

The Marne Express

"Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork"

Volume 2, Issue 19

Serving the Soldiers of Task Force Baghdad

November 6, 2005

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



New roads
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Gotta get rid of that UXO



Photo courtesy of 42nd Inf. Div.

A cache of captured enemy ammunition is destroyed near Tikrit. The safe destruction of ammo caches of unexploded ordnance keeps it out of the hands of insurgents and, in some cases, allows Iraqi civilians to reclaim their land.

East Baghdad ballots turned in, troops praise security

Maj. Russ Goemaere
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – All polling material in east Baghdad was turned in to the Independent Election Commission Iraq October 16.

More than 2 million ballots

were counted and recorded on tally sheets by Iraqi election officials.

"The Iraqi Security Forces secured the movement of the materials to the warehouse and then IECE officials took over," said Maj. G. Jay Sawyer, an operations officer

with Coalition Forces in east Baghdad. "I was very impressed with the way the Iraqi government protected the election."

Sawyer said a new age was being ushered in for Iraq in which the people get to choose their own path.

He said he was overcome with a sense that the U.S. military is really here to make sure the voice of the Iraqi people is heard.

For at least two U.S. Soldiers, the events of Oct. 15

See **BALLOTS**, page 12

Digging for days ...

70th Engineers find thousands of munitions

Sgt. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

TAJI, Iraq – A combat engineer sifts through the sun-bleached sand and uncovers a shiny rocket tube as other Soldiers scramble into the pit to pry the tube from the ground.

They've been at this for hours and found hundreds of pounds of explosives, but the site isn't empty yet.

The Soldiers of 70th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division found the weapons cache in a remote area northwest of Baghdad and worked to uncover the munitions for several days.

Since the 70th Eng. Bn., nicknamed "Kodiaks," started digging in the arid, desert-like terrain, they have unearthed more than 700 mortar rounds ranging from 60-millimeter to 120-millimeter, more than 700 rocket-propelled grenades, hundreds of rockets and 51,000 rounds of anti-aircraft ammunition.

The Kodiak Soldiers, assisted by troops from 977th Military Police Company, also found several mortar tubes, various explosives, small-arms weapons, homemade rocket launchers, wires and timing devices.

"Any time we find a cache this size, we take a lot of pride in it. It's a big win for us," said Capt. Jesse Curry, commander of 70th Eng. Bn.'s C Company. "We know that these are rounds that won't be buried on the side of the road in our sector or around Baghdad."

The catalyst for the cache discovery was a routine patrol conducted by C Co. miles away from the site.

"We found the cache based on a 'snap' traffic stop and that led us out to this site in the first place," said Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony M. Cady, the Kodiaks' command sergeant major. "It's kind of like a piece of string frayed on a sweater. We just pulled on it and

See **DIG**, page 12



Sgt. Matthew Wester

Spc. Jeremy Poly, 977th MP Co., carries a rocket tube out of a weapons cache site northwest of Baghdad. Poly's unit helped 70th Eng., 3/1 AD clear the site in a remote rural area.

m7 sends

Maintain PT standards

Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Grant
3rd Inf. Div. command sergeant major

Physical training is one of the techniques that help leaders shape today's Warriors by greatly enhancing their ability to operate and be effective in difficult conditions and environments.

There are pros and cons to everything we do. However, the pros surely outweigh the cons when this subject is addressed.

The Army has invested an enormous degree of energy toward the development of workout techniques and routines that are focused on improving the physical state of our formations.

One of our greatest assets embedded within our units is the Master Fitness Trainer, who has received specialized training to enhance physical training programs at the small unit level.

However, this capability doesn't exempt the creative ideas and participation of other noncommissioned officers and leaders.

Physical training must involve everyone in the unit and should be something that everyone enjoys.

During our stay here in Iraq, our unit programs in some cases have been de-centralized and some Soldiers have been charged with executing on their own.

We all must accept the fact that the short term pain and discomfort resulting from gaining muscular failure or cardiovascular routines is well worth the end state – remember, the beaches are awaiting our return!

Physical fitness equates to a change in lifestyle, which is a significant emotional event for many.

This healthy approach to life can produce positive effects on our families – you are leading your loved ones, and the energy you project daily through the state of fitness will serve to motivate them to seek the same.

Remember, our approach to this subject needs to be that we are all Warriors and physical fitness is a part of the business.

As we focus on the up-coming redeployment the Army physical fitness test will face us all.

For some it may be just a diagnostic test, while for others it will be the deciding factor for graduation from a service school.

"My minimum is..." only sustains a mind set of mediocrity; don't let your reflection in the mirror bear the image of this type of Soldier.

An internalized motivation to overachieve and "Be All You Can Be!" breeds excellence and this is the strength of our Army and the Marne Division.

Rock of the Marne!

Take a good look at the robot now ...

... so you can watch outside the cordon later.



STAY ALIVE

0012

IEDs KILL

The Word on the Street

What advice would you give Soldiers who are coming to Iraq for their first deployment?

"Stay focused, stay conditioned, and be ready to adapt to anything."



Sgt. 1st Class Chad Ullery
HHC, 2nd BCT
Falkville, Alaska

"Be flexible, and be ready to do a job you may not have done before."



2nd Lt. Travis Thomas
HHB, 1/9 FA
Memphis, Tenn.

"Stay vigilant – it may seem quiet, but don't be fooled."



Staff Sgt. Tiffany Strothers
F Co., 26th FSB
Chesapeake, Va.

"Maintain contact with your family, and listen to them – they're going through a lot."



Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Merchant
HHB, 1/9 FA
St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

"Make sure you have at least one clean uniform at all times. And at least one clean pair of socks."



Pfc. Brian Birmingham
HHB, 1/9 FA
Dallas, Texas

The Marne Express

Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs Office

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr.

Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. Robert Whetstone

Public Affairs Supervisor: Sgt. 1st Class David Abrams

The Marne Express Staff

Editor: Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker
Layout and Design: Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Staff Writers: Sgt. 1st Class Peter Chadwick, Sgt. 1st Class David Abrams, Sgt. 1st Class Ken Walker, Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper, Staff Sgt. Britt Smith, Staff Sgt. Kevin Bromley, Staff Sgt. Russ Rozean, Sgt. David Bill, Sgt. Andrew Miller, Sgt. Matthew Wester, Spc. Ricardo Branch, Spc. Natalie Loucks, Spc. Ben Brody, Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr., Spc. Jennifer D. Atkinson, Spc. Derek Del Rosario, Spc. Christopher Foster, Spc. Brian Henretta, Spc. Maria Mengrone, Spc. Tracy J. Smith, Spc. Daniel Balda, Pfc. Jason Jordan.

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Commentary

The NCO Creed: a powerful blueprint for how to lead

Sgt. Matthew Wester
100th MPAD

Soldiers aspire to become noncommissioned officers, and the phrase, "I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of Soldiers," stirs the emotions.

Now that I've been promoted to sergeant, the Army's creed for non-commissioned officers has a special meaning.

The NCO Creed lays out the philosophical framework for what a sergeant is supposed to be.

It isn't just a collection of words to be memorized; it is a code that drives the actions of a corps of professional leaders.

All NCOs are expected to be consummate professionals and the first words of the creed, "No one is more professional than I," bear out this expectation.

To me, NCOs are the ones people depend on to get things done.

They are there every day tying up loose ends and making sure all the details of a mission are attended to.

That is why the first paragraph of their creed describes them as the

"Backbone of the Army."

When I read that phrase, "Backbone of the Army," I think of a running cadence I learned in basic training.

Most Soldiers probably remember breathlessly yelling, "backbone!" when the drill sergeant called, " Sergeants, where you at?"

The drill sergeant was trying to drop a not so subtle hint about the importance of the NCO Corps.

Some of the behavior expected of an NCO is also covered in the first paragraph of the creed.

It states, "I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety."

