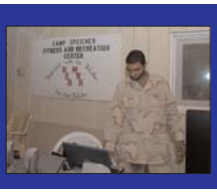
**In this edition**



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# RAIDERS DOWN RANGE

*Volume 1 Issue 14* | *Diary of the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team* | *October 15, 2005*

# Large voter turnout for Referendum

**Task Force Liberty Press Release**
42 ID PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq—Iraqi police and army forces, with the support of Task Force Liberty Soldiers across the four provinces of North Central Iraq, sustained their successful efforts throughout the day and established an unprecedented voter turnout at the polling centers.

Events at polling centers and the day's voter turnout overwhelmed any terrorist attempts to dissuade voters. By day's end, there were 36 attacks in North Central Iraq. This is less than one third the level of terrorist activity when compared with the previous voting period on Jan. 30.

Task Force Liberty Soldiers and their Iraqi Security Forces partners discovered 12 IEDs and one mine prior to detonation during the course of their security operations as part of the completion of Operation Saratoga. Iraqi police, soldiers and Task Force Liberty elements detained nearly 70 suspected insurgents throughout the day.

The initial summary of events validates the confident estimates of Task Force Liberty Soldiers who appraised the preparations across North Central Iraq to President George W. Bush on Thursday.

"We're really happy to see, during the preparation for this one, sir, they're doing everything. They're making the plans, they're (Iraqi Security Forces) calling each other, they've got it laid out," said 1st Lt. Gregg A. Murphy during the teleconference with the White House.

"So on Saturday, we're going to be beside them, we're going to be there to support them through anything. But we can't wait to share in their success with them on Sunday," Murphy had told the President on Thursday.

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

An Iraqi soldier displays his ink marked finger, proving that he voted October 15 on the Constitutional Referendum. Iraqis showed up in force to the polling sites guarded by Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army soldiers. Because of the intense security by the Iraqi Army few significant attacks by insurgents occurred in Salah Ad Din.

The actions by the Iraqi police and army forces across North Central Iraq required no combat or logistics mission response from Task Force Liberty forces. The security operations of Iraqi police and army elements set the conditions for a voter turnout above IECI expectations.

The Salah Ad Din Provincial Joint Coordination Center, along with the provincial IECI representative, estimate nearly 450,000 voters throughout the province at about 5 p.m. with some of the provincial polling centers yet to return their information. This represents an estimated 74% turnout for registered voters in the province and more than a three-fold increase in voter participation.

The participation of voters exceeded even the high expectations of IECI officials, the Iraqi Security Forces and Task Force Liberty Soldiers.

"I was with my Iraqi counterpart in...Tikrit last week, and he was going around, talking to the locals," said Capt. David Williams from the 1st Brigade Combat Team during the White House teleconference. "And from what he told me that the locals told him, the Iraqi people are ready and eager to vote in this referendum," said Williams.

The evening's estimate of voter turnout in the City of Tikrit and its surrounding villages approaches 40,000.

In Diyala Province, IECI officials report an estimated voter turnout of 340,000 citizens, an increase of 150% from the previous voting on Jan. 30. Estimates for both Kirkuk and As Sulayminayah Province are expected to meet or exceed previous voter turnout.

"It has been an historic and great day in the history of Iraq," said Ahmed M. Salih, the Salah Ad Din Provincial spokesman during an evening press conference from Tikrit.

# New Iraqi Army helicopter pad in Tikrit

**1 BCT Press Release**
1st BCT PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq -- The Iraqi Army in Salah Ad Din province christened a new helicopter pad with the landing of a Coalition Forces aircraft October 10. The landing marked the end of a three month long project to build the helicopter pad on the 1st Iraqi Army Brigade compound in Tikrit.

The landing was also a special occasion for the pilot of that first helicopter, Maj. Kelly Donna, the operations officer for 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Assault Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. Donna, formerly the military training team chief for 1st Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Liberty, was the officer who started the project.

"I was very excited to be the first guy to land there," Donna said. "It was closure on a project that I had started 3 months earlier."

Donna cited the hard work of 1BCT MiTT soldiers and contract liaisons for bringing this project to closure.

Because of Donna's efforts, Brig. Gen. Abdul Jabbar, commander of the 1st IA Bde, honored him by naming the helicopter pad Donna Pad.

"It makes you feel good knowing that they (the IA) recognize you and your guys for your efforts," Donna said.

Staff Sgt. Daniel Bailey

Maj. Kelly Donna walks with Brig. Gen. Abdul Jabbar on the Iraqi Army compound in Tikrit. Donna had just piloted the first helicopter to land at the 1st IA Brigade's new landing pad. Abdul Jabbar named the pad Donna Pad, in honor of Donna.

