community, the IA Soldiers shook hands, listened to concerns and reassured their people that they would do what was best to provide for the growing democracy and protect them from outside

"They are growing up in a very difficult time. But they will rebuild Iraq again. We are now creating a good environment for them."

Brig. Gen. Mahdi, commander, 4th Bde., 6th IA Div.

agitators.

"The end result to this new beginning is going to be providing information and cooperating with the Iraqi Army," Mitchell predicted. "They are willing to make a difference and we are definitely seeing that today. They are picking up the pace and making great strides."

"We're definitely making history!," Mitchell said.

Soldiers encounter IEDs almost daily

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

The most effective weapons the insurgency in Iraq has against Coalition Forces are improvised explosive devices. IEDs can be detonated from a distance, keeping insurgents out of the direct sight of CF Soldiers.

While some Soldiers dread the idea of encountering an IED, other Soldiers such as C Company, 1st Battalion 128th Infantry Regiment of the Wisconsin National Guard, deliberately go looking for them.

"IEDs are part of our everyday routine here," said Sgt. Robert Cahow, a C Co., 1/128 Inf. truck commander. "As the TC in the lead truck, my crew are always scanning the shoulders of the road as well as looking for potholes, depressions, and anything that seems out of place."

Soldiers go out twice a day to clear the roads and make them safe for travel, as well as patrolling communities in the area looking for enemy contact.

"From the time we arrived in December, 2004, we have gone out on two combat patrol missions a day," said Spc. Arturo Veloz, a C Co., 1/128 Inf. dismount. "We patrol all the villages in our area of operation, trying to find the bad guys. We

regularly encounter IEDs. We try to find them before they go off. Three or four times they have gone off before we found them, but we have found countless IEDs before they have detonated."

There are procedures the Soldiers follow when they find something they suspect is an IED.

"Once you do find something, you initially try to get out of the kill zone," Cahow said. "You find a secure place to park and do a (five and 25-meter) sweep of the area and around your vehicle."

There are two types of IEDs, according to Cahow: ones that have detonated and ones that haven't. There are ways to deal with both.

"There are two ways of thinking about it," Cahow said. "One is that you want to see if the IED is going to blow up; and two, we stay in the vehicle and count to 10, because you are actually safer inside the vehicle if it does blow up. You don't want to just jump out."

"If we find one that hasn't blown up, then it's a totally different story. We look for a trigger person, but it's hard because a lot of time there are civilians out in the fields working," Cahow said. "It's hard to differentiate who is guilty and who isn't."

When there aren't civilians around, sometimes reacting to

an attack with force leads to a positive outcome."

"The last time we were hit, we reacted with force," said Sgt. Edward Johnson, a C Co., 1/128 Inf. TC from Hinckley, Minn. "I think that's critical, because in that case, we stopped the attack."

"We were also able to catch the bad guys," Johnson said. "I don't think that would have happened if we had reacted passively to that situation. We went through thousands of rounds that day."

Despite the danger the Soldiers face every day, they can keep the bigger picture in mind; making the roads safe for traffic in their area of operation.

"Our mission is to make sure routes are clear," Cahow said.

"We have a little joke. They say a route is green when it is clear of IEDs; we say it is clear after an IED blows up because we just cleared it."

The Soldiers feel lucky that they haven't taken more casualties than they have because of the nature of their job.

"Basically we are just trying not to get blown up every day," said Spc. Paul Risch, a C Co., 1/128 platoon sniper from Merrillan, Wis. "We are very lucky. We've had a (staff sergeant) kick over dirt and right there were some rounds and a bunch of wire. We could talk all day about how many close calls we've had."



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Sgt. Robert Cahow, a truck commander with A Co., 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry Regiment, listens as two Iraqis try to explain where they saw suspicious activity in the town of Shihab.

Sadr City residents see progress every day

Norris Jones

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Sadr City residents say they're definitely seeing a difference as nearly \$86.5 million in infrastructure improvements have been completed with an additional \$246 million ongoing. Local citizens report their sewers are working (unlike last year when all the lift stations were inoperable with broken pumps), water pressure is better, and they're seeing electric lines going up.

Lieutenant Col. Jamie Gayton, commander of Brigade Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, is overseeing the work and said he couldn't accomplish the mission without the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers "The lash-up with USACE has been absolutely fantastic."

USACE established an office at Forward Operating Base Loyalty near the Brigade and Battalion headquarters and they work together on a daily basis, Gayton said.

The first step in the process is meeting with local Iraqi leaders to

determine which projects are priorities for the community. "We talk to municipal authorities to understand exactly how each proposed project fits into the big scheme for them. Then we turn it over to the Corps who go out and make an assessment of what needs to be done, derive the initial construction estimates, develop a new or validate an existing Scope of Work,

advertise for bids and award the contract. We could not do this without the Corps of Engineers. They've been phenomenal."

Gayton also appreciates the fact that USACE has hired local Iraqi engineers who regularly visit the sites to

provide quality assurance. "What I see in the future is for USACE to continue gradually raising the number of Iraqi

local nationals who are doing the engineering aspects out there so it's acting almost as a transition for us. The U.S. military is here and they're working a lot of the projects right now and we're providing most of the resources to execute. I see this as a transition process from reconstruction being a military-led operation, to being a Corps of Engineers-led operation, and then to being an Iraqi-led operation."

Regarding the work itself, Gayton said, "It's amazing the difference I've seen in the past nine months in Sadr City. When we first arrived, it was a semi-permissive environment. Residents were allowing people to come in to do work but they weren't embracing them. Over the past eight months, since we really got in and started doing some good

work but they weren't embracing them. Over the past eight months, since we really got in and started doing some good

projects, they see the results and the difference has been incredible. As we drive through neighborhoods now, people are waving, smiling, cheering ... we have government leaders, municipal leaders, social leaders of Sadr City all focused on what we're doing, joining together to ensure the projects get done."

Gayton said his battalion's first priority was cleaning up the trash and sewage that filled Sadr City's streets.

"We immediately reinforced the trash removal program started by the 1st Cavalry Division, as well as renovated the sewage system. We continued refurbishing all the sewer lift stations (which at the time had no operable pumps), unclogged the sewer lines, and repaired the sewage line breaks. Now when I ask residents, 'Are you feeling better off than you were last year,' they smile and say 'Yes' — They see the improvements."

"And as more projects get done, the momentum is becoming incredible. It's a snowball effect. They realize their government is getting stronger. We're making progress every single day."

"We immediately reinforced the trash removal program started by the 1st Cavalry Division, as well as renovated the sewer system."

Lt. Col. Jamie Gayton
BTB, 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

**Reducing Speed and properly wearing of a seatbelt saves lives.
Bottom line – Buckle up, slow down!**



Photos by Staff Sgt. Matthew Acosta
An Iraqi medic helps a fellow Soldier practice treating another Soldier for a broken arm by applying a splint during a combat lifesaver course taught by U.S. Army and Iraqi Army medics.



Spcs. Dominic Italiano, and Christian Hardwick, medics with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, Task Force Liberty, demonstrate the proper procedure for the Heimlich maneuver during the Iraqi combat lifesavers class.

Iraqi Combat Lifesavers

Emerging IA medics begin transition of taking over for medical aid

Staff Sgt. Matthew Acosta
22nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PALIWODA, Balad, Iraq – Medical support for Soldiers is a critical part in waging war.

As Iraqi troops take over combat operations, they are also stepping up to the job of providing their Soldiers with medical support, from a patient needing sick call to a Soldier with traumatic injuries.

Equipping the Iraqi Army with medical personnel requires training from Coalition Soldiers who can bridge the gaps in technology, language and customs.

“Right now, Iraq’s emergency medical system is in the process of being stood up,” said Cpl. Slade Deister, a medical supply noncommissioned officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, Task Force Liberty. “We’re helping them as much as we can to treat both their military and civilian casualties and their sick.”

Although the CFs are helping to set up an emergency medical system for treating Iraqis, they have had to turn away some patients and divert them to the hospital in Balad.

“Sometimes it breaks my heart to see someone in extreme pain, and I can only tell them they need to go to the hospital in Balad for treatment,” said Spc. Dominic Italiano, a medic and combat lifesaver instructor working for Task Force 5-7. “If we don’t turn them away, they’ll just keep coming here for treatment for the minor injuries in addition to life-threatening traumatic wounds. When it’s life threatening, we do what we can for the patient,” he added.

Training some Iraqi Soldiers in first aid and the combat lifesaver course was the next step because the Iraqi Army is getting closer to taking over combat operations in the area, Italiano said.

“Soldiers attend a three-day course learning the basics of first aid,” Italiano said. “They

receive instruction in bandaging, splinting, checking for pulse and breathing, how and when to give intravenous injections, assessing a casualty and the fireman’s carry.”

The training is going well and a few Iraqi Soldiers earned the honor of additional training as medical personnel at the Taji and Tikrit medical facilities.

Training Iraqi Soldiers has its share of challenges.

“In the beginning, we used (PowerPoint) slides but, it didn’t work as well as we had planned,” Deister said. “We decided to use interpreters to help train the class explaining everything in Arabic; this is working well. Then we put Iraqi medics to work helping us train these Soldiers, integrating them into the training.”

“Treating them and training them is a challenge, but we’ve got it now and they are doing just fine with it.”

Cpl. Slade Deister
5th Bn., 7th Cav.

Since incorporating the Iraqi medics into the training, Soldiers are learning faster and retaining more, Italiano said.

“Their customs also differ from ours. When we need medical care, we get it,” said Italiano. “But they think if Allah wants them to live, he will save them. So sometimes, it’s a bit difficult to get them to treat each other, without

worrying about ‘godly repercussions.’”

“There have been Soldiers who have gotten sick while getting intravenous injections because the thought of not knowing if they are going against their own beliefs makes them physically ill,” he added. “Treating them and training them is a challenge, but we’ve got it now, and they’re doing just fine with it.”

Deister said the ultimate goal was for the Iraqi Army to stop relying on Coalition Forces for medical support. The Iraqi Army already has a medical supply system in place, with a growing inventory.

“They realize we’re not going to be here forever to help them,” said Italiano.

With the help of CF and dedicated Soldiers, the Iraqi medics can now effectively treat many of the injuries a Soldier might encounter while out on patrol and raids.

Iraqi, U.S. forces help families of bridge tragedy victims

2nd BCT PAO
Media Release

BAGHDAD – Coalition and Iraqi Forces teamed up with local officials in Sadr City Sept. 13 and 14 to provide humanitarian aid to families

affected by the events at the Khadamiyah Bridge Aug. 31. The aid was a follow-up to an initial humanitarian package that was provided Sept. 3.

Hundreds of men, women and children died Aug. 31 when they were trampled or fell from a bridge over the Tigris River after panic swept through the crowd as they headed to a religious ceremony at a nearby mosque.