I think this statement means a sergeant doesn't abuse the power he or she has earned.

Supervisors shouldn't hold their power over the heads of their subordinates and threaten them.

They should use their power to mentor the junior members of the unit.

One of the most powerful parts of the creed says, "I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so

as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country, regardless of the situation in which I find myself."

These words remind sergeants that even under the most trying circumstances, like combat in Iraq, they must remember they are leaders and must act with integrity.

An amazing example of an NCO performing in a very tough situation happened at the beginning of this tour south of Baghdad.

Sgt. Cory J. Scott, squad leader for 2nd Platoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with a "V" Device for valor for his actions on April 3. What did he do to earn it?

As an Army journalist, I've heard of a lot of war stories and tales of valor, but when I interviewed Scott about what he did on that hot Spring afternoon I was blown away.

Scott's patrol was ambushed. Some of his men tried to take cover in a canal, but fell in the swift-flowing water and were in danger of drowning. Scott organized his men to defend

their area and then fished out two of the three Soldiers in the canal with a radio antenna.

He did it all under withering small arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire.

Later, he helped carry the exhausted Soldiers out of the ambush zone and led his squad to safety.

Scott lived the Creed and I will strive to do so as well.

I have taken the words of the creed to heart and I am proud that I now

walk in the footsteps of the brave sergeants who have served before me.

I am a Noncommissioned Officer.

I am a leader of Soldiers.



Sgt. Matthew Wester

O Army, how do I love thee? Let me sum up a few of the ways ...

Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
3rd Inf. Div. PAO

Have I ever told you how much I love the Army? For real, I adore it.

In fact, if I could write the Army a letter, it would start with "Dearest darling Army," and end with "I love you so much xoxo."

You might be wondering, "But Specialist Wilsoncroft, why do you love the Army with such intensity?"

I would have to reply, "Why not?" Because, you know, the Army makes my rockin' world go 'round.

However, if you really need to know from whence my deep-seated affection for this great organization comes, I suppose I can spell it out for you.

The Army has taught me many valuable lessons:

- *I am absolutely and undeniably important.*

Even though I may not be a unique snowflake, the Army has showed me that as a person, I am really very appreciated.

It would accept me no matter what my race, creed, religion, gender and/or (to an extent) I.Q. – kind of like daycare. And

come on now, who doesn't love daycare? I mean, there are snacks! Just like in the Army, except we call them MREs!

Thank you, Army, for the love, and the snacks.

- *Any illness I could possibly get can be cured with extra-big Motrin pills.*

Can you imagine all of the pharmaceutical expenses I will avoid after I hang up my uniform for the last time?

It makes me fairly giddy just to think about the bundles of cash I will be able to squirrel away because of all the vats of extra Motrin I will have in my possession.

Thank you, Army, for the Motrin – those 800 beautiful milligrams have changed my life.

- *There is no constant driving force except change.*

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder has become obsolete here without the use of any type of psychiatric aid, because the Army has made us all more flexible than Stretch Armstrong.

It's fun and useful to make plans, but it's even more fun and useful to change them.

Thank you, Army, for teaching me

about structure and its pliability.

The Army has given me stuff:

- *I have all kinds of matching outfits now, which I did not have before I enlisted.*

And shoes, too! It saves me so much time getting ready for work, when I don't have to agonize over whatever I shall wear.

Thank you, Army, for the gift of time, and clothes which match.

- *I have never wanted for a place to live, since I have been in the Army.*

In fact, I have gotten to live in barracks all over America! Now, I even get to live in a neat little trailer in a country *entirely separate* from America – how cool is that??

Thank you, Army, for the gift of a roof over my head, no matter where in the world that roof actually ends up being.

- *Money!*

The Army has given me all kinds of cold, hard cash in return for the important service I provide it – namely, staying alive and not going AWOL.

This shows me that I have worth.

Thank you, Army, for the gift of self-worth, and also, cash.

As anyone can see, the Army clearly rules. Can you not understand, now, why I admire it so?

The Army and I first met on a blustery day in December 2001, and ever since, I have strived to find a way to properly proclaim my utter devotion to it, voluntary or not.

Now, thanks to my job – given to me by the Army, in its infinite generosity – I have the perfect venue in which to tell all of you in Task Force Baghdad just how close I hold this organization to my heart.

I mean, if Tom Cruise can jump on Oprah's couch for Katie Holmes, I see no reason why I shouldn't proclaim my love for the Army on the printed page.

And to any cynics out there, I have one thing to say:

You're just jealous.



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Unsung Heroes

Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Grant
3rd Inf. Div. command sergeant major

Our "unsung heroes" for this issue don't take the weather for granted as most of us do. These individuals, by keeping their keen eyes skyward and monitoring computers receiving data from satellites and ground sensors, can tell you more about weather than you'd ever want to know.

The men and women of the 15th Expeditionary Air Support Operation Squadron support Task Force Baghdad by alerting commanders on daily weather conditions so they can make informed decisions.

One of the most important factors affecting combat missions is the weather, not the insurgents or terrorist activity. By giving commanders an accurate site picture of the wind, temperature, cloud coverage, visibility, fog, and smoke direction, commanders

can plan their missions accordingly and mitigate risk.

Pilots depend on the 15th EASOS to help them make mission-essential decisions based on weather probability. Flight activities are largely dependent on weather forecasts because several variables such as visibility, wind speed, altitude and rain must be taken into account.

So the next time you go outside the wire on a mission or take a flight on the Marne Express, realize we have an experienced team of Air Force meteorologists who have trained approximately two dozen Soldiers as weather observers. Together, they all watch conditions that affect every aspect of mission success.

The 3rd Infantry Division salutes the fine Air Force men and women as well as the Soldiers who look out after all our interest.

Rock of the Marne!



Air Force Sr. Airman Brandon Gorley, 15th EASOS, adjusts a dish satellite on top of Task Force Baghdad headquarters on Camp Liberty Oct. 29.

Spc. Derek Del Rosario

TF Baghdad honors fallen Soldier

Capt. Kyle Yonemura
29th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – A Task Force Baghdad Soldier was memorialized during a service as fellow Soldiers gathered to remember his life and legacy Sept. 19.

Soldiers assigned to 4th Brigade Combat Team honored the memory of Staff Sgt. Alfredo Barajas Silva at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

Silva was a forward artillery observer assigned to D Company, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment. He was killed Sept. 7 after the vehicle he was traveling in struck an improvised explosive device.

Silva joined the Army in July 1995 and served three years on active duty as a forward artillery observer. He later joined the California Army National Guard and served as a combat engineer.

In 2001, he began working as a member of California's Counter-Drug Task Force.

While training for the Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 deployment at Fort Bliss, Texas, a strong bond formed between the artillerymen and their infantry counterparts after Silva joined the team.

"We melded together when Staff Sgt. Silva joined us and he made us into a team," said Silva's close friend and platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Barker.

Silva was respected by his subordinates and leaders alike.

Though some who didn't know him well may have perceived him as having a hard exterior, fellow Soldiers said he was a generous, charismatic leader who took care of his soldiers.

"Professionalism and dedication to his guys were first and foremost in his mind," Barker said.

Capt. Raymond Hill, the fire support officer for 1st Bn., 184 Inf., said Silva was known to his buddies as "Chamuco," or "The Bogeyman," in Spanish. The nickname was a misnomer for a firm leader who tried — unsuccessfully — to hide a soft and generous heart.

"He would try to get things to give out to the kids and his team," Hill said.

"He was the first to start throwing Beanie Babies and soccer balls to the (Iraqi) kids (on patrols). He made sure every kid got something, even if it was just a pen or a pencil lying around the truck," Barker said.

"I have so many memories of Silva," he added. "He is the reason Delta Fire Support Team is such a tight team. When we first came together as Delta FIST we were a bunch of guys who got pulled from other units to fill out the detachment. Because of him, we became a team."