**Use the five C's to secure an IED site.**

**Confirm :** the device
**Clear :** the area
**Call :** EOD
**Cordon :** the perimeter
**Control :** site access

STAY ALIVE

0035 IEDs KILL

## Voices and Viewpoints

# Complacency kills, man-kissing doesn't

**Staff Sgt. Thomas Mills**
1st BCT PAO

Well they're here. Most everyone here knows who I'm talking about. In the 1st Brigade Combat Team area of responsibility, the folks with the eagle on their shoulders are arriving.

Not just the eagle, either. They're wearing those new uniforms with the pixilated pattern and the pockets everywhere.

They're the first elements of the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division, part of which has come to replace the 1st BCT here in Salah Ad Din province.

The first time I saw one a couple of weeks ago I wanted to go right up and give him a big hug and kiss, Iraqi style. That would have been a true and heartfelt greeting.

Then, with my eye blackened, I would have gone on my way happily.

Of course now many of us are beginning to look back at the last 9 or 10 months and do one of a couple things. We're either looking back and thinking fondly of our time here; reminiscing about all the good times.

Or we're saying good riddance.

I won't say which of those things I'm thinking but you could guess and you'd probably be right.

What's important to me, though, is what we're looking forward to.

Like they say, it ain't over 'til it's over, and we have plenty of time and plenty of mission left here in Iraq.

The main worry most of the leaders should be concerned with in 1st BCT is not so much how sharp we've been over the past 9 months. What leaders maybe should be concerned with is how sharp we're going to be in the coming months before we go home.

This place is inherently dangerous. That goes without saying. It doesn't pay to wander about a combat zone with your mind adrift. It certainly doesn't pay to become complacent.

We have a new safety officer in 1st BCT. Mr. Ray Williams, a Department of Army civilian, has taken over the reigns as safety officer while the former safety guru, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Kelley redeploys with his unit from the 42nd Infantry Division.

The first topic of conversation that came up between Ray and I was the alarming rise in negligent discharges.

I think the conversation started when he asked me how long we had been clearing weapons at clearing barrels when we entered the Forward Operating Bases.

I told him that we had been doing it the entire time we had been here.

Ray was surprised. Then why, he wanted to know, would we have a problem with negligent discharges? Haven't we had enough practice?

I couldn't answer that other than to surmise that we are becoming more and more complacent as we look forward to winding down from this deployment.

Not to sound like your old drill sergeant spouting cliches, but the enemy never "winds down." The enemy here in Iraq certainly isn't looking forward to the end of a deployment.

I see the signs everywhere.

In my wanderings I've been seeing Soldiers outside the wire out of the prescribed uniform, the Marne Standard.

There's a reason we wear the eye protection, elbow pads, knee pads and nomex or leather gloves. If you're one of the lucky ones who has never actually "needed" them in the 9 months you've been here it doesn't mean you won't need them at some point in the next couple of months.

I've seen Soldiers on missions who don't want to wear all that ammunition we carry. They complain that they haven't needed it before, so why carry it around everywhere?

Some want to take their ammo "rack" off while sitting in the vehicles so they fit more comfortably.

Heck, I've been on many different kinds of missions, from house to house raids to air assault missions and even when things go south I haven't had a chance to shoot at the enemy. If I were to guess, I probably won't have a chance to shoot at any bad guys the entire time I'm here.

That doesn't mean I won't need my ammunition and protective gear in the future.

Here's another cliche for you: complacency kills.

We need every leader out there to stay on top of the standards; to keep their Soldiers sharp.

If we all come home and the only injury to us is a black eye because we man-kissed a 101st Abn. Soldier, well, it won't be a bad thing.

# Soldier spins discs for the troops at MWR

**Staff Sgt. Thomas Mills**
1st BCT PAO

When a Soldier is sent back to the States after serving in Iraq there are all sorts of wheels put in motion. Requisitions are sent out, personnel offices process those requisitions and the needs of the Army are met. Recently, when a particular Soldier rotated back to the States the requisition to fill his slot was handled by the folks at Morale, Welfare and Recreation North on Forward Operating Base Speicher.

MWR North turned to Pfc. Lance Lesueur, a flight operations specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team. It's all because MWR North wanted to get hip-hop back to Saturday nights.

Lesueur sets up his computer and the MWR sound system every Saturday night at MWR North and plays a variety of music for any Soldier who is willing to listen.

This is Lesueur's first gig as a DJ but he's hoping it won't be his last. "I've always wanted to be a DJ," Lesueur said.

"I wouldn't mind being a professional DJ," he added. To Lesueur, though, what he wanted was actually secondary. "It's more for the other people to relax than me getting something out of it."

In this often tense environment the Soldiers needed an outlet, a place to get their minds off of things. "I felt that it would be good for the Soldiers to get out and listen to music."

To help the Soldiers relax, Lesueur plays an eclectic blend of music from a mix of musical genres.

"I can play hip-hop, R&B. I can even throw in a country song," Lesueur said.