“The humanitarian supplies provided to the local citizens are intended to help them during a very tragic circumstance. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the families involved,” said Maj. Kurt Anderson, civil affairs team chief with 2nd Brigade Combat

Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Each family received a package consisting of one kerosene heater, two food bags, a dozen water bottles, five notebooks, and one box of pencils.

Maj. Kurt Anderson
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

“I was very impressed with the role of the Iraqi Police as the aid packages were handed out,” Anderson said. “They definitely were of great assistance, not just in handing out the packages but

“I was very impressed with the role of the Iraqi Police as the aid packages were handed out. They definitely were of great assistance.”



Courtesy Photo
Iraqi Police and 2nd BCT Soldiers hand out aid packets during a humanitarian assistance project Sept. 13 to families affected by an August bridge stampede.

also with comforting their fellow countrymen during a very difficult time.”

The earlier humanitarian packages consisted of rice, sugar, cooking oil, tea and tomato paste.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Tad Browning
(left) Sgt. Jaron Alderman, HHC 3rd Bn., 3rd Avn., Regt. (Attack Reconnaissance), unrolls a fuel hose during the Aviation Brigade's first FARP Rodeo.
(right) Pvt. Jonathan Byrd, HHC, 4th Bn., 3rd Avn., Regt. (Assault Helicopter), runs to emplace a water can at a fuel point during the Aviation Brigade's first FARP Rodeo.



Aviation Brigade Soldiers compete in FARP Rodeo

Staff Sgt. Tad Browning
Avn. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, IRAQ – At a rodeo, one expects to find cowboys sitting on fences waiting for that eight-second ride to fame, the smell of manure and the rowdy “yee-haws” from the crowd.

No tight fitting jeans or large belt buckles were on-hand at the first Forward Arming and Refueling Point rodeo held by Aviation Brigade’s 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Assault Helicopter). What could be found on Sept. 19 were Soldiers from three battalions in the brigade pouring their heart and soul into six events that made up the competition known as the FARP rodeo.

“The FARP rodeo has multiple stations that are Military Occupational Specialty specific that focus on training,” said Capt. Shane Schmutz, 4/3 AHB executive officer and officer in charge of the event. “The point is to make the Soldiers more technically and tactically proficient and to enhance overall readiness for the brigade.”

The Soldiers took the systems out for about two weeks prior to the event to find out what worked and what didn’t work said Sgt. 1st Class Arthur Benefield, noncommissioned officer in charge and a platoon sergeant with 4/3 AHB.

“The rodeo enhances the abilities of the Soldiers to refuel aircraft in an expeditious manner,” Benefield said. “They should be able to set up a FARP in the shortest time possible, and that’s really the ultimate goal.”

The events were comprised of teams containing seven to 11 Soldiers each. Some events required as little as two Soldiers and other events needed as many as seven Soldiers to participate.

“We’ve been pretty busy from previous deployments and we’ve had limited training opportunities,” said Schmutz of West Jordan, Utah. “This gives the Soldiers the opportunity to experience multiple MOS tasks and FARP setups.”

Two of the toughest events had Soldiers racing against the clock setting up an Advance Aviation Forward Aircraft Refueling System and the Heavy Expandable Mobile Tactical Truck Tanker Aviation Refueling System. The Soldiers unrolled fuel hoses and ran with equipment over a field of gravel to complete the setups that would allow four aircraft to refuel simultaneously.

“Because the rocks are so hard to run on, and the distance, it took a little longer than expected,” said Sgt. Jaron Alderman, a refueling specialist from Burgaw, N.C. and member of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance).

The other events at the rodeo included single and dual blivet rigging which required two Soldiers to hook up 500-gallon blivets in preparation for air movement to a forward location, preventive maintenance checks and services of the HEMTT, and a written test where Soldiers had to meet a mental challenge associated with their job.

In addition to training, the rodeo provided an excellent opportunity for Soldiers from the different

battalions to work together and build morale.

“We work pretty well as a team, like a family, and it’s not hard working with fellow Soldiers,” said Pvt. Jonathan Byrd, an Atlanta, resident with 4/3 AHB.

“The rodeo is an awesome experience,” Byrd said. “We pretty much knew what each other was

thinking and everyone knows what needs to be done. Everyone gives 110 percent.”

Schmutz gives a lot of the credit for the success of the training event to Staff Sgt. Floyd Lewis who missed the event due to family circumstances caused by Hurricane Katrina. Staff Sgt. Samuel Middleton was also instrumental for coordinating the events and for providing challenging training for the Soldiers. Without their help, the event possibly would not have hap-

“The rodeo is an awesome experience. We pretty much knew what each other was thinking and everyone knows what needs to be done.”

Pvt. Johnathan Byrd
4/3 AHB

pened.

“We thought about how to bring cohesion and morale throughout the petroleum, oil, and lubricant platoons in the brigade. The events were determined by equipment that the Soldiers use on a daily basis here in theater,” Middleton said. “Throughout the training morale was high and the Soldiers had a lot of confidence.”

The Soldiers took the competition personally. The competitive spirit between the participating units involved helped determine who would walk away with the bragging rights. When it was all over and the dust had settled, 4/3 AHB took the honor of first place overall.

Sentinel cops train Iraqi brethren through MiTT

1st Lt. Lloyd Warren
4th BTB

BAGHDAD – Military Police are sometimes called upon to do things outside of their lane of expertise. MPs of 4th Brigade Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division have done that yet again with the establishment of the Military Training Team to support their newest mission.

With a partnership formed between 4th Brigade Combat Team, the Ministry of Defense and the Iraqi Army, the MP’s MiTT is also working with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. Iraqi Security Forces working at MOD are comprised of Soldiers from several units with multiple job functions.

The MP MiTT has been tasked to assess, train, resource and equip the Iraqi Soldiers. Additionally, they are upgrading the force protection of the highly visible and targeted Iraqi MOD compound. This partnership and training is critical to the ISF learning to secure, fight and defend their newly-formed government.

On average, more than 400 vehicles and 500 pedestrians enter the MOD Compound on a daily basis. Demonstrations occur regularly across the street in the Haifa Street Park. The guard towers, entrance guards and the ministry building are often the target of small-arms fire, mortar and rocket attacks.

Training is focused on vehicle and

personnel searches, reaction drills and guard tower responsibilities. The MiTT is looking to establish, work with and train an internal quick reaction force as well as help upgrade physical force protection.

Because the operational tempo for the MOD is very high, training must be completed during the workday. The MPs work alongside the security forces, training and teaching as they go.

This mission is nothing new to the Gunslingers of 4/3 BTB. Prior to taking on the MOD MiTT mission, the platoon worked directly with the Iraqi Police forces in the Kharkh district of Baghdad where they were responsible for tasks such as establishing police station operations, upgrading force

protection and motivating the IPs patrolling the streets.

The platoon was very successful working with area IP stations. After passing the reins to the 42nd Military Police Brigade, the platoon was assigned convoy security operations, VIP transports, personal security detachment missions and detainee escorts. The platoon continues to perform these missions as they train the ISF.

Helping and training the Iraqi Soldiers to defend themselves and their country brings the Iraqi government one step closer to democracy, the U.S. and Coalition Forces closer to overwhelming success and the Gunslinger Soldiers one step closer to home.

When time passes by Time in Iraq changes Soldier's life forever

Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta
42nd ID PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SUMMERALL, BAYJI, Iraq — In combat, the point of contact is defined as where Soldiers encounter the enemy.

Spc. Bryan Walczel, made contact in more ways than one May 17 when he and some Iraqi Soldiers joined the ranks of improvised explosive device survivors.

His Pennsylvania Army National Guard unit, A Company, 111th Infantry, has been training and performing combat operations with C Company, 201st Iraqi Army Battalion since last December. Soldiers of both units roll out of the base daily on counter-insurgency missions, which have become routine as patrols and raids.

"Anything a normal infantry unit would do, we've done," Walczel said.

Walczel was driving an open-back humvee with Iraqi Soldiers on board as passengers during a patrol on May 17 when an IED comprised of several 155-millimeter rounds detonated next to the vehicle.

May 17, the anniversary date of his enlistment, would no longer be remembered as a day of reflection on his Army career. Instead, Walczel refers to it as the "dark day" after coming close to losing his life.

"I said before we left the gate, 'this is a rolling target,'" he recalled. "I was being sarcastic. You never expect anything's going to happen, but in this case, it did."

The moments following the explosion are etched in Walczel's memory. He couldn't hear and was in a dizzy,



An Iraqi medic, consoles Spc. Bryan Walczel at FOB Summerall's aid station following an IED attack which injured Iraqi Soldiers on a vehicle Walczel was driving. Walczel is from Allentown, Pa., and belongs to A Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry.

Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta

disconnected, slow-motion state he described as "post-concussion retarded."

"When you have 155-millimeter rounds go off right next to your vehicle, everything slows down," Walczel said.

He was still functioning, however. Guided by survival instincts and fueled by adrenaline, he was aware

enough to get out of his vehicle and seek cover. Minutes later, he was ordered back to his damaged humvee where he saw the IED's aftermath — several wounded Iraqi Soldiers.

Walczel, an Allentown, Pa. native, is 20 years old with a family lineage that reads like a catalog of honor — a line of uncles and grandfathers who marched through and survived the

Vietnam Conflict, the Korean War, and World War II's Normandy beaches.

Like them, Walczel is a veteran. Even before the IED blew up near his vehicle, he had witnessed the carnage from a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. It was a ghastly scene.

May 17 was indeed different for him however.

"I remember looking at the wounded and thinking, 'I've never seen anything like this before,'" he said.

The unit quickly evacuated the wounded Iraqi Soldiers, but once he was at the base medical facility, Walczel broke down.

"My emotions just came out," Walczel said. "It was almost as if I was hiding them on the battlefield. They couldn't come out; I had to do my job first."

All but one of the wounded Iraqi Soldiers survived.

"The Iraqi Soldiers are always nice to me," he said. "I felt bad because I was driving the vehicle. I thought, 'maybe if I drove more to the left, they'd still be here.'"

Despite this and other incidents, Walczel and his fellow Soldiers drive on with their mission.

"I guess time heals all wounds," he said. "You realize it is war, and it's not fair. You always try to do better, but you can't do everything perfectly."

Back home, Walczel is a criminal justice student, but he is considering studying medicine instead.

"You come here to this place, and see all this violence...maybe healing people will make me a better person," he said.

Soldiers honored for Hallums hostage rescue

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD — As the urban sprawl of Baghdad goes south, the concrete roads turn to dirt pathways cutting between fields tended by the farmers that call this sparsely populated area home.

Roy Hallums called one of these farmhouses home



Courtesy Photo

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flies over the farmhouse where Roy Hallums was held hostage for 10 months.

for 10 months, although it was not by choice.

He was kidnapped Nov. 1, 2004 while supplying the Iraqi Army with food. His captivity came to an end during a daring night time rescue on Sept. 7. Soldiers assigned to 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, provided valuable assistance during the raid on the farmhouse where Hallums had been held by terrorists.