"Thank you, 'Chamuco.' I'm proud to have known you. I will never forget you."



Courtesy photos
Staff Sgt. Alfredo Silva's helmet, rifle, dog tags and boots are arranged in a solemn display at his memorial service Sept. 19. Inset: Task Force Baghdad Commander Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr. pays his respects to Silva at the service.

Maintaining a tradition: the origin of the 21-gun salute

www.army.mil/cmh-pg/faq/salute.htm
Special to The Marne Express

The use of gun salutes for military occasions is traced to early warriors who demonstrated their peaceful intentions by placing their weapons in a position that rendered them ineffective. Apparently this custom was universal, with the specific act varying with time and place, depending on the weapons being used. A North African tribe, for example, trailed

the points of their spears on the ground to indicate that they did not mean to be hostile.

The tradition of rendering a salute by cannon originated in the 14th century as firearms and cannons came into use. Since these early devices contained only one projectile, discharging them once rendered them ineffective. Originally, warships fired seven-gun salutes — the number seven probably selected because of its astrological and Biblical signifi-

cance. Seven planets had been identified and the phases of the moon changed every seven days. The Bible states that God rested on the seventh day after Creation, that every seventh year was sabbatical and that seven times the seventh year ushered in the Jubilee year.

Land batteries, having a greater supply of gunpowder, were able to fire three guns for every shot fired afloat, hence the salute by shore batteries was 21 guns. The multiple of three probably was chosen because of the mystical significance of the number three in many ancient civilizations. Early gunpowder, composed mainly of sodium nitrate, spoiled easily at sea, but could be kept cooler and drier in land magazines. When potassium nitrate improved the quality of gunpowder, ships at sea adopted the salute of 21 guns.

The 21-gun salute became the highest honor a nation rendered. Varying customs among the maritime powers led to confusion in saluting and return of salutes.

Great Britain, the world's preeminent sea power in the 18th and 19th centuries, compelled weaker nations to salute first, and for a time monarchies received more guns than the republics. Eventually, by agreement, the international salute was established at 21 guns, although the United States did not agree on this procedure until August 1875.

The gun salute system of the United

States has changed considerably over the years. In 1810, the "national salute" was defined by the War Department as equal to the number of states in the Union — at that time 17. This salute was fired by all U.S. military installations at 1 p.m. (later changed to noon) on Independence Day. The President also received a salute equal to the number of states whenever he visited a military installation.

In 1842, the Presidential salute was formally established at 21 guns.

In 1890, regulations designated the "national salute" as 21 guns and redesignated the traditional Independence Day salute, the "Salute to the Union," equal to the number of states. Fifty guns are also fired on all military installations equipped to do so at the close of the day of the funeral of a President, ex-President, or President-elect.

Today, the national salute of 21 guns is fired in honor of a national flag, the sovereign or chief of state of a foreign nation, a member of a reigning royal family, and the President, ex-President and President-elect of the United States. It is also fired at noon of the day of the funeral of a President, ex-President, or President-elect.

Gun salutes are also rendered to other military and civilian leaders of this and other nations.

The number of guns is based on the protocol rank. These salutes are always in odd numbers.



A firing team performs a gun salute at a memorial service.

Courtesy photo

**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.



'Beanie Babies and bullets' keep 48th BCT aware

Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th BCT PAO

LUTAFIYAH, Iraq — Soldiers patrolling the Iraqi villages of Lutafiyah, Yusufiyah and Mahmudiyah have many affectionate nicknames for their area — ranging from the Arabic “feyahs” to the English “Triangle.”

No matter what this area is called, Capt. Scott Jackels and his Soldiers simply want to call it secure and will do whatever is necessary to make that happen.

Jackels is proud of the accomplishments of his B Company, 108th Armor Battalion, 48th Brigade Combat Team Soldiers in their corner of the Triangle in Lutafiyah.

“They don’t get any days off,” he explained. “My Soldiers are outside the wire every day. Their commitment makes my job a lot easier.”

“Easier in the sense that his officers and noncommissioned

officers, like other Soldiers living in the Triangle, know their job and approach any task with purpose and spirit. This sense of duty has been integral in successfully flushing out the ‘bad guys.’

Their mission always incorporates the basics of the patrol. They make it a point to stay a step ahead with their planning and to always be aware of their surroundings. They call this approach “the Beanie Babies and bullets theory.”

It’s a tongue-in-cheek reference to the posture they must assume while working to make the local residents comfortable and safe with their constant presence.

“You can be standing outside enjoying some time playing with the kids, handing out Beanie Babies and candies,” Sgt. Ashley O’Donnell said, describing a typical scenario.

However, Soldiers must always be ready for the unexpected—which means potentially engaging the enemy.

“No matter what you may be involved in, you are always out there with a ‘lock and load’ mentality,” said O’Donnell, a gunner with B Co. “Everybody’s gotta be on their game because you don’t know what to expect from one second to the next.”

Terrorist attacks against Iraqi Security Forces only make the Lutafiyah-based Soldiers more determined to help the people in the region. The key to their success, Jackels explained, is adaptability.

“The key to staying a step ahead is to continually adapt,” he said. “What works today may not work tomorrow. However, if it didn’t work today, it may work tomorrow. Just because you’ve had success with it does not mean you have to use that technique again.”

Staff Sgt. Nicholas A. Baughman, a tactical vehicle commander for B Co., keeps a tally of the number of patrols his unit has conducted since putting



Spc. J. Tracy Smith

From his perch in an observation tower, a Soldier with B Co., 108th Armor Bn., 48th BCT keeps a watchful eye on the area surrounding the U.S. Army’s Lutafiyah-based compound.

arriving in Lutafiyah. There are more than 200 tick marks thus far.

“We know our area like the back of our hand at this point,” Baughman said. “That’s our job. We know if the slightest thing is different from the last

trip. The operational tempo has been high and it takes its toll on the Soldiers, but that doesn’t keep us from doing our job. We are successful because we work well together and can depend on each other to accomplish our mission.”

New road opens, improves life in east Baghdad district

Maj. Russ Goemaere
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD — Residents in one east Baghdad community believe a recently-opened road will have a positive impact on their local economy.

“This road will make it much easier for the people of Al Shuada south and Al Oubaidy to move between both communities,” said a smiling Sharker Rheeieh Sudan, a long-time resident and owner of a propane shop along the road. “Business will improve,” Sudan continued. “Heavy trucks will have an easier time getting to my shop for deliveries and pickups.”

The 700 meter asphalt road will impact more than 60,000 Iraqis. At a cost of approximately \$100,000, the road officially opened Oct. 19

The project was started after members of the community approached local leaders with their request.

“The people came to me and told me they needed a road,” Chalub Lazim, district chairman of the community

said. “During the rainy season, it was very hard to move between the neighborhoods.”

Lt. Col. Kevin Farrell, commander of Coalition Forces in the Tissa Nissan district, said, “The district and neighborhood councils have the interests of the people at heart with projects like this.”

This project shows how a good dialogue can result in a benefit.

“I am convinced this road will improve the economy and security situation here,” Farrell said. “People will come here and build their homes and these homeowners will bring businesses and money into the local economy, and they will want a secure environment to raise their families.”

“The plan is for the Iraqi government to provide more roads that will branch out from this one to build an even bigger and better community,” he added.

Sudan has noticed many changes since the fall of the previous regime.

“Now is better than the past,” he said. “Everyone can see the progress

happening every day. There is progress in security and services.”

New multi-million-dollar sewer and water projects are on-going in Al Shuada and Al Oubaidy as well.

The Al Shuada sewer project will run about \$2.2 million while the massive Al Oubaidy sewer and water project costs about \$14.5 million. While the small road that just opened benefits only a small amount of the population, the sewer and water projects are expected to positively impact the lives of more than 260,000 people.

Both projects are expected to be completed in early summer 2006.

Members of the sewer work crew in Al Shuada feel very good about what they are doing for their community.