His first night as a DJ not many people showed up, but that changed. The next time he went out to play music Lesueur's audience swelled. While Lesueur played the music the Soldiers in the audience played ping pong and dominos.

When people dance, Lesueur said, you know they are enjoying the music, but if they hang out and enjoy the other MWR activities that's just fine with him as well. "Just having people show up is more gratifying than doing this with no one but myself," he explained.

Staff Sgt. Thomas Mills

Pfc. Lance Lesueur of HHC, 1st Brigade Combat Team, readies his computer and sound system for a night as a DJ at MWR North on FOB Speicher. Lesueur plays his music every Saturday night starting at 10pm.

Lesueur is planning on bringing drinks and other refreshments to the MWR on Saturday nights as well, so Soldiers can knock back a cold soft drink while they listen to the music.

Raised in Philadelphia, the twenty-one year old Lesueur has a strong background in music. He listens to everything from R&B and hip-hop, to jazz and classical music. Lesueur liked to sing growing up, and he said he still would like to learn an instrument or two. In high school he joined the school choir at Abraham Lincoln High School, singing with the barbershop quartet, the madrigal ensemble and the Lincoln Varsity Singers.

Yet even with that background Lesueur isn't too keen on getting into the music business. To him music is for fun, not necessarily for business.

"I see the music business as very iffy. You either make it or you don't. If you do make it you don't know how long you're going to be there."

Lesueur said he'd rather do what he does now when he gets back into the civilian world – flight operations.

"I'd like to work at the Philadelphia International Airport, or the Savannah International Airport," he said.

For now, he said, he'd like to be a volunteer DJ, bringing a few moments of relaxation to Soldiers' lives in this battlefield environment.

"Just because we're deployed doesn't mean we can't relax and have fun," Lesueur said. "I don't want just (42nd Infantry Division or 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers) to enjoy the music. I want a place where all the Soldiers can go to when they get off work."

Raiders Down Range is published in the interest of the service members of the 3rd Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Combat team. Raiders Down Range is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army, under the provision of AR 360-1. Contents of Raiders Down Range are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or Department of the Army.

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Staff Sgt. Thomas Mills

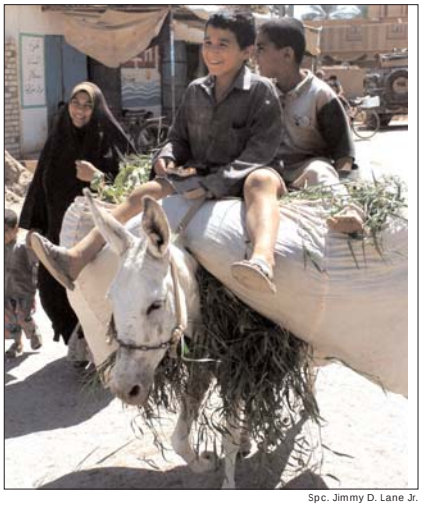
# A look at our home in Iraq

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

The view from the Samarra dam on the Tigris River looking toward the government buildings along the bank. The Tigris River is a lush landscape in the desert of Iraq.

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

An Iraqi family travels through an Iraqi Army check point near Balad. The main cities in Salah Ad Din province are separated by anywhere from 20 to 60 or more miles and the Iraqis rely heavily on cars.



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Two Iraqi boys ride a heavily laden donkey in Balad.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Acosta

A C Troop, 5th Battalion, 7th Cav, 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldier keeps an eye out during a combat patrol near Balad.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Acosta

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division distribute food, toys and supplies to the people of Tikrit, Iraq, building a relationship with the people in the area.

Staff Sgt. Thomas Mills

A Black Scorpion makes a shower its home at FOB Speicher. Scorpions, centipedes and snakes are common sights on the FOBs in Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Matthew Acosta

An Iraqi soldier checks IDs at a check point near the city of Balad.

## Constitutional Referendum

# Iraqis look to the future...

Courtesy photos

TIKRIT, IRAQ -- Referendum day, October 15th, 2005 dawned with people lining up and ready to vote in the towns of Salah Ad Din province.

Polls opened at 7 am and by 9 am an overwhelming majority of voters in the Province had already cast their vote for, or against, the Constitutional Referendum.

In Balad an organized, peaceful, demonstration was held hailing the referendum and calling on all Iraqis to cast their vote.

Iraqis came to the polling sites in Balad, Samarra, Tikrit, Bayji and every town in between throughout the day until more than eighty-percent of registered voters had cast their vote. That was nearly three times the amount of people voting than had voted in the elections for an interim government held last January.

# ...and the future looks bright

**Raiders Down Range is looking for your photos, commentaries and stories. Send submissions to the 1st Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office via email (richard.bartoszuk@us.army.mil, thomas.mills@us.army.mil) or call us at 670-5127**