The Task Force Baghdad Soldiers—1st Lt. Stephen Young, Sgt. Lee Prather, Sgt. Anthony Signorello, Spc. William Forsyth, Spc. Forrest Gielenz and Pfc. Christopher Carter, all assigned to K Troop, 3/3 Armored Cavalry Regiment, were honored by the State Department during an informal ceremony Sept. 21 at Forward Operating Base Falcon. They were members of the tank crew that set up a protective outer cordon to protect the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter carrying the rescue team as it moved in on the farmhouse.

Hallums was discovered bound and gagged in a tiny cellar-like room. The only ventilation came from a small fan and cracks in the concrete slab that doubled as his door. Each time his captors opened the

door to give him food or water, they would put a fresh coat of cement over the "door."

Although they were unable to personally talk to Hallums, the Soldiers felt they had played an integral part in the rescue.

"The overall mission our here is a hard one, but to be able to help in rescuing an American reminds me of who I am and what I do every day," said Prather, a

tank gunner from Woodbridge, Va. It reminded me of the good coming from (our mission)."

"It was an honor (to help free Hallums)," Signorello said. "I was proud that after 10 months he did not give up."

Gielenz, a native of Grass Valley, Calif., felt the ceremony was very personal. "It was a real sincere thanks that you could tell came from the heart," he said.

Gielenz valued the certificate of appreciation signed by the ambassador, but he had already received the one thing that really made him feel like he had contributed to something important.

"Knowing that I participated in the rescue of an American who is now home safe and sound with his family was the best part of the whole thing," Gielenz said.

"Knowing that I participated in the rescue of an American who is now home safe and sound with his family is the best part of the whole thing."

Spc. Forest Gielenz
3rd Squadron, 3rd Armor Cav. Regt.

Iraqi Army Soldiers graduate commando course

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE JUSTICE, Iraq – With rifles in the air, Iraqi Army Soldiers sang cadences and jubilantly marched in circles as they celebrated.

Soldiers of the Iraqi Army's 1st Brigade Headquarters, 6th Division, were commemorating their graduation of the first commando company basic course during a ceremony Sept. 21.

More than 100 Iraqi Army Soldiers endured 16 weeks of intense training which was separated in three stages. The first stage was six weeks of basic training

which trained the Iraqi Soldiers on skills such as map reading and weapons familiarization. The second stage consisted of four weeks of special training at Camp Taji, which trained the Soldiers on check-point and convoy operations, as well as how to conduct a raid. The final stage was six weeks of high-level training, which gave the Soldiers the opportunity to train in a

civilian environment in handling ambushes and close armed fire fights.

Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Jalil Kalaf, 1st Brigade, 6th Division commander, says that he feels the Soldiers are well trained.

"The Soldiers received training similar to special forces training such as house-to-house combat and training on different weapons," Jalil said. "It is very physical and intense training that prepares the Soldiers to counter terrorism."

The graduation ceremony included demonstrations of the training they endured. Spectators were treated to demonstrations of unarmed close engagement combat, Soldiers taking sniping positions atop trees, setting up explosive devices, and even Soldiers showcasing their physical abilities by jumping through hoops of fire and crawling under barbed wire.

The training and increased responsibility of the Iraqi Army plays an important role in establishing a democratic government, an area in which Jalil says

"It raises my morale and gives me more confidence to see these Soldiers graduate. The more trained Soldiers we have, the more we can fight terrorists."

Brig. Gen. Jalil Kalaf
1st Bde., 6th Div., commander



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Iraqi Army Soldiers jumped through rings of fire and crawled under barbed wire to demonstrate the training endured by graduates of the Iraqi Army commando basic course.

his brigade has made much progress.

"There has been improvement over the last six months. We received an area of operations in February, and we plan to expand that area," Jalil said. "My brigade is the first brigade in Iraq to handle such responsibility, and we are going to do the best we can."

Another aspect of the training that mirrors the increased responsibility of the Iraqi Army is that the training

course was taught and supervised entirely by Iraqi trainers, said Jalil. With such progress being made, Jalil foresees a brighter future for a democratic Iraq.

"It raises my morale and gives me more confidence to see these Soldiers graduate. The more trained Soldiers we have, the more we can fight terror," Jalil said. "We are putting nails in the coffin of terrorism."

Baghdad kings of trash

U.S. Soldiers, Iraqis help large task of waste management

Maj. Brian P. Murphy
2nd BCT

BAGHDAD – Have you ever watched the HBO television show "The Sopranos" and thought that you wanted to be in the trash business like Big Tony and the boys?

While the lives of Maj. Todd Shattuck and Staff Sgt. Dominic Fernandes, 3rd Infantry Division, Government Support Team, may not be as exciting as Tony Soprano, they are without a doubt, the Kings of Trash in Baghdad.

Think for a moment about how much trash you generate by yourself each day. Now multiply that by 7 million people. That's the amount of solid waste materials these gentlemen oversee the evacuation of each day. It's a daunting task, equal to the solid waste management for a city the size of Toronto, Canada.

It's a job that requires the two Soldiers to manage a complex \$56 million dollar annual contract for collection and servicing of solid waste.

Shattuck and Fernandes



Maj. Russ Goemaere

A cleaning crew for Baghdad loads collected piles of trash on their wagon to be taken to the city dump.

draw upon their past experiences to make this happen.

Fernandes' family actually owns a trash business in New Jersey. During his youth, he spent the summers riding on the back of sanitation trucks collecting the neighborhood solid waste. He has used this personal knowledge and expertise to

assist Shattuck in developing an effective solid waste collection and servicing plan.

Fernandes chuckles as he tells a story where they caught one truck in three different neighborhoods within the same day. "He was doing a great job of driving around picking up delivery tickets, but he was not

picking up any trash."

To avoid this issue in the future, they developed a unique color and symbol systems for the trucks and workers in the various color-coded zones.

Shattuck relies on his experiences as a former plant operations manager for Siemens and is teaching the Japanese princi-

pal of Kaizen or "constant improvement" to enhance the program. Shattuck began a program where solid waste is picked up at the curb in nearly all Baghdad neighborhoods several times per week. Under Sadaam Hussein's regime, this was a luxury enjoyed only by the very wealthy.

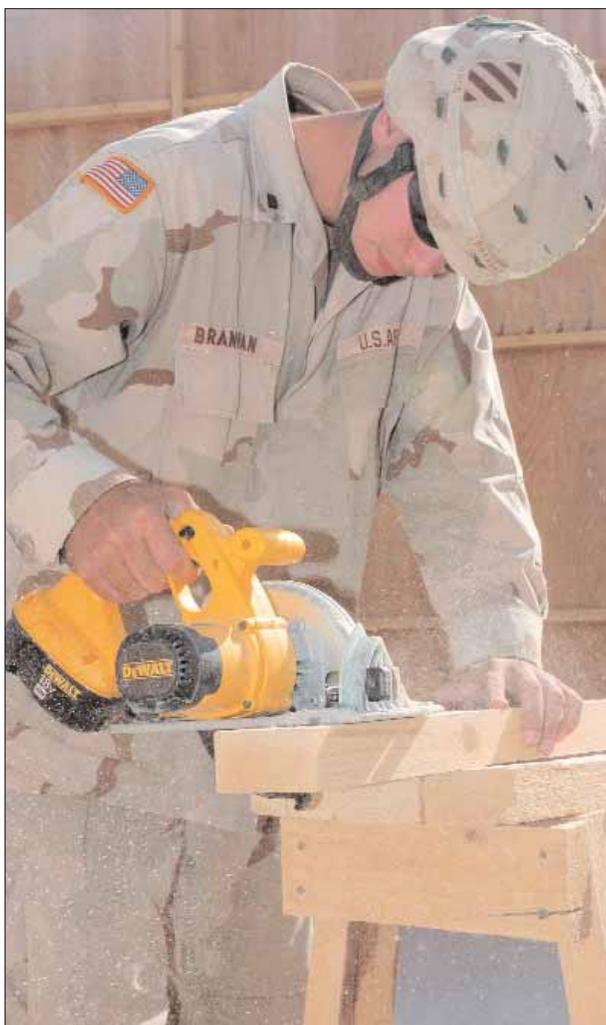
While it is true that a great deal of trash remains in the streets of Baghdad, Shattuck estimates that it will take a generation to change the idea that trash receptacles are where trash gets placed, not simply thrown out the window or in the street for someone else to collect and discard.

He has initiated an education program in the elementary and higher grade schools for proper waste disposal.

When asked what their proudest accomplishments were during this tour, the "Kings of Trash" said that it had to be the release of more than 200 dumpsters for the cleanup of Sadr City.

Having the dumpsters in place has resulted in a significant reduction in the amount of trash lying in the public areas.

Uphold the Warrior Ethos. Obey your regulations and General Orders. Serve with honor.
"Rock of the Marne!"



Photos by Spc. Derek Del Rosario (above) Louistown, Pa., native, Spc. Kyle Brannan, C Co., 365th Engineer Combat Battalion, cuts wood to be used to support a medical supply warehouse. (right) Pottsville, Pa., native, Staff Sgt. Richard Scardina, C Co., 365th Eng. Combat Bn., put a truss in place during a warehouse development project.



Foundation of support Pennsylvania Reserve Engineers ensure medical unit's success

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The hot Iraqi air was thick with sawdust as the sun beat down on Soldiers in a roofless warehouse. Power saws buzzed and the sound of hammers pounding could be heard as Soldiers worked fluidly like a team of worker ants as they measured, marked and cut the boards before passing them to comrades waiting on scaffolding 15 feet high.

These Soldiers were from C Co., 365th Engineering Combat Battalion, an Army Reserve unit out of Pennsylvania, and they were working on another project in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

Their current project is much more extensive than an anthill, it is a medical supply warehouse intended for the 44th Medical Company.

The officer in charge of the project, 1st Lt. Steve Koslowsky, a Medford, N.J., native, said the new warehouse will allow them to store medical supplies that previously did not have any shelter.

“Before we came here, all the supplies were sitting in the sun,” Koslowsky said. “When we complete this project, they will have a building with a roof — a place to keep the supplies in an insulated, air-conditioned building away from the weather.”

Sgt. 1st Class Scott Kendall, the project noncommissioned officer in charge and Carlise, Pa., native, agrees that the new medical storage warehouse will be a great benefit to the company and the Soldiers they support.

“We are giving them the opportunity to store their supplies in a secure environment, out of the elements,” Kendall said. “Having them out of the sun or rain will help in their receiving and shipping.”

The 40,000-square-foot warehouse is scheduled to be finished in mid-October. As of mid-September, the girders and columns were in place, the concrete had been laid, and the trusses were being put in place. According to Staff Sgt. Mitch Passarella, carpentry and masonry job foreman and Lorretta, Pa., native, there were still some important aspects to be completed before the warehouse can be used.

“I would say we are about 70 percent done right now,” Passarella said. “We still need to finish the roof, electrical, AC, doors and sealing, but if we stick with the plan we should finish as scheduled.”