“The people are very happy,” many workers said in unison, as they took a short break to talk to BBC reporter Hugh Sykes who was visiting the area Oct. 20.

“We only had gutters and channels to take the sewage out into the street. This project will change everything,” said Mr. Alla, a resident and worker who has lived there since 1997.

“It has taken 30 years for projects like these to come to the people in these areas,” Lt. Col. Jamie Gayton, commander of 2/3 Brigade Troops Battalion said. Gayton is also the primary essential service project manager in east Baghdad. “(Coalition Forces) are here to support the Iraqi government as it gets stronger and can coordinate and execute these projects on its own.”

The Al Shuada project is being completed by Iraqi engineers using local neighborhood labor following designs created and approved by Iraqis at the Baghdad Sewer Authority. The projects have collectively employed more than 120 Iraqi laborers.

Gayton held an informal discussion with the Iraqi workers and some of the residents in Al Shuada to gauge how the projects are benefiting the community and to remind them that they need to talk to their local government leaders about what additional projects are needed in the future.

All projects go through the Iraqi Amanant municipal management offices for development, he said.



Photos by Maj. Russ Goemaere

Alla, a resident of Al Shuada and worker on his community’s \$2.2 million sewer and water project, stands next to new pipes. “We only had gutters and channels to take the sewage out into the street. This project will change everything,” he said.

“When we see progress and the Iraqi workers doing such a good job we are all encouraged,” said Abdel Karim, a government employee and resident of Al Shuada.

The Iraqis seemed pleased by the visit by Gayton and the BBC reporter, but one worker who was focused on the job politely told the visitors the interview needed to wrap up. “You are in our way; please leave so we can get back to work,” Alla said with a smile.



The Al Shuada sewer project will run about \$2.2 million while the massive Al Oubaidy sewer and water project will cost about \$14.5 million. The sewer and water projects are expected to positively affect the lives of more than 260,000 people, and are set to be completed by summer 2006.



Learning to fly ...

Spc. Jennifer D. Atkinson

Chief Warrant Officer Troy A. DeGolyer, A Co., Avn. (Attack Reconnaissance), watches a bank of monitors during an instrument evaluation flight on the Longbow Crew Trainer.

Helo simulators give pilots feel for real thing

Spc. Jennifer D. Atkinson
Avn. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The view outside the Apache cockpit is a smooth dusty gray, obscuring the trees and ground below and any dangers that might be lurking to either side.

The pilot trades information back and forth with the airfield approach tower, relying on instrument readings to settle gently on the landing strip materializing below the aircraft as it descends through the heavy clouds.

As the aircraft begins to roll down the taxiway, lights come up and the "airfield" disappears as screens surrounding

two Apache cockpit mock-ups go blank. Two men at a bank of computer monitors remove headsets and begin to discuss the "flight."

Since Camp Taji's weather and mission requirements don't always cooperate with training schedules, Task Force Baghdad pilots use one of the two Longbow Crew Trainers to maintain perishable skills like instrument flying, and to enhance and improve upon their combat tactics.

One "box," as it's called, is used by 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack Reconnaissance), while the other is used by 3rd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment (Attack

Reconnaissance).

The LCT is a state-of-the-art mobile aircraft simulator featuring two linked cockpits surrounded by display screens. Each cockpit is an exact replica of its counterpart in the aircraft itself, with one front and one rear seat.

Although the LCT is used on several Army posts in the United States, this is the first time the system has been deployed to a combat environment.

With so many aircraft on the flightline, having a simulator on the ground might seem pointless, said Robert D. Welch, an LCT operator, but it allows pilots to rack up valu-

able hours of training.

A former Apache pilot for 15 years, Welch brings aviation and technical know-how to the LCT training.

"It's a good place to practice emergency procedures since everyone walks away from the simulator," he said.

LCT operators can position an aircraft anywhere in the sky or on the ground, and implement an in-flight "emergency," prompting pilots to react and go through established procedures.

After the emergency has been dealt with, pilots can analyze what went right or wrong, then get back in the cockpit and go through the scenario again.

"You can practice some of the harder emergency procedures without endangering anyone," Warrant Officer Benjamin Cuevas, A Company, 1/3 ARB said.

During an emergency, "pilots have to be able to recover and get into the clear," said Chief Warrant Officer Johnny Bower, B Company, 3/3 ARB.

Being able to practice in realistic situations instead of just talking about them helps develop necessary skills, said Cuevas, adding, "If the helicopter doesn't want to fly anymore, what are you going to do with no practical experience?"

The linked cockpits enable the pilots to communicate with each other the same way they would in the aircraft, said Bowers, "allowing pilots to react, both as individuals and as a crew."

Emergency procedures aren't the only training conducted in the LCT.

"The LCT allows us to teach and evaluate aviators as per the training manual," Bower said.

Allowing pilots to link the simulators creates more realism in drills, he said, letting pilots learn visual cues from each other that help accomplish the Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 mission.

Gunnery drills are also practiced in the simulator, said Bower. His goal is to train pilots to "fly without concentrating on the art of flying itself so they can concentrate on gunnery," he said.

"It's the fast and steady gun that wins the fight," he added.

For instrument training, the LCT is the preferred method, said Chief Warrant Officer Troy A. DeGolyer, A Co. 3/3 ARB. The LCT allows pilots to experience a variety of weather conditions on demand, something nature isn't always willing to do.

After initial flight qualification, the simulator also allows pilots to conduct sustainment training, and refreshers for lapsed qualifications.

The simulator also allows for a rapid "mission" turnaround, since the console operator can just restart the computer program instead of having to wait for the pilot to reposition the aircraft, said Welch. Along with a quick reset, the simulator is considerably less expensive to run compared to the Apache, he said.

The biggest challenge to keeping the LCT flying high is the brutal heat four months out of the year, said site manager Joe M. Fraley.

The LCT can be packed up for transportation by either truck or plane, said Fraley. Once on the ground, a crew of four or five technicians can get the box up and running in about two weeks.

The LCT is a better training tool than some previous flight simulators housed in permanent structures, said DeGolyer, since "we're able to bring it pretty much anywhere."

All the training lets pilots help the guys on the ground, he said, and "that's what it's all about."

"Our mission here is to find ... and destroy the enemy, and this training lets pilots hone those skills," Bowers said.

Network operators get 2nd BCT Soldiers plugged into cyberspace

Staff Sgt. Craig Zentkovich
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Even in the midst of combat operations in Baghdad, Soldiers are able to plug into cyberspace with the help of satellites, on-the-ground equipment and technical know-how.

Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, Network Operations Center at Camp Loyalty keep units, commanders and Soldiers up to date on what's going on in their battle space, back home and throughout the world.

"Our job is to make sure all distant nodes (or camps) stay connected at all times," Maj. Curtis Geiger, the 2nd BCT network administrator said.

Those nodes include six locations spread over approximately 200 square kilometers, encompassing nearly 1,100 users or pieces of equipment monitored by the operations center.

From the time NETOPS troops touched down in Baghdad, they had their work cut out for them.

"When we got (to Iraq), we hit the ground running," Geiger said. "We had to build a complete automation network from scratch – from network routers and lines to components. It took us about 30 days working 20- to 22-hour days to get

the system up and running."

The connectivity depends on a new piece of equipment that 2nd BCT is the first to put in place – the Joint

Network Node. The JNN is a centralized network hub, located at BCT headquarters, that uses line-of-sight and satellite communications technology.

Because the JNN is new to the brigade, Soldiers received extensive training from independent contractors, subject-matter experts, using JNN. Each NETOPS Soldier from A Company, 2nd Brigade Troops Battalion has knowledge of the system and plays a critical role in maintaining the network.

NETOPS Soldiers also use a multitude of software programs which track potential problems all the way down to an individual router port.