The warehouse is to be of great assistance for 44th Medical Co., but this is only one project that C Co. has worked on that has benefited Task Force Baghdad units; they are also responsible for the improved living conditions that have helped Iraqi forces.

“We spent two weeks at Camp Yousefiya to work on projects such as floors and the AC,” Passarella said. “We really improved the living conditions there, making it a better place for Iraqi Army Soldiers to live in.”

Other projects that C Co. has completed are 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment’s Tactical Operations Center and a tank hangar at Camp Riva Ridge, formerly known as Camp Tigerland.

While the company is making progress on the warehouse, Koslowsky says that obtaining the materials needed to complete project remains the most difficult task. While most of that is out of their hands, he feels the company has been able to successfully overcome other challenges that they can control.

“(Lack of) experience was an issue when we first got here. Some of these Soldiers didn’t have very much construction experience,” Koslowsky said. “But since our first project, you can really see the Soldiers coming together. They are teaching each other and doing a fantastic job staying on or ahead of schedule.”

Kendall agrees that C Co. has done an excellent job at overcoming any inexperience they were facing at the beginning of deployment.

“There is a gap you have to bridge when going from a citizen-Soldier to a full-time military structure,” Kendall said. “A lot of these Soldiers’ only active-duty experience was basic training and advanced individual training, but they are doing a good job at adapting. I am proud of them and what they are accomplishing.”

Soldiers are facing the same elements that the medical warehouse is intended to protect.

“The heat plays a factor in our production. I have to really keep track of my troops during the hot days,” Kendall said. “We’ve done projects at nights when it’s cooler, but then, there is an issue with lighting.” Day or night, the Soldiers in the company get the project done safely, he added.

Gratification comes in many forms for the Soldiers of C Co. but for Passarella, nothing beats being able to see a building that they have completed.

“It’s a great feeling to see the end product and to know I helped build it,” Passarella said. “It’s gratifying to be able to point (to a building) and be able to say, ‘We built that building.’”

Having a tangible end product can be very rewarding, but it’s the intangible aspect of the job that Koslowsky enjoys the most.

“I love working with the Soldiers. Out here I am like the project manager, and I have the privilege of working with excellent project NCOs and a fantastic, motivated team,” he said. “Being out here with these guys — there is nothing better.”

Local leaders, U.S. Soldiers fix ‘impassable’ roads

4th BCT PAO
Media Release

BAGHDAD – Just two months ago, the children living in the Al-Doura district could not pedal their bikes without riding along dirt pathways and dodging large ruts to avoid collisions. Cars chose to avoid this route because of water and sewage in the street earning it the nickname, “The Green Mile.”

These images are now just a memory after Task Force Baghdad Soldiers teamed up with local leaders from the Al-Rashid district council to fix the

road. On Sept. 13, they hosted a media event and showcased the one-mile stretch of paved road in the Al-Doura neighborhood.

Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment began the project in July as part of an ongoing reconstruction campaign in the 4th Brigade Combat Team’s area of operations. A contractor paved the previously dirt road, installed a gutter system and added a sidewalk.

The project is well over halfway complete and should be done by the end of September, said Sgt. Mathew See, a

civil military operations sergeant assigned to 1st Bn., 184th Inf. and a native of Roseville, Calif. “Besides the drainage, we are also focusing on creating a thoroughfare to connect the two main roads. We hope this will stimulate the local economy.”

The completion of one mile of road included more than 1,200 cubic meters of asphalt and 2,630 meters of curb.

The Al-Doura project is a prime example of developing infrastructure that works for the people and encourages their ideas for future developments.

Paving the road was suggested by a member of one of the neighborhood councils, said Abbas Al-Ta’aei, the Al-Rashid District Council chairman.

Jobs created for this project helped lower the unemployment in the area and the residents were thankful for the serviceability of the road that was previously impassable, said Al-Ta’aei.

“The people of the neighborhood are very happy for the road repairs and thank the Coalition Forces for establishing the project. I hope that cooperation will continue for future projects in the area,” Al-Ta’aei said.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Iraqi Army Lt. Ali Abbas, security platoon leader for 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, kisses a young girl on the cheek before giving her school supplies Sept. 25.

IA, Coalition Soldiers donate school supplies to Kharkh

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – The Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces work together every day to make Iraq a safer place.

During a school supply donation Sept. 25, Iraqi Army Soldiers and the Kharkh District Council took the lead to distribute the supplies to students.

“We came here to support the schools in the Kharkh district and make the children happy. I feel great about being here,” said Iraqi Army Lt. Ali Abbas, a security platoon leader for 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division. He added that such events help to show that the Soldiers and the local government are here to help and protect people from all walks of life.

The Soldiers from A Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment brought more than 200 packets of school supplies that are designed to give students the basic items they will need for class along with extra pens, pencils and paper that were given to teachers. The KDC identified students from the five area schools that needed supplies, and the Iraqi Army helped to transport and pass out the items.

“It was the partnership between Coalition Forces, the KDC, and the IA that made the day a success,” said Abdu Al-Sattar, chairman of the KDC.

As the supplies were carried in, the Iraqi and American Soldiers visited the different groups of students as they waited. The students were divided into five groups from each of the area schools. One student told an Iraqi Soldier that he knew that the IA was there to protect him.



Staff Sgt. Isaiah Montfort, a squad leader with B Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment and Rochester, N.Y., native, teaches an Iraqi girl how to play patty cake during a school supply donation to the Kharkh district Sept. 25.

“We want to assure the children that we are here to stop terrorism, and when they see us they can feel safe,” Abbas said.

For many of the Soldiers, the Iraqi children remind them of the sons and daughters they left behind when they deployed, so they made an extra effort to connect with them.

Staff Sgt. Isaiah Montfort, a squad leader from B Company, 4/64 Armor Regt., said he taught one student how to play patty cake because he loves children and has a daughter her age.

The school supplies were donated by a variety of non-profit organizations to help the students with their studies.

“The donations will help them continue their education and become good citizens,” Abbas said. “This period of terrorism will end soon, so we want them to never hesitate in studying and finishing their schooling.”

This was the first event for this

school year in the Kharkh district, but Al-Sattar said that he would work hard to ensure that there are many more events for the area schools.

“I am proud that all of us could gather together to help the children of this area continue their education.”

The CF has a close relationship with the IA and government agencies when conducting operations, but it's important for the Iraqi leaders to take the lead on operations to demonstrate they are in charge, said Capt. Scott Ginsburg, one of the team leaders from A Company, 425th Civil Affairs Battalion.

“It's easy to say that they are in charge, but actions speak louder than words,” Ginsburg added.

“Today, they (U.S. Soldiers) were a great help in working with the both the IA and KDC,” Abbas said. “The two Armies have such a great cooperation because our goals are the same – the end of terrorism and a safe and secure Iraq.”

1/10th Mountain ensure a stable country

Soldiers build a secure Iraq by delivering concrete barriers

Staff Sgt. John R. Rozean
1/10 Inf. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The rumbling sound of 500-horsepower diesel engines and voices of motor transport operators fill the air as Soldiers make final adjustments and perform radio checks.

To some people, Camp Liberty's motor pools are dusty spreads of fine Iraqi sand surrounded by concertina wire fencing and contain every imaginable type of Army vehicle. This scene may seem impressive, but to the Soldiers of the 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, it's routine.

“We do this everyday,” Pfc. Gerome Anderson said as he maneuvered a 10-wheeled palletized loading system loaded with eight 5,400 pound concrete barriers out of the motor pool and onto the Baghdad streets. Anderson, from St. Louis, Mo., is assigned to BSB's Distribution Company.

For the next few months, barriers will be placed strategically to control traffic flow and limit vehicular access to certain areas. Delivering concrete barriers is one way the U.S. Soldiers are helping to increase the security in Baghdad.

Escorted by the 1st Squadron, 71st

Cavalry driving heavily armored humvees, BSB drivers concentrate on maneuvering the large vehicles through the narrow Iraqi streets. This is a challenge because the trucks are 35 feet long and eight feet wide.

“Don't worry, I've been driving a long time,” said Anderson, as he skillfully maneuvered the massive vehicle through parked cars and local market areas. Anderson said although driving is his units' specialty, they are prepared to fight if they have to.

Anderson said he feels this is one way that he is helping to bring freedom to Iraq through these security efforts.

When the convoy finally arrives at the drop-off site, it is met by Forward Support Company counterparts who have trucks outfitted with a materiel-handling crane to unload the cargo. Soldiers like Sgt. Oscar Diaz from Chicago operate the crane with such precision it becomes an extension of their hands.

Once the cargo is unloaded the Soldiers return to the Class IV yard at Camp Liberty and pick up more barriers.

Sgt 1st Class Earl Faulk, from Nashville, Tn., a BSB noncommissioned officer, said his unit has moved more than 500 barriers in just a few days.



Staff Sgt. John R. Rozean

Pfc. Chad Vertz, from Janesville, Wis., of 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1/10th Mountain Division connects the chains to a 5,400 pound concrete barrier during a Sept. 23 delivery to Forward Operating Base Institution. Delivering concrete barriers is one way the U.S. Soldiers here are helping to increase the security in Baghdad. Concrete barriers can be placed strategically to control traffic flow and limit vehicular access to certain areas.

“We've moved a lot of them,” Faulk said, as he directed the crane's hook into position so that another barrier could be picked up and loaded.

As he stood near row upon row of concrete barriers destined for the

streets of downtown Baghdad he saw another vehicle delivering more barriers to the yard.

“Well, here come some more,” said Faulk, “Soon as we make a dent, they bring more!”

Tuskers remember fellow Soldiers

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – When we are faced with losing someone dear to us to an untimely death, the natural reaction is to ask, “why?”

Why was this person, whom I care about, taken from me?

Too often we focus on the negatives rather than the difference made by those who are no longer serving beside us.

Lt. Col. Robert Roth, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor’s battalion commander tried to make some sense of the conflicting feelings he felt during the memorial service held at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Sept. 21, for 1st Sgt. Alan Gifford, Sgt. Matthew Decker and Spc. David Ford, all assigned to C Company, 4/64.

The Soldiers were killed when an explosive device detonated next to their tank Sept. 17.

“I believe that for every horrible thing that happens on this earth; something very good comes from it,” Roth said.

He continued to share what positives he had gleaned from the loss of three of his Soldiers.

“I remember the night of the attack, being at the hospital and seeing one of the Soldiers,” Roth said. “The first thing he said to me was, ‘Give it to me straight, sir. How is everyone?’ When I replied that they were being attended to by doctors, and he only need worry about himself, the next thing he said was, ‘I’m sorry sir.’”

Roth couldn’t believe that this young Soldier, bleeding internally, who had just experienced the single-most traumatic event of his young life was more concerned with his buddies and how his commander was handling the situation, than his own condition.