"If anything pops up, we have a trained technician who goes out (to the JNN hub) and troubleshoots the problem," Staff Sgt. Andy Oates, A Co., 2/3 BTB, NETOPS frequency manager said.

"From commanders speaking to one another to Soldiers using the Internet café, everyone benefits."

Chief Warrant Officer Daryl Rounds
A Co., 2/3 BTB network manager

"Fortunately, we have a lot of (Soldiers) who are well-trained and get it right the first time."

The JNN hub itself is sheltered and fits on the back of a humvee. It handles fiber-optic cables and standard network cables through a series of routers which, according to Oates, "makes it much easier to get both voice and computer data faster."

Before JNN, BCT level units used only line-of-site and frequency modulation technology to communicate with other each other and higher headquarters. The advantages of the system are obvious to everyone affected by the new technology, Chief Warrant Officer Daryl Rounds, A Co., 2/3 BTB network manager said.

"There's a substantial amount of bandwidth with this system, which leads to increased service," Rounds said. "From commanders speaking to one another to Soldiers using the internet café, everyone benefits."

Prior to the 3rd Infantry Division's ini-

tial assault into Iraq in March 2003, the brigade's battlefield planning was limited to radio communications, butcher block paper and paper maps in the tactical operations center.

"We are now more than half-way through our tour, and the brigade (tactical operations center) is able to do all the same things as before, but it's all automated and digitized," Geiger said.

The most noticeable difference is the Command Post of the Future, an independent server which connects BCTs and higher headquarters with each other. It utilizes an interactive program which allows users to view identical maps, graphics and pieces of information on a computer monitor in real time.

For example, when a commander briefs a specific event over the radio, he can simultaneously open a map and highlight, with a digital marker, the specific location on the map where the event occurred. All units online using CPOF will view the commander's marking of the area on the same map at the same time.

"CPOF exposed the entire battle space to the commanders ... and they're pleased with its capabilities," said Rounds.

Liberty cooks carve food sculptures

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – This Thanksgiving, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers dining at the Rock of the Marne Sports Oasis can expect to see a three-foot-tall turkey.

While the turkey won't be edible, it will surely catch the eyes of the Soldiers enjoying their holiday meal at this military camp on the outskirts of Baghdad.

The food sculpture of a large turkey, along with many other large sculptures such as Native Americans and cornucopias, will be featured at the Thanksgiving feast. These, and many other carved-food creations featured in the dining facility throughout the year, are the works of civilian contractors and Soldiers of the Fort Stewart culinary arts team who are now showcasing their talents here at Liberty.

Sgt. Onica P. Branche, a Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company food specialist, said making food appealing to the eye is the team's goal.

"We ensure the quality of the food, but we are also the ones who enhance the food," she explained. "Basically, we make it look good."

One of the more experienced team members is culinary artist Sgt. 1st Class Preston Lee Slayton, HHSC

platoon leader. With 22 years of culinary art experience behind him, Slayton splits his time between his platoon duties and his job in the kitchen.

"It's a big difference. They are two totally different worlds. Here in the kitchen, I get to really showcase my artistic skills," Slayton said. "I've had six years of art in school, so it comes natural to me. If I can picture it, I can draw it with icing."

Slayton is certified by the Culinary Federation Campaign, which testifies to his proficiency and allows him to teach culinary artistry to others. He was also Fort Stewart's Chef of the Year in 2004.

Slayton had a hand in helping to prepare the three-foot-tall chocolate sculpture of the 3rd Infantry Division's mascot, Rocky the bulldog. The massive brown watchdog has been the centerpiece of the Camp Liberty dining facility since the beginning of the division's deployment earlier this year.

Slayton's crowning achievement, however, was a five-foot-long bread sculpture of the White House, a three-month project that earned him a gold medal in the Army's Culinary Arts Competition at Fort Lee in 1992.

Spc. Jarrod Marshall, another HHSC culinary arts team member, often relies on the expertise that Slayton has

to offer. Marshall said he sees Slayton as a mentor who has a lot to offer in the culinary arts field, one whose guidance helped Marshall win a first-place finish at the Fort Stewart 2004 Culinary Arts Show for his ice sculpture of a two-foot-tall globe.

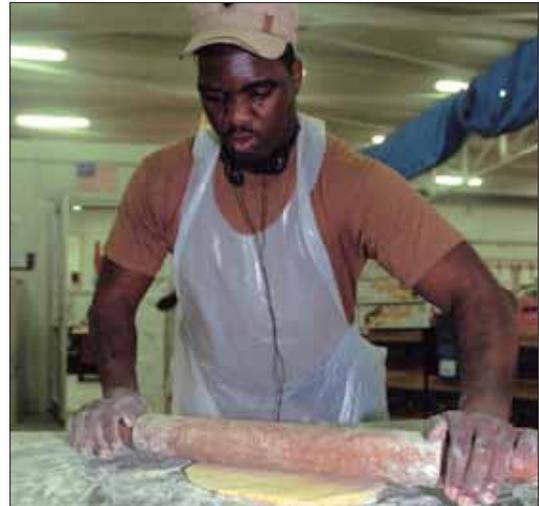
"This work takes a lot of patience. (Slayton) has taught me a lot, he knows what he's doing," Marshall said. "He has really helped me develop my skills, whether it is preparing icing or making dough from scratch."

Marshall is not the only one who has been recognized for his work while under Slayton's tutelage. Branche received two medals during the culinary arts show for her presentation of small, layered cakes known as petit fours. "I learned everything I know from Sgt. 1st Class Slayton," she said.

Slayton said his interest in cooking started at a young age, much like the other members of the team. Growing up, the duty of cooking the family meal rotated between him and his siblings. He developed his abilities even further when he took home economics in high school.

Now as a cook in the Army, he is feeding a new crowd but still remains grounded to the family dynamic he grew up with.

"(My family) is the reason I do this job," he said. "Their



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Spc. Jarrod Marshall, HHSC, STB, 3rd Inf. Div., rolls the dough for a horn-of-plenty sculpture, one of many artistic food creations that will be featured during the Thanksgiving meal, at the Camp Liberty dining facility Oct. 19.

security is very important to me. They have given me the support, and I couldn't do it without them."

In addition to the initial training each food service specialist goes through soon after entering the Army, members of the culinary arts team completed a month-long class on advanced cooking and food decoration.

Being part of the team is something Branche said she started to enjoy once she began

training and getting hands-on experience. She said she has a great passion for her job, something she feels is essential for members of the team.

"Being able to put out something that looks good is the most gratifying part of the job," Branche said. "This job has shown me that no matter how hard a job or project might be, you have to be dedicated and put time into it. If you put your mind to it, it can be done."

4th BCT equipment donations help Iraqi children chase soccer dreams

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – In Iraq, \$10 can buy a lot of goodwill.

Just ask Soldiers from 4th Brigade Combat Team who regularly give Iraqi children soccer balls they receive from U.S. donors.

"If someone feels good about giving us 10 soccer balls, and we go out



An Iraqi child sharpens his soccer skills at Chapa Stadium Oct. 10.

on a patrol and make 10 friends and a favorable impression with the families and children ... that's a \$10 investment that has a priceless payoff," said 1st Sgt. Mark Barnes of B Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment.

The regiment went a step further by delivering more than 140 boxes of soccer and office equipment to a soccer league Oct. 10.

As Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers unloaded the supplies at the stadium, hundreds of Iraqi children practiced soccer on the green field under the watchful eyes of their coaches.

League founder Amu Baba said when they first started the league the field was in terrible condition, but he and the coaches worked to get it back into shape.

There are 350 children, ages 6 to 14, in the camp and the goal is to prepare them to represent Iraq on national teams. The children come from all over Baghdad to participate in the league.

"Soccer gives these kids hope," Barnes said. "Every one of these kids dreams of playing soccer professionally or playing on the Iraqi national team."

But there are other benefits to the kids being part of the soccer league.