Roth found it to be same when he spoke with the loved ones of the fallen Soldiers. They told him, “Tell the Soldiers that our husbands are with God in heaven now. They are home and safe; please tell them that it is okay. I want everyone else to finish the job so they can come home and celebrate with everyone else.”

After this conversation, Roth had his epiphany. “The single-most important thing we have on this earth is each other. The actions I saw that night and the following days, help us to remember that all we have in this sometimes cruel world, is each other.”

He saw the incredible love that came



Spc. Dan Balda

Spc. Nathan Parks speaks of his battle buddy, Spc. David Ford, during the 4/64 Armor, memorial ceremony held at FOB Falcon Sept. 21.

from everyone that night. The crews who never gave up and did whatever it took to save these Soldiers lives. The families back home who took care of the wives and children of those who perished. The people who don’t even live in Georgia who wanted to go to the hospital in Washington D.C. to visit the injured as they returned.

“Ladies and gentleman, this is love for one another, which is the most powerful force on earth,” Roth said. “That is what makes America great. In my mind, that is why we are here in Iraq today. We are here to show the rest of the world how to love one another, and live in peace.”

“God put these men here on earth for a purpose. Perhaps their purpose was to do what they could in the short time they had here in Iraq, and perhaps, it is also to remind us that there is no greater love than the love of a friend, regardless of color, race or religion,” Roth said.

There is a time for everything, according to the book of Ecclesiastes. Roth asked that his Soldiers turn from their season of mourning, leave their grief by the wayside and embrace the joy the fallen Soldiers had brought to their lives.

“Don’t tell me nothing good came from the deaths of these men, because I don’t believe it. Let us put grief aside; the time to celebrate their lives has begun,”

Roth said. “Walk away today and honor these men by talking about them; laughing, joking and sharing stories about them that brought us all closer together. Thank these heroes for their sacrifice and for reminding us all that all we have is each other.”

Capt. David Anderson, C Co. commander, followed Roth by sharing memories of his Soldiers. He began by quoting his company first sergeant, “Sir, if it’s stupid and it works; it isn’t stupid.”

“I hope this works,” Anderson said, his voice choked with emotion as he began to share his memories of his top NCO.

“1st Sgt. Gifford had the ability to make me smile no matter how mad I was or the situation,” Anderson said. He remembered one angry episode in particular. He was in a particularly foul mood when Gifford told him, “Sir, I cursed during my church league softball game last week. Think they are going to let me play next week?”

“Suddenly all my anger was gone, and I was smiling,” Anderson said. “I apologized and realized that what I was getting mad about wasn’t really worth getting mad about at all.”

Though his voice was cracking, Anderson managed to edify his first sergeant.

“He was respected by all and loved by the Cyclones. My job was made so easy because my first sergeant was by my side. He was a family man; he would beam with pride and joy as he talked about his wife and son.”

Anderson remembered Decker as an information sponge whose eyes would shine brightly as he acquired new knowledge and a mild-mannered Soldier who gave everyone around him reassurance and confidence.

“He told me when I promoted him to sergeant, his promotion was for his family,” Anderson said. “He loved his family more than anything.”

Sgt. John Durst remembered “that damn Decker” as a great person, always there for Durst and anybody else who needed him. “He would help anyone and never ask anything in return.”

When someone who was like a brother to him died earlier in the deployment, Decker told Durst he could not sleep until he comforted Durst. “When your head is messed up, my head is messed up.”

“I could never repay him for the things he did for me,” Durst said. “He held my head while I sobbed and endured the brunt of the blast while I raged. He kept asking me, ‘What else can I do, man?’”

Durst told the assembled mourners something they could do to help his grief. “When you say your prayers, or crack open that first beer, I hope you will all remember that ‘damn Decker.’”

Ford’s roommate at Fort Stewart and battle-buddy Spc. Nathan Parks remembered his “little brother” as one who didn’t love the Army or even plan on staying in, but one who was a great Soldier.

“He was a smart kid and a hard worker,” Parks said. “He motivated me on several occasions. He just loved life.”

Anderson’s first thought when he met Ford was, “My goodness, this kid looks too young.” During the time Anderson knew Ford, he watched him mature into a man and remembered him as one who never complained, never questioned his orders. He gave all.

We shall not mourn their deaths as a tragedy – that in itself would be a tragedy, Anderson said. We shall learn from them and speak of their strength, courage in the face of adversity. They were doing what they wanted; being Soldiers and acting with selfless service. They gave their lives in the noblest of ways so that people would know freedom.”

DSB mourns fallen comrades, friends

DSB PAO
Media Release

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Friends and fellow Soldiers of two fallen Division Support Brigade Soldiers attended a memorial ceremony at the DSB Ministry Center Sept. 10.

More than 500 mourners gathered to bid a fond farewell to Staff Sgt. Jude R. Jonaus, a pharmacy technician with the 550th Area Support Medical Company, and Sgt. Franklin R. Vilorio, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, both with the Brigade Troops Battalion.

Jonaus, who was born in Haiti, and Vilorio, who was from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, were killed when their vehicle was struck by a rocket Sept. 6 while they were performing duties as the brigade headquarters’ personal security team.

The PST is where Sgt. Leo Arong, a laboratory technician with the 550th ASMC, first met Jonaus.

“We were both selected to be on the PST,” said Arong, who was born in Nigeria. “During the PST training, I came to know Jonaus as a dedicated, intelli-

gent and motivated Soldier and a noncommissioned officer.”

Arong further explained how Jonaus had joined the Army after witnessing its assistance to his own country during Operation Uphold Democracy. Arong also shared some personal memories of his friend.

“Each of us will remember him in our own way; for he touched each of our lives differently and profoundly,” said 1st Lt. Jennifer A. Pollard, the commander for the 550th ASMC. “Some shared his love of jazz and Miles Davis and some joked around in wigs and silly hats together in the clinic. But mostly, we will remember him because he was a brave and courageous Soldier who never backed down from a mission.”

Mission accomplishment was also important to Vilorio.

“Sgt. Vilorio was a great Soldier who dedicated his life to completing the mission and taking care of Soldiers,” said Staff Sgt. Jose F. Magana, also a pharmacy technician with the BTB. “I will miss him dearly and I will never forget him.”

Magana, the brigade PST noncommissioned officer in charge, said Vilorio will be remembered for his laid-

back attitude and infectious smile.

“He was a wonderful friend, father, son, and leader,” said Magana.

“Sgt. Vilorio was a compassionate leader who did his job beyond well,” said Capt. Jennifer R. Cave, the commander for HHC. “He now belongs to the ages, but we preferred it when he belonged to us.”

“We all look to that fine day when we will see him again, strong and sure, and smiling; that day when the sorrow of his leaving will be gone from us forever.”

“The loss of one such Soldier diminishes us all,” said Lt. Col. Ronnie W. Long, the battalion commander for BTB. “The loss of two is truly hard to bear.”

Long summed up his remarks with a charge.

“I conclude with the words of Gen. Creighton Abrams, former Army chief of staff,” said Long. “What this country needs, it cannot buy. It needs dedicated Soldiers who see service to their country as an affair of the heart.”

“No finer words could possibly sum up the convictions shared by Staff Sgt. Jude Jonaus and Sgt. Franklin Vilorio,” Long said. “May the same be said of all of us.”



Photos by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

(above) Hattiesburg, Miss., native Spc. Matthew Stallard and Eagle Point, Ore., native Pfc. Eric Cramer, both of A Co., 603rd ASB, work on an Apache rotor head as part of its phase maintenance.

(right) Stallard and Cramer tighten the rotor blades on the Apache.



BATTLE, continued from page 1

of what makes the Apaches currently in theater the most effective combat aircraft patrolling the skies. The continual maintenance and proficiency of the Soldiers in A Company, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, are key factors in making sure the Apaches in the battalion are up to standard and ready to fly.

Putting their 24th aircraft into phase means that 3/3 ARB has flown more than 12,000 hours — an accomplishment that Sgt. 1st Class Bernard Brooks, noncommissioned officer in charge of production control in A Co., 603rd ASB, said has a direct impact on the operation tempo.

“Our troops are working very hard and they put in long hours,” said Brooks, of Augusta, Ga. “The amount of flying impacts upon our phase inspections, so when the operation tempo is high, we are going to be doing a lot of inspections.”

Sgt. 1st Class William Eckert, NCOIC of production control in D Co., 3/3 ARB, coordinates with Brooks so the members of A Co., 603rd ASB can do the phase inspections on the battalion’s Apaches.

“The mechanics are working very

hard and I think that we currently have a good mix of flight time to inspection time,” said Eckert, of Lake Charles, La.

While the mechanics have been doing a good job keeping pace with the OPTEMPO, Eckert said what the mechanics accomplish during phase inspections is also quite an impressive feat.

“The Apache comes in the hangar door (as) an aircraft. In two or three days you look at that same aircraft again, and it’s just a shell,” Eckert said. “The aircraft is completely broken down, from the engine to the tail rotor.”

The phase inspection consists of many parts. The armament group performs electrical checks on things such as the guns, sights and all electrical components. The aircraft is broken down and different sections are inspected before it

is put back together. Mechanics then conduct a multi-operations check to make sure the bird is ready to fly. Finally, maintenance test pilots fly the aircraft for a final check before the Apache is once again ready for combat.

“A good phase can take up to two-and-a-half weeks,”

Brooks said. “When it comes to Apaches, our company has phased approximately 50 so far.”

Eckert said being able to finish the Apache phase inspections in about 20 days, is about 10 days faster than standard — a

tribute not only to the hard work of the mechanics in A Co. but to the Soldiers of D Co. as well.

“603rd is doing their phases very efficiently, but a lot of that is due to how well our company keeps (the Apaches) maintained,” Eckert said. “Being able to

phase out so many Apaches ensures the brigade has the combat power to do its missions.”

Brooks agreed that the two companies are working well together to provide the fastest turnover of mechanically-sound Apaches in a very prompt manner.

“We get a good handoff from A Co. because they conduct good pre-phase inspections,” Brooks said. “We use a phase book to keep track, that way when we get the Apaches for phase inspection we already know a lot of what to do, which makes things flow faster and we can do the job quicker.”

While things such as the heat and OPTEMPO can be a challenge for the mechanics of the company, Brooks said the morale in the company is high because the Soldiers feel they’re making ground-breaking accomplishments.

“The amount of flight hours and maintenance that this brigade puts in has never been done here,” Brooks said. “It shows that we have some excellent mechanics and we are getting some excellent training. We are making history, for the company and the brigade, and it is gratifying to be a part of that.”

“The amount of flight hours and maintenance that this brigade puts in has never been done here. It shows that we have some excellent mechanics.”

Sgt. 1st Class Bernard Brooks
603rd ASB

BANKS, continued from page 1

special person.

“You are all special people,” the five-time Amateur Athletic Union Champion began. “To come to this country and work so hard to help (the Iraqi) people; most would run from that challenge. If you were not special, everyone in the United States would be here with you brave men and women.”

Blanks was straightforward with his personal challenge to the Soldiers as well: stay safe and do what it takes to be the best by not allowing doubt to be a deterrent.

“Fear is caused by doubt. By getting your senses in shape to be the best you can be, you will get your body in shape,” said Blanks. “Physical fitness is more than a physical thing. You can’t just believe you can do it — you must know it.”

1st Lt. Robert Venton, 48th BCT force protection officer, equates Blanks’ challenge to two words: time and determination.

“There is nothing to stop you,” Venton said. “If you have the time, you should reinforce it with the determination to do what is necessary to get where you need to be.”

In Billy’s “Boot Camp” workout package, Blanks issues a small item all too familiar to the military: dog tags simply inscribed, ‘Spirit’ and ‘Willpower’.

Sgt. Gary L. Ray, a combat engineer with C Company, 648th Combat Engineer Battalion, exemplified the warrior spirit. Returning from a night mission, the Waycross, Ga., carpenter was determined to enjoy an opportunity to be part of the warrior’s workout.

“I’ve never enjoyed anything so much,” Ray said visibly bleary-eyed and proud of his accomplishment. “Now I’ve got to get my hands on his DVDs so I can keep up with him.”

The Local Beat: Task Force Baghdad News Briefs

Operation Flea Flicker sweeps through Zafaraniya

ZAFARANIYA, Iraq – U.S. and Iraqi forces searched houses and fields during Operation Flea Flicker in Zafaraniya Sept. 14.

The operation, conducted by Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team and Iraqi Public Order Brigade, was designed to disrupt anti-Iraqi activity in the area in preparation for the Oct. 15 constitutional referendum.

The joint force swept through neighborhoods during the early morning mission, searching for illegal weapons, propaganda and other contraband.

Troops discovered several minor weapons violations, and detained a man with a 60-millimeter mortar round in a plastic bag under his bed.

U.S. Soldiers nab 18 terror suspects

BAGHDAD – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers continued clearing roadside bombs and detaining terrorists in operations around the Baghdad area Sept. 29 and 30.

Around 9 p.m. Sept. 29, a Task Force Baghdad patrol reported finding an improvised explosive device on a highway in west Baghdad. An explosive ordnance disposal team safely cleared the bomb from the site. Two suspects were detained for further questioning in connection with the IED.

Elsewhere, after setting up an impromptu control point in northeast Baghdad, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers

stopped four suspicious vehicles around 11:55 p.m. Sept. 29. Upon searching the car, the Soldiers discovered terrorist propaganda, 10 Iraqi Police badges and six IP-issue Glock pistols. Soldiers detained 12 suspects for further questioning.

About 10 minutes later, another vehicle was stopped at the same check point and the four occupants of the car were discovered to have Iraqi government badges, three AK-47 assault rifles and one Glock pistol. The four individuals were also detained for further questioning by IPs.

At 12:30 a.m. Sept. 30, a Task Force Baghdad patrol saw two individuals placing a roadside bomb on a highway south of Baghdad. The Soldiers fired on the individuals who then fled the scene. The area was cordoned off and the anti-tank landmine was safely destroyed by an EOD team.

U.S. Forces seize weapons, capture terror suspects

BAGHDAD — Task Force Baghdad Soldiers uncovered two weapons caches and arrested two terror suspects Sept. 17 denying terrorists an opportunity to conduct attacks against Coalition Forces and innocent Iraqi civilians.

The Soldiers found the first weapons cache hidden in north Baghdad at 7:45 a.m. The cache contained a 55-gallon oil drum, three bags of gunpowder, six AK-47 assault rifles, and a large amount of plastic explosives.

Soldiers of TFB discovered the second weapons cache in an old ammunition depot at 2:45 p.m. in southeast

Baghdad. The Soldiers secured the site and found 15 mortar rounds, one anti-personnel mine, one stick of dynamite and 16 cases of rifle grenades. An explosive ordnance disposal team safely detonated the munitions.

Later, U.S. Soldiers on patrol stopped a vehicle in southwest Baghdad just before 6 p.m. When the patrol searched the vehicle they found a 107-millimeter rocket hidden in the trunk. The driver and the passenger in the vehicle were taken into custody for questioning.

Coalition Forces seize seven terror suspects, weapons

BAGHDAD – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers captured five suspected terrorists near a checkpoint in east Baghdad just after noon Sept. 19.

Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat team seized five AK-47 assault rifles from the suspects who were gathered at an intersection near the checkpoint.

The five terror suspects and their weapons were turned over to the Iraqi Police.

In other combat operations, Coalition Forces conducted an early-morning raid against a suspected terrorist safe house at 1 a.m. Sept. 20. The team captured two suspects believed to be involved in planning and conducting terrorist activities in the Hadeen district of central Baghdad.

Both men were taken into custody for questioning.

Coalition raids net 10 suspected terrorists

terrorists

BAGHDAD – Coalition Forces captured 10 terror suspects in three separate combat operations conducted in and around the capital city.

Shortly after 9:30 p.m. Sept. 17, Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment began a cordon and search of suspected safe houses to capture members of a terror cell operating in west Baghdad.

In just over two hours, the Soldiers seized four members of the cell who are thought to be members of a mortar team which had been carrying out attacks against Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces and civilians.

All four suspects were taken into custody for questioning.

Just before midnight, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment carried out another cordon and search in east Baghdad. Within minutes the Soldiers secured the area around the targeted house, knocked on the door, entered the house and seized the suspect they were after.

When the Soldiers searched the house, they found weapons and instructions on how to build a roadside bomb. The unit also found numerous documents and maps which could have been used to plan an attack.

An hour later, Coalition Forces detained five more terror suspects during a raid conducted in central Baghdad. The five suspects are believed to have taken part in planning and participating in terrorist activities in the Aamel district.

The suspected terrorists were taken into custody for questioning.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker
(above) Spc. Joseph MacLaughlan, 92nd Chemical Co., 92nd Eng., from Ridgewood, N.J., asks Gen. George Casey Jr., the top commander on the ground of Iraq about future enhanced body armor.

(right) Gen. George Casey Jr., senior commander of Coalition Forces in Iraq visits and answers questions from Soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division at Camp Liberty Sept. 28.





Photos by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

(above) Playing basketball is a popular activity at the Wisam Almajd Sports Club.

(right) A group of Iraqi citizens drill basketballs on the Wisam Almajd basketball court. The 448th Civil Affairs Brigade has made improving the sports club an ongoing project.

Battalion helps build recreation club for Iraqis with disabilities

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

BAGHDAD – Iraqi citizens who are mobility impaired or have other disabilities have a place to gather for sport and recreation thanks to the ongoing efforts of community leaders and the U.S. Army. The Wisam Almajd Club for Sports of the Disabled is a center where people who use wheelchairs and individuals with disabilities can play basketball, fence or lift weights.

The 448th Civil Affairs Battalion assisted a continuing effort to improve the center by adding a kitchen to the sports club. This addition was commemorated during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the club Sept. 25.

The club has a full basketball court with bleachers, a gym with exercise equipment and free weights, and now a kitchen for patrons to enjoy.

Sgt. 1st Class Dennis O'Connor, a member of the civil affairs battalion and Appleton, Wis., native, acted as a project manager and met with community leaders to improve the center.

"This is an ongoing project that was built from the ground up," O'Connor said. "This is an organization whose participants are very active and get involved with proj-

ects involving the community."

While the club is open to anyone who wants to use its facilities, it is also the place where a wheelchair basketball team practices and a power lifting team trains.

"The club welcomes everyone, and every time I visit I see new faces. There are usually around 30 to 40 participants on a given day," O'Connor said. "They are really big on their sports, and they are really proud. They often show me their ribbons and awards."

One member of the club competes in power lifting competitions with much success. Mohamed Abass uses a wheelchair to aid in mobility, but he doesn't need it for the bench press. Abass can bench press 352 pounds — almost three times his body weight.

"I've been working-out here for the past four years," Abass said. "This (club) is the only place for the disabled in Baghdad, and probably the only place in Iraq."

Building up the recreation center has come with some setbacks. O'Connor says that being cautious and vigilant of possible attacks is one of the challenges that are part of the project.

"We had a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device go off in front of the facility once, and it blew out all the windows," O'Connor

said. "We fixed the windows, but, with the Islamic party headquarters located down the street, it is important for everyone to be careful and remain watchful."

The battalion has completed other projects helping the community near the recreation center. They have filled potholes, upgraded parks by planting trees, and built swings, benches and tables. They have also built a railroad crossing and more projects to improve the community are in the planning stages.

"I see a lot of Iraqi kids riding their bikes in the streets, so we are trying to get a bicycle track built," O'Connor said. "We are also looking into building a family picnic ground with a gazebo and a fountain for families to enjoy."

While O'Connor gets a lot of gratification from serving the Iraqi community, he tries to let everyone know that club users are just as thankful to their own Iraqi people as they are to the U.S. Army.

"(It's gratifying) when kids come up and say 'thanks, we needed this.' It's a good feeling to see the smile on people's faces," O'Connor said. "It's their culture; everyone is very appreciative and can't stop saying thank you. I tell them to thank their council members; they are the real people who did it for them."



An wheelchair athlete goes for a layup in the gym at the Wisam Almajd Sport Club, a recreation center built by community leaders along with the U.S. Army.



(left) Club members and visitors await the club's ribbon cuttin ceremony.

(right) Mohamed Abass performs multiple repetitions on the bench presses in the workout room inside the gym.



Safety in a combat zone can save lives

Sgt. Maj. Kenneth A. Hinckley
Safety Sergeant Major, STB

Have you ever had that thought? At first, the term "Safety in a combat zone" does seem absurd. I mean the way most Soldiers are wounded or killed in Iraq is by enemy fire, improvised explosive devices...COMBAT! Well, you are "dead wrong" in your thinking.

Hundreds of Coalition troops have been killed or wounded by accidents since the beginning of the war. The dead are just as dead as if the enemy shot them or blew them up; the same goes for the maimed.

The tragedy in these cases is that most of the accidents were preventable. The lack of focus on safety in a combat zone; that failed thinking, that complacency, that lack of situational awareness, that lack of leadership, was the reason for the accident. Other factors may be involved, but safety is

a state of mind. It is a mindset that begins with "Hey, I can be killed or horribly wounded over here, and not even leave the wire!"

Should this scare you? You bet it should!

We are all from nations where laws are absolute and safety codes were put in place long ago and enforced. Back home, ignore your seatbelt, run a stop sign, fail to put your small child in a car seat, even jaywalk...and there will be a state trooper or police officer more than happy to give you an unpleasant reminder. You might look at the ticket he or she hands you as some quota to fill, instead of the officer caring about whether you or those who you are "charged" with protecting, live or die.

Who among us would think of speeding on a military post, or running a stop sign, knowing there was a penalty to pay, money to lose, privileges lost?!

In Iraq, you won't see a military police vehicle at most camps and forward operation bases trying to save you from yourself. The military police are too busy outside the wire in the fight.