"I think that if they are able to have a successful sports league and the children are able to experience the same type of happiness and healthy competition that we do in the United States, it's healthy for their families and communities. The children will grow up healthy and competitive," Barnes said.

Baba, often called the Pele of Iraq,



Photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Iraqi children play practice games at Chapa Stadium.

feels this is the way to bring the children of Iraq to peace and help teach them to be good and keep them off the streets.

More than \$30,000 worth of supplies has been donated by businesses and organizations in the U.S. as part of a continual stream of donations from concerned citizens, Barnes said.

"The support is fantastic," he said. "It's been my experience everywhere ... there is all kinds of support for this. People want to do what they can do, and they see this as a means to be able to do something."

Barnes explained that his company has received a lot of support from his hometown, companies and private organizations all over the country, and he and his Soldiers want to show the people of Iraq that they care about their security and their children.

"My company is an infantry company, and we have sectors that we patrol. If the situation allows it, we will take some soccer balls with us and pass them out to the kids," Barnes said.

This is the best way for the Americans to see the children, Baba said. If a Soldier gives them a ball, they will be happy and tell their mother and father that this ball is from Americans.

"Soccer is an international language," Barnes said. "Come out here and kick a soccer ball around and you can make a whole bunch of friends at one time. These kids are going to grow up and have opinions. Their thoughts are going to be shaped by their experiences and hopefully they will have happy memories of Americans."

BUSTED!

IA Soldiers raid bomb-making factory



Press Release
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – An Iraqi Army raid on a bomb-making factory in Baghdad resulted in the detention of 10 suspected terrorists Oct. 20.

The 10 suspects were working in the facility when they were detained. They are now being processed by the Iraqi judicial system.

The Iraqi Army set up an outer cordon around the building and launched the raid at midday. Within minutes, the entire building had been searched and cleared by the Iraqi Army forces.

Task Force Baghdad Soldiers then entered the cleared building and identified a truckload of materials used to make improvised explosive devices.

An explosive ordnance disposal team followed and ensured it was safe to remove all the materials.

“The Iraqi Army appeared very confident in the execution of this mission,” said 1st Lt. Lauren Rowe, a military police officer with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. “They acted very professionally and took ownership of the operation. U.S. forces remained in the background while the IA cleared the building.”

The IA developed the intelligence on the target and planned the operation.

“This operation shows that there are still caches to be discovered. We need the help of the Iraqi people to turn in suspects,” Rowe said.

“These materials could easily have been used by the terrorists to kill innocent Iraqi civilians,” added Maj. Russ Goemaere, spokesperson for 2nd BCT. “The people of Baghdad need to feel a sense of pride that their army is performing so well and making the city safer for all of them.”



Courtesy photos

Top: A Task Force Baghdad Soldier holds up a triggering mechanism for a potential improvised explosive device.

Above: Iraqi Army Soldiers found boxes, bags and shelves filled with bomb-making materials during a midday raid on a factory in Baghdad Oct. 20.

1/71 Cav. praises smooth referendum operations for Khadamiyah area voters

Capt. Marc Pelini
1/10th Mtn. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Since Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, took over operations in the Khadamiyah district in western Baghdad Sept. 10, they’ve been conducting patrols every day to contribute to the security of Iraq.

When they set out Oct. 15, it was not much different than any other day to them, but for the Iraqi people, it marked a significant milestone.

“It was great to see the Iraqis get the chance to express their opinions,” said Pfc. Francesco Borsellino, of B Troop, 1/71 Cav. “The Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police displayed themselves professionally and were well disciplined. Their performance was excellent.”

Pfc. Warren Lewis, also of B Troop, 1/71 Cav., attributed the performance of the Iraqi Security Forces to “all their hard work and dedication.”

He said the day of the referendum was “a memorable time” in his life and could be “a turning point” in history.

“It feels great to see the Iraqi people get the freedoms they

have been denied for so many years,” said Borsellino, as he came off of a security patrol the evening of the voting. “Any step toward democracy is a step in the right direction.”

“We take these freedoms for granted in the U.S.,” said B Trp.’s Sgt. Andrew Kisz. “It is uplifting to see that a regular practice to us, such as voting, brings the Iraqi people so much enjoyment.”

“The performance of the Iraqi Security Forces was no different than my previous encounters with them,” he added. “Today, they were setting up a perimeter around the polling sites. They were disciplined and focused on the mission at hand.”

ISF took the lead in securing polling sites while Coalition Forces played a backup role in assisting with outer perimeter security.

“Seeing all the Iraqi Forces coming together for a common goal was a good indication of how well they are coming along,” Kisz said. “It is very rewarding to see democracy in action in a country that has been denied such freedoms for such a long time.”

10th Mtn. troops call historic voting day ‘great experience’

Capt. Marc Pelini
1/10th Mtn. PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division witnessed history as Iraqi citizens headed to the polls to vote on the Constitutional Referendum Oct. 15.

Security was tight as Iraqi Army Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army Brigade and Iraqi Police from the Abu Ghraib district manned polling sites in west Baghdad.

After weeks of preparation, the referendum voting was carried out without any serious attacks in west Baghdad during the voting period.

“From what I saw of the Iraqi Security Forces, they did a pretty good job of keeping the elections secure,” said Spc. Brandon Castleberry, of 1st BCT’s 1st Squadron, 11th

Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Terrorist organizations tried to hamper the voters’ enthusiasm on the morning of the referendum by posting threats instructing people not to participate at one of the polling sites.

to be a part of this event,” 1st Lt. Wesley Willard, a platoon leader with F Troop, 1/11th ACR said “It makes me feel as if we helped the democratic process and the Iraqi people are taking charge of their government and responsibility for their future.”

“(Being a part of this event) makes me feel as if we helped the democratic process and the Iraqi people are taking charge of their government and responsibility for their future.”

1st Lt. Wesley Willard
F Trp., 1/11th ACR

In preparation for the elections, the 2nd Bn., 3rd IA Bde., and the 1/11th ACR conducted several combat raids and searches in the days leading up to the referendum and detained terrorists who were planning to derail the process.

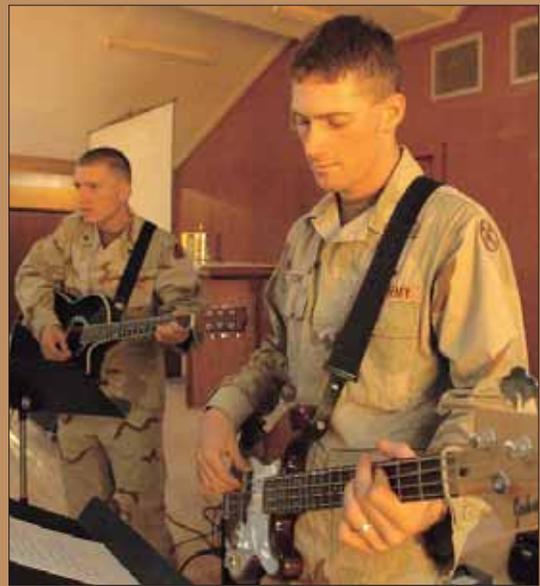
“In the last month, we have detained more than 100 suspected terrorists; disrupting their ability to plan, resource and conduct coordinated attacks against the polling sites,” Capt. Jason Brown, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1/11th ACR said. “The Iraqi Army had a significant contribution in gaining information from the people.”

This particular site, however, had the largest turnout of the eight polling stations in the area.

The unexpectedly high number of voter turnout forced two polling sites to temporarily close in order to receive more ballots from the central distribution facility in central Baghdad.

“It was a great experience

Make a joyful noise



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Above: The contemporary protestant service praise band sing and make joyful music at Camp Liberty's Division Chapel Oct. 2
 Right: Sgt. Jason Moore, 612th Engineer Company (foreground) lays down the rhythm for the contemporary Protestant service praise band on bass guitar as Sgt. Ryan LaBar, 1st Detachment, 3rd Signal Company, accompanies him on acoustic guitar for the morning worship service.