Troops of all ranks take advantage of this by driving like there is "no tomorrow." We see Soldiers blowing by stop signs (Hey, no one is coming!), driving thru dining facility/post exchange parking lots in five-ton vehicles or larger as if not worrying about those that might walk in front of you...the list seems endless. For those and for those they hurt, there may be "no tomorrow."

Despite the many lectures, posters, signs, briefings, safety stand-downs and classes, some Soldiers still refuse to wear their seatbelt outside the wire.

You know if the vehicle rolls over or is blown in the air by an IED, you are possibly going to die, yet you still refuse to buckle-up.

Some leaders still refuse to set the example. They might even encourage their Soldiers not to wear seatbelts! These same leaders would not think for a second, of not buckling their infant child in a car seat when the risk is nowhere near as great as it is over here!

Leaders, your troops are not children, but you are charged with protecting them like they are your children. They are someone's child, and that someone would like to have them back in one piece at the end of their duty.

The accident rate is out of control. One preventable accident is too many. Don't we have enough tragedy to deal with by losing our troops to enemy action, without adding to the misery by lack of good sense and leadership? Safety in a combat zone?

Hell yeah, and NOW!
 Leaders, do your job and quit being the problem instead of the solution.

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

Chitosan blood clotting bandages are now a part of medic's aid bag

Division Medical Operations Staff
Special to The Marne Express

Shrimp shells, of all things, may contain the military's solution to the problem of hemorrhage (bleeding) on the battlefield. More specifically, the shell's chitin, after it's transformed into a specific form of chitosan, forms a seal that can stop uncontrolled bleeding.

Today, Army combat medics in Iraq and Afghanistan use the chitosan hemostatic (hemostatic means "stop bleeding") dressing made from chitin found in these shrimp shells that bonds with blood cells to form a clot. Medics began receiving the dressings in 2003.

The dressing was created by researchers at the Oregon Medical Laser Center using a research grant from the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. Researchers at the Institute of Surgical Research, which has robust research efforts in stopping lethal hemorrhages on the battlefield, tested the dressing before it was submitted to the Food and Drug Administration for approval in 2002.

In studies performed at the institute, the chitosan dressing effectively stopped bleeding of a wound in

the first 30 seconds. Chitosan was shown to be effective in stopping or reducing bleeding in more than 90 percent of combat cases, without known complications.

The 4-inch by 4-inch chitosan dressing is well suited for the battlefield and is a vast improvement over gauze and pressure bandages traditionally used to stop extreme bleeding, said Col. Bob Vandre, director of Combat Casualty Care research for the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. The dressing's durability and flexibility make it "Soldier proof," he said. The dressing can withstand blunt force as well as extreme field conditions, including inclement weather, temperature and rugged terrain.

"We need to keep casualties alive longer so we have more time to evacuate them for surgical treatment. When we can get them to surgeons, they almost always survive," he said.

Researchers also believe hemostatic dressings can save limbs as well as lives because they limit the amount of time a tourniquet is needed. "You can't leave a tourniquet on for more than a few hours, or the loss of circulation in that limb will cause it to need to be amputated," Vandre said. "The thought

with this dressing is that you can put on a tourniquet, stick the dressing on, stop the bleeding, then take the tourniquet off and keep circulation to the limb (so amputation isn't necessary)."

"We haven't actually run over it with a humvee, but it does stay together well, and that's an important factor because we need Soldiers to be able to carry it in their packs and run around with it, fall down on it (without damaging it), et cetera," said Dr. Anthony Pusateri of the Institute of Surgical Research.

Since Operation Restore Hope in Somalia ended in 1993, Army researchers have been making strides toward making uncontrolled battlefield hemorrhage a distant, horrible memory.

On modern battlefields, more than nine of 10 combat deaths occur before evacuation, and a little more than half of those are caused by uncontrolled hemorrhage, said Pusateri, a physiologist who's worked in hemorrhage control for nearly eight years.

Further, chitosan is also antimicrobial, so it kills germs for soldiers injured on dirty battlefields, Vandre said. The bandage poses no threat to people who are allergic to shrimp, he added.

"It turns out that though many people are allergic to shrimp, they're not allergic to the chitin," he said.

Religious Service and Prayer Schedule for Camp Liberty

Division Chapel

Mon. - Fri.
 12 p.m. Catholic

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 (noninstrumental)
 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

Riva Ridge 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

DESERT JUSTICE

Interesting jobs in the SJA field

Cpt. Jacob R. Lilly
Chief Counsel, Detainee Operations

"Chief Counsel, Detention Operations?"
"So that makes you a prison warden, right?"

Any attempt to explain Detention Operations has to start with this question asked by one of my uncle's before I left Georgia.

"No," I tried to explain, "I'm more like the human rights lawyer for the division."

But why does a division at war need a full time lawyer assigned to detention operations?

Let's start with the scale of detention operations here in Baghdad. At any one

time, there are approximately 300 detainees in Multi-National Division-Baghdad custody. These detainees are processed from the point of capture, through brigade and division facilities, and eventually on to Abu Ghraib if there is evidence to detain them. Additionally, the 6th Iraqi Army Division, the Ministry of Interior Special Police, and the Iraq Police all have detainees in our area of operations.

Every individual detained has certain rights, guaranteed by the Geneva Conventions. There are actually four different GCs, as they are known, pertaining to different areas and types of war. While Soldiers typically have to know Geneva Convention III (Prisoners of War), the war here in Iraq actually applies Geneva Convention IV (Civilians in Wartime).

Many Soldiers ask why we should apply these rules when the terrorists we are fighting do not respect any law. However, the United States continues to abide by interna-

tional laws even when our enemies do not for a couple of reasons.

First, international law, once ratified by the Senate, becomes a part of U.S. law just as if it was passed by Congress and thus must be followed regardless of other illegalities.

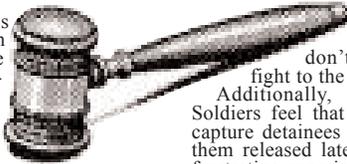
Second, the U.S. follows the law to encourage other countries in future conflicts to engage in the principle of reciprocity (we respect their detainees and they respect ours). This respect for international law will lead in the long term to lower casualties as enemies know they can

surrender honorably to us and don't have to fight to the death.

Additionally, many Soldiers feel that when they capture detainees only to see them released later is a very frustrating experience. Every detainee captured is entitled to a series of legal reviews that are essentially a detainee's day in court. These legal reviews are there to make sure that we have picked up the right detainee, that there is enough evidence to hold the detainees and that the detainee will eventually stand trial.

These legal reviews, however, only recommend to commanders what to do, it is always a combat commander's final decision as to whether to hold onto a detainee. The US can not hold detainees indefinitely, and must push detainees into the Iraqi courts to try and convict those detainees. Then, they can be given sentences of many years in Iraqi jails.

The job of the detainee operations lawyer then is to enforce these standards, to look out for the legal protections of all involved, to provide our forces with clear guidelines to stay out of trouble, and most of all, to make sure the bad guys go to jail and the innocent do not.



Chaplain's Corner

Where is God in this?

Chaplain (Maj.) Stephen Walsh
42nd MP Bde.

Like many, I watched with a mixture of fascination and horror the television reports of Hurricane Katrina's havoc upon the city of New Orleans. With awe, I sat mesmerized as reporters ominously predicted a natural disaster the scope of biblical proportions. I prayed along with the nation that the worst would not happen.

New Orleans was submerged in a watery grave along with much of lower Louisiana and Mississippi. Overnight, thousands of Americans were displaced without food, shelter or clean water.

Immediately, the talking heads began pointing fingers from the climate-controlled comfort of their studios. Some pointed at their fellow man and some pointed at God. Hollywood heroes rushed to the scene; many hoping to look three inches taller by standing on the misfortune of others. Politicians crooned, government agencies swooned and charities seemed doomed.

Yet amid all the huff, puff and bluff there arose from the darkness a quiet force; unheralded and undaunted. Forged without fanfare or flourish, they gathered in armories and airfields, gymnasiums and parade fields prepare to deploy as it has done so many times bringing a message of hope ... it's mission to restore order from chaos, and peace out of confusion.

With the strength found in an army of believers who trust in a power higher than themselves, a good greater than their own and a cause larger than their life, they left home and family to bring help.

They flew low in soaring UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and drove slow in lumbering humvees. They packed themselves in busses

and in gangly tactical vehicles. They assembled by the thousands under the guidance of their commander who ordered them to roll up their sleeves and begin to restore New Orleans.

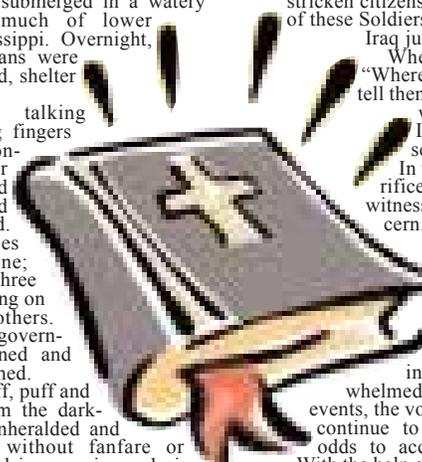
I watched as majestic CH-47D Chinook helicopters ferried Americans to safety and I was proud to be in uniform. My chest swelled to see our young Soldiers plowing through flooded streets in enormous M977 series tactical trucks to bring food and clothing to the stricken citizens of the Big Easy. Many of these Soldiers were deployed here in Iraq just a few months ago.

When people ask me, "Where is God in all this?," I tell them to look at the men and women of our military. In their actions you will see God's help and hope. In their willingness to sacrifice their lives, you will witness God's love and concern.

When all is said and done, our military is still the one organization that people trust to be able to provide them help. At a time when most human institutions seem overwhelmed by natural or political events, the volunteers of our military continue to overcome all earthly odds to accomplish any mission. With the help of God, they will continue to prevail in the battle to overcome any force that threatens to hurt or harm people everywhere.

I predict that long after the television news crews go home and Larry King returns to interviewing Pamela Anderson, members of our military will still be there in Louisiana and Mississippi working quietly to help restore people's lives and to rebuild. They will do it without any reward, except the one that comes from above.

Thankfully, for most of them, that will be enough.



LEGAL PROBLEMS? CONTACT YOUR UNIT'S SJA FOR GUIDANCE



In Memory of ...

Spc. David H. Ford IV, 4/64 Armor
Sgt. Matthew L. Deckard, 4/64 Armor
1st Sgt. Allen N. Gifford, 4/64 Armor
Staff Sgt. Daniel R. Scheile, 1/184 Inf.
Sgt. Paul C. Neubauer, 1/184 Inf.
Staff Sgt. Jason A. Benford, 2/69 Armor



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



“Titan Cup” brings Soldiers together as one

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Shutts
2/3 BTB

CAMP LOYALTY, Iraq – The Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Brigade Troops Battalion, normally spend their days fighting terrorism in Iraq.

Sept. 10 brought something special to the battalion – a chance to forget about the terrorists for awhile and concentrate on a different type of contest – a struggle among the companies to claim the coveted “Titan Cup” during the battalion’s organizational day.

The Titan Cup is awarded to the best company in a series of team and individual competitions. While the rivalry for the cup drives each company to compete, the overall goal is to bring all Soldiers of the battalion together regardless of rank or occupation.

“It was the first time we had unity as a battalion. It eased a lot of stress by giving Soldiers a chance to take a break,” said Staff Sgt. Kevin Charlott of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2/3 BTB.

Soldiers of 2/3 BTB have been involved operations since the activation of the battalion almost 14 months ago; first training rotations, then deployment operations, and finally stability and reconstruction operations in Iraq.

Because 2/3 BTB is composed of more than 300 Soldiers from many different military occupational specialties, including military police, military intelligence, and signal, the BTB can accomplish a wide variety of battle tasks.

Given the unit’s high operational tempo and diverse company missions, an organizational day and Titan Cup competition seemed the ideal way to strengthen the battalion, according to Lt. Col. Jamie Gayton, 2/3 BTB commander.

The events began early that morning with an Army Physical Fitness Test involving three-person teams from the companies. Dozens of Soldiers from every company came out at dawn to cheer and motivate their company’s APFT team.

Spc. Stephanie Jones, A Co., 2/3 BTB, said she had “good support” from her company as she participated in the early-morning APFT.

The events that followed were ultimate Frisbee, soccer, flag football, and volleyball for the outdoor events, and indoor events featured spades, darts, dominos, and ping-pong.

Pvt. Bernabe Cobos, B Co., 2/3 BTB, a member of the soccer team, said he enjoyed the overall camaraderie and he liked seeing the “rivalry between the companies.”

“Soldiers were supporting Soldiers by cheering on the side lines,” Cobos said.

Between the outdoor and indoor events, Soldiers enjoyed a barbecue that brought a touch of home.

Sgt. Michael Ruff, A Co., 2/3 BTB, said he was pleased with the barbecue.

“It was a good social event with great food and lots of variety,” Ruff said.

A senior leadership event pitted Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory Watkins, 2/3 BTB, command sergeants major and company first sergeants against Gayton and the company commanders in a game of basketball.

1st Sgt. Joseph Rodgers, for HHC, 2/3 BTB, first sergeant, said he thought the senior leadership basketball game “showed great senior-leader team work as well as a great time to get together outside of work.”

After fighting the sweltering heat and soaking up the crowd’s cheers, the noncommissioned officers came out on top.

The day ended at the Camp Loyalty Theater with an awards ceremony. The Soldiers of the BTB watched a “Hooah” video created by Chaplain (Capt.) Ric Thompson, 2/3 BTB.

Clips of the events set to music featured the spirit and teamwork of the day.

Gayton and Watkins recognized all of the event champions and the overall unit champion with trophies. Second place teams and second place overall received battalion certificates of appreciation.

The highlight of the awards ceremony was the announcement of the overall winner. While the scoring was close, the Soldiers of A Co. came out on top and took possession of the Titan Cup until the next competition.

Capt. Byron Johnson, A Co., 2/3 BTB, commander, spoke about his company’s performance as the overall



Spc. Elizabeth Garcia
The 2/3 BTB Organizational Day Flag Football Championship pitted A Company versus B Company, which A Co., won ending the day’s events by taking the first-ever Titan Cup.

points champion for the landmark BTB event.

“I was pleased with the company’s overall performance,” Johnson said. “If we fight as one, there’s no way we can lose.”

Capt. Joshua Shaw, HHC, 2/3 BTB, commander, said he was “very proud of his company,” which came in second.

“Next organizational day, HHC will be on top, Shaw said. “Even though we didn’t win, it was great to finish ahead of Bravo Company!”

BTB is planning to have another day of fun, decompression, esprit de corps, and sports competition. The Titans, despite their diverse military specialties, will be once again “together as one.”

The teams recognized by the Battalion Commander and Battalion Command Sergeant Major were:

Overall Points Champion: A Company

First Place Spades: A Company

Overall Points Runner Up: HHC

Second Place Spades: HHC

First Place 3 Soldier APFT: B Company

First Place Darts: HHC

Second Place 3 Soldier APFT: A Company

Second Place Darts: A Company

First Place Ultimate Frisbee: B Company

First Place Ping Pong: HHC

Second Place Ultimate Frisbee: A Company

Second Place Ping Pong: B Company

First Place Soccer: B Company

First Place Dominos: A Company

Second Place Soccer: A Company

Second Place Dominos: HHC

First Place Volleyball: B Company

First Place Flag Football: A Company

Second Place Volleyball: HHC

Second Place Flag Football: B Company



Spc. Ricardo Branch

Pfc. Christopher Hopkins, (bottom) HHOC, STB and Pfc. George Pearce, (top) HHSC, STB, spar in a Jiu-Jitsu match at the 3rd Infantry Division LSA Gym Sept. 16. Jiu-Jitsu matches involves getting your opponent in a submission hold or him tapping out to constitute a win.

Baghdad Jiu-Jitsu Academy

Come join the “Baghdad Jiu-Jitsu Academy,” and learn the basics of the combat fighting Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu!

THIS IS NOT AN AEROBIC CLASS!

This is a challenging and fun way to get a good workout and learn practical self-defense.

All skill levels from beginner to advanced welcome!

Grab your PT clothes and move out to the 3rd Infantry Division’s LSA Gym (Next to the Sports Oasis).

Wednesdays & Fridays

2130 hrs.

For details of upcoming classes contact Sgt. Anthony Rogers at 242-4958 or 847-1800.



In the Movies



Guilty Pleasures: Movies We Shouldn't Love, But Do

Spc. Matthew Wester
100th MPAD

When I think of my favorite films, a few titles lurk in the background and I'm a little embarrassed to admit they are among the movies I will gladly watch over and over again. They may have been panned by the critics, but they have charm, quirkiness and a likable stupidity. These are my cinematic guilty pleasures — so bad, they're good!



"Planet of the Apes" (1968)

Charleton Heston plays an American astronaut who sets out on a deep-space exploration mission only to find himself and his crew off course and thousands of years in the future. They crash-land on a strangely familiar planet where men forage in the jungle and, a race of highly-intelligent apes run the show.

Heston's overacting is a real highlight, as he chews major scenery struggling against the ape establishment to regain his dignity in a world turned upside down. His love interest, Nova, inexplicably sports a perfect 60s hairdo and makeup even though she has been living in the forest foraging for fruit all her life. The ape costumes are the real star of this movie. They fascinated me as a kid and still do.

Look for great performances from Roddy McDowall and Kim Hunter as chimpanzee scientists who help

Heston break free from his ape captors.



"EUROTRIP" (2004)

This teen comedy follows the adventures of Scott (Scott Mechlowitz) and his group of high school friends as they tear across Europe on a low-budget vacation/quest for Scott's German pen pal and soul mate.

With this film, it's the journey not the destination that is important. During the trip, the perky teens beat up a robot mime, encounters a train passenger who can't seem to keep his hands to himself (current "Saturday Night Live" cast member Fred Armisen in the best performance of the movie), and accidentally convince most of Rome that Scott has been chosen as the new Pope. A formulaic, schmaltzy ending wraps up the trip just as you would expect.

Stay alert for great cameos by Matt Damon and Lucy Lawless.



"Logan's Run" (1976)

Sci-fi thrillers are all over the place now. This movie was the model for many of them (including this year's "The Island"). Michael York does his

English-accented best to beat the system in a utopian city of the future where the government requires all citizens to dispose of themselves when they turn 30. York's character is a "Sandman," an agent who is required to track down people who would rather continue living past the 30-year limit. Things get interesting when the city's central computer sends York on a secret mission, and he decides to buck the status quo with the help of doe-eyed Jenny Agutter.

The special effects are laughable, and your little brother could probably build more realistic sets with Legos, but the disco-inspired look of the futuristic city has charm. Most of the special-effects budget was probably eaten up by the cool, psychotic robot named Box, who the main characters encounter on their quest for a way out of their domed home.

Keep your eyes on the screen for an appearance by Farrah Fawcett, whose swimsuit poster adorned thousands of teenagers' bedroom walls when this movie hit theaters.



"Weekend At Bernie's" (1989)

Andrew McCarthy and Jonathan Silverman star in this screwball comedy about two young guys trying to climb the corporate ladder who think they are going to spend a weekend at their boss Bernie's beach house as a reward for finding a major accounting error on the company books. Actually,

Bernie has been embezzling from his company and plans on bumping the boys off. He doesn't complete his plan because he kicks the bucket himself. For various reasons, McCarthy and Silverman have to pretend Bernie is still alive. Hilarity ensues.

Why do I think it is funny every time the main characters make Bernie's body walk, wave or dance? I don't know, but I do.

Curiously, this flick is a favorite for people to send to Soldiers in Iraq. In one month, my teammate and I received three copies of the film from three different people.



"Shogun Assassin" (1980)

This is the ultimate blood-and-guts Samurai epic. Based on the popular Japanese manga "Lone Wolf and Cub," this film centers on "Lone Wolf," the invincible assassin of a powerful Shogun (de facto leader of Japan). The Shogun grows paranoid and fears "Lone Wolf." He dispatches a team of ninjas to kill the assassin, but they end up killing Lone Wolf's wife in the super-fast, karate melees. Lone Wolf embarks on a blood-soaked quest for revenge, accompanied by his infant son. Most of the story is told by the son's voice-over narration.

Cartoon-like Samurai violence is the name of the game here. Be prepared for airborne ninja moves, tricky swordplay and geysers of fake blood that look like fountains of marinara sauce. You'll love the hilariously bad, dubbed dialogue and body parts flying around.

Hunker down in your trailer or tent, invite a few friends over and enjoy these anti-classics. Chances are I'll be watching one of them again, too.

Crossword: IRAQI history

Across

2. Oct. 13, 1932, Iraq becomes sovereign state and is admitted into this world organization (3 words)
7. Nation invaded by Iraq in 1990
8. First city in the world to have a population more than one million in year 775 C.E.
10. Writing system of making wedge shapes in clay tablets developed by Sumerians.
11. World War I general who established British influence over Iraq
14. Region conquered by this Macedonian king in 331 B.C.
16. Nickname of strategy used by Coalition Forces in opening days of OIF in March 2003
17. Iraq's second largest city
19. The land between two rivers

Down

1. Amorite ruler, established famous code of laws
3. Leader of Iran during Iran-Iraq War
4. Ruled Iraq for four centuries until World War I
5. Babylonian king who reigned for 43 years, destroyed Jerusalem
6. Baath party leader who became president in 1979
9. Hanging _____ of Babylon
12. Holy cirt soythwest of Baghdad
13. These invaders from Asia seized and controlled Baghdad in 1258 for 150 years
15. Islamic holy month
18. Hometown of Abraham before his migration to Palestine