Siblings in separate divisions reunite at Camp Liberty

Pfc. Jason Jordan
 1st BCT PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Out of all the things they leave in the States, Soldiers deployed to Iraq often miss family back home the most.

Although the living conditions in this country are improving and the improvements are good for morale, nothing can replace the empty feeling of being away from loved ones.

For Pfc. Crystal Duffy and Cpl. Michael Duffy some of that emptiness was filled recently when the two siblings were united. Michael Duffy, 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, had been in Iraq for nearly

eight months before he heard his unit was going to be attached to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, arriving in August.

He and his sister Crystal, already a 1st BCT Soldier, would soon be working close to one another.

"It's great having my little sister here with me," Michael said. "It's like we are in high school again."

The two Soldiers said their family is a bunch of "adrenaline-junkies," always looking for something exciting.

"I love the adrenaline rush; my brother and sister and even my mother, are the same way," Michael said. He added, "(Our mother) has wanted to join the Army Reserves for a long time, and she

really wants to now that two of her babies are in Iraq."

Although the two do not have many opportunities to hang out due to different missions, they visit as often as they can and enjoy their time spent together.

"I love it when we can get together," Crystal said. "We just sit and reminisce about old times. We talk about the games we played on each other growing up, and the things we would like to do in the future."

Michael's stay in the country is nearly over, and Crystal's is just beginning.

Even though the year has been long for him and will be for her as well, the two have at least found a brief comfort in each other.



Courtesy photo

Corp. Michael Duffy and Pfc. Crystal Duffy, stand with their arms around one another. The two were recently united in Iraq when his unit (1/11th ACR), was attached to her incoming unit (1/10 Mtn.).

Shared experiences build stronger family bond for mother and son

Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo
 42nd Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Tikrit, Iraq – It is not uncommon for parents and their children to serve together in the National Guard.

However, it is unusual for a mother and son to be serving together in a combat theater.

For Chief Warrant Officer 3 Tammy Kostoff and her 22-year-old son Lauren, it was just the natural progression of serv-



Courtesy photo

Spc. Lauren Kostoff and Chief Warrant Officer Tammy Kostoff spend time together during a visit at FOB Warrior, Iraq.

ice to their country.

Both Soldiers are full time employees and members of the Montana Army National Guard. Chief Kostoff joined the National Guard in 1990 and Spc. Lauren Kostoff, 1st Battalion, 163rd Armor Regiment, followed in 2000 when he enlisted in the Montana National Guard as a cavalry scout.

When Lauren received deployment orders in 2004 for Operation Iraqi Freedom, Chief Kostoff volunteered to deploy with the 116th Brigade Combat Team as their resource manager.

"I volunteered knowing that my son was deploying and because I wanted to do my part in this effort," Chief Kostoff said.

Upon arrival in Tikrit, Iraq, she was assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division as a budget officer.

She took on the responsibility of overseeing three primary funding projects: the Commanders Emergency Relief Fund, the rewards for information program and the Iraqi Army fund program, earning her a

Bronze Star Medal for exceptional meritorious service throughout the deployment.

Chief Kostoff has spent most of her deployment at FOB Danger, some 70 miles away from her son, who is stationed at FOB Warrior.

They both may be in north-central Iraq, but their duties have limited the amount of time they have spent together.

Once, they were on a combat patrol together when the younger Kostoff's unit transported Soldiers to inspect schools built in the Kirkuk area. They also traveled home together this summer on leave.

"Being on patrol with my son was amazing. I never really knew exactly what he did until I experienced it first hand. I am so proud of him," Chief Kostoff said.

"I was nervous taking my mom along with us on a combat patrol because of the danger," Lauren said. "You never know what might happen, and fortunately, it went really well."

While traveling home on leave, the Kostoffs received a lot of strange looks and even

more questions as they walked through the airport wearing the same name tags.

Lauren said it was really neat to be coming home from a combat zone with his mom by his side. The duo was greeted at the airport by their entire family.

Lauren has seen a great deal since arriving in Iraq last December.

As a humvee driver and gunner, the junior Kostoff has been awarded the Combat Infantry Badge for action during Iraq's historic election in January when his platoon was attacked maintaining security at polling sites in Ba'qubah.

After completing the 40-hour security mission, his platoon was returning to the base when their vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device and small arms fire from insurgents.

"Lauren's an adult, but I'm still a mom so I worry constantly. Being here helps because I have a better knowledge of what's going on, as opposed to being at home, wondering," said Chief Kostoff.

For the younger Kostoff, he

takes the good-natured ribbing from his fellow Soldiers with a smile.

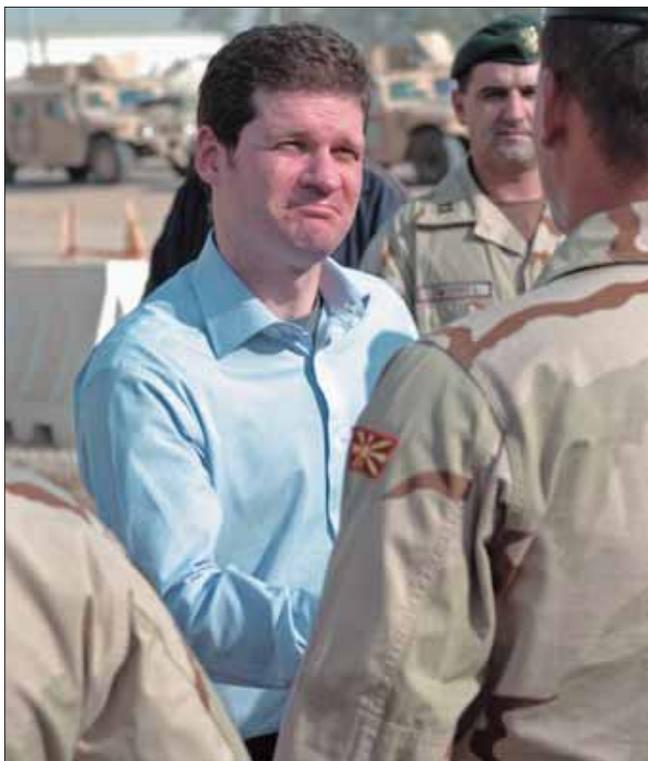
"I get picked on because my mom is over here to protect me, but I'm very proud to say that my mother is in the same combat zone as I am in," said Lauren. "It's a good feeling, being so far away from home and still having your mom so close to take care of you."

"We have always been very close, but this deployment has brought us even closer after sharing this unique opportunity," both mother and son said.

When the deployment ends, both will return home and to the Montana National Guard, where Lauren will attend school, and mom will return to her duties as a deputy financial manager for the Guard's United States Property and Fiscal Office.

"It's really nice that my mom and I can talk together about Iraq and the experiences we have had here. It's really hard to talk to just anyone about what has happened over the last year because they don't know what it is like over here in Iraq," Lauren said.

Macedonia Defense Minister visits his troops in Iraq



Sgt. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Macedonian Rangers stood in formation and proudly displayed their nation’s red-and-gold flag during a special visit from Defense Minister Jovan Manasijevski Oct. 11.

The Defense Minister, accompanied by Maj. Gen. Miroslav Stojanovski, the senior officer of the Macedonian Armed Forces, spoke to the Soldiers, toured the Macedonian living quarters and discussed military issues with American officers of 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

“This is a special day for us,” Manasijevski said. “We are celebrating with our troops our national holiday of liberation from the Germans in 1944.”

Manasijevski said his country was the only one in Europe to liberate itself from the Germans with native troops and that the Macedonian Rangers serving in Iraq are continuing a legacy of freedom fighting.

He said service in Iraq

was “a unique opportunity in the process of shaping our armed forces.”

The Republic of Macedonia is a nation in southeastern Europe, north of Greece and west of Bulgaria. Most Americans know it as the birthplace of Alexander the Great.

Manasijevski said his

2003 and asked to work with them again during this tour.

He added that the Ranger Platoon is a very professional, disciplined unit and has contributed greatly to his unit’s operations northwest of Baghdad.

Stojanovski, chief of staff of Macedonia’s Army and part of the group of officials who visited Camp Taji, told his Soldiers he has received feedback from American officers about the professionalism and skill of the Macedonian Rangers.

Officials brought the Rangers a special guest from their native land: Aleksandra Pileva, a well-known Macedonian singer. Pileva performed with the 3rd Infantry Division “Fokus Band.”

She entertained the troops with an emotional rendition of the Macedonian national anthem and then sang American pop songs.

After the concert, Soldiers spoke with reporters from their home country, allowing them to send messages to their families hundreds of miles away.

“This is a special day for us. We are celebrating ... our national holiday of liberation from the Germans in 1944.”

Jovan Manasijevski
Macedonia Defense Minister

Jovan Manasijevski, Macedonian Minister of Defense, greets one of his Soldiers during a visit Oct. 11. A platoon of Macedonian Rangers works with 70th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division at Taji.

Sgt. Matthew Wester

48th BCT Soldiers see justice served in Iraqi courts

Staff Sgt. Britt Smith
48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRYKER, Iraq – Task Force Baghdad’s 48th Brigade Combat Team continues playing a role in seeing terror suspects tried in Iraq’s judicial system.

The Georgia National Guard brigade recently recommended a suspected terrorist to a three-judge panel for sentencing in the Central Criminal Court of Iraq.

The suspect was caught with bomb-making material and is suspected of planting roadside bombs against

Coalition Forces.

The recommendation for trial means the presented evidence was solid enough for a judge to forward the case to the panel for sentencing in the near future.

This first step is much more than just getting a “bad guy” off the street where he will not be able to harm Iraqi citizens and Soldiers.

It is also a testament to 48th BCT Soldiers that the system works and their mission to capture terrorists will continue to pay-off.

“It shows us the system works and that (terrorists) will pay a price for

what they do,” said Capt. Robert McCullers, 48th BCT, the deputy staff judge advocate.

In order to get a conviction before the three-judge panel, evidence must be presented along with credible witness testimony. Photographs are also crucial to the process.

McCullers said success comes from the details. “Our part is putting together good packets that include good evidence and to prepare good witness statements.”

Seeing justice done affects more than Coalition Soldiers – it also creates a level of trust from the citizens of Iraq.

“Citizens of Iraq have a greater trust in the court system than any other government agency,” McCullers said. “It’s part of our mission to reinforce and encourage their understanding of the rule of law.”

Staff Sgt. Nicholas Baughman, B Company, 108th Armor Battalion was one of the Soldiers who testified against the defendant.

“It was rewarding. We caught a guy in the process of doing bad things ... (and we were able to) testify against someone who conducts improvised explosive device strikes against Soldiers,” Baughman said.

In the overall scheme of things, one conviction for criminal activity does not seem like much, but for a country making progress toward establishing freedom for its citizens, each guilty verdict builds on another, noted Maj. Jon Turner, 48th BCT, staff judge advocate.

“Anytime we can get a criminal conviction, it’s a great thing,” Turner said. “It’s a step in the right direction.”

“We want to build many more cases before we leave,” he added.

“It shows us the system works and that (terrorists) will pay a price for what they do.”

Capt. Robert McCullers
48th BCT deputy staff judge advocate



Soldiers kill terrorists after drive-by shootings

Press Release

1/10th Mtn. PAO

BAGHDAD – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers killed three terrorists connected with drive-by shooting attacks and detained an additional suspect Oct. 25.

The terrorists, driving a white sedan, were suspected of several small-arms fire attacks on U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces occurring over the last few days.

Around noon Oct. 25, an Iraqi Police van transporting prisoners to the Abu

Ghraib detention facility came under small-arms fire in the Ghazaliyah neighborhood.

The bus veered off the road and rolled onto its side. One guard was killed in the attack, five were wounded and at least two prisoners were wounded.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division responded to treat and evacuate the wounded.

Iraqi Police spotted the white sedan

with four occupants wearing black masks fleeing the scene of attack.

The white vehicle and its occupants were spotted again about an hour later when they fired on Iraqi Army forces near the same area.

Three hours later in the Khadra neighborhood, Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry and 1/87 Inf. spotted these terrorists again and gave chase.

The terrorists responded with gunfire and a firefight broke out which resulted

in the killing of two terrorists and the wounding of a third, who was immediately transported to a military medical treatment facility, where he later died from his wounds.

A fourth terrorist was detained.

Soldiers discovered three AK-47 assault rifles, one Romanian machine gun, one 9-millimeter pistol, one fragmentary grenade, 12 AK-47 magazines loaded with ammunition, and more than 150 rounds of linked machine-gun ammunition in the vehicle.

Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers bring food, water to needy families

Spc. Ben Brody

2nd BCT PAO

SEVEN PALACES, Iraq – Iraqi Army troops, in coordination with U.S. Soldiers from 448th Civil Affairs Battalion, distributed food and water to residents of Seven Palaces in

north Baghdad Oct. 26.

Soldiers from 2nd Iraqi Army Brigade passed out 1,200 Halal-certified food rations and 1,200 1.5-liter bottles of water that had been stockpiled as a contingency against possible violence on the day Iraqis voted on the

Constitutional Referendum.

Since the Oct. 15 Referendum went smoothly, Iraqi Army Sgt. Maj. Nameer Mohammed said he felt the food should go to needy families in Baghdad.

"The people feel happy when we come to their neigh-

borhoods, because we often give away food to the poor," Mohammed said. "It is good training for the Soldiers and they learn to organize the crowds that arrive."

Seven Palaces is a poor area that was once farmland but is now home to many people who came to Baghdad seeking work, but can't afford to live downtown.

Its name is a tongue-in-cheek term from the area's farming days when there were only seven small houses in the neighborhood, said Iraqi Army Warrant Officer Abdul Razak.

"We are working for one goal — to build the army that will protect and free Iraq," Razak said. "It will take time, but we are building the confidence of the people every day."

Razak, a former Iraqi Army sergeant major, said he was imprisoned at Abu Ghraib for five years under Saddam Hussein's regime for speaking out against the dictator.

He was liberated in 2003 by U.S. forces.

As the Iraqi Soldiers rolled into town, a crowd quickly assembled around the trucks carrying bottled water and Halal rations, and residents eagerly carted away the donations.

"Civil military operations like this are relatively new to the Iraqi Army, but they're picking it up quickly and see the importance of assisting their people," said Capt. Roger Miick, 448th Civil Affairs Battalion. "They're still fighting a battle against insurgents, but they know it's important to do what they can to help."

Miick observed the humanitarian aid drop to both assess the Iraqi Army's performance and determine residents' additional needs.

"Everyone wants shoes, winter clothes and blankets as soon as we can get them," said Capt. Michelle Dyarman, a team leader with 448th CA Bn. "We have hundreds of kerosene heaters to distribute, but we need to line up a consistent supplier of fuel with the Ministry of Oil first."

After receiving a kiss on the cheek from a little girl who had her arms full of donated food and water, Dyarman said the mission was a big success.

"This is the best humanitarian assistance drop yet — the Iraqi Army did a great job," Dyarman said. "People are happy to see us and really appreciate what the troops are doing."



Spc. Ben Brody

Residents of Seven Palaces line up as 2nd IA Bde. Soldiers distribute food and water during a humanitarian aid mission Oct. 26. U.S. troops from 448th CA Bn. worked alongside the IA Soldiers.

1st BCT mechanics wrench their way to a successful deployment

Pfc. Joshua R. Ford

MNC-1 PAO

When it comes to servicing and repairing military vehicles, mechanics with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division have worked hard to maintain high standards.

"We drop engines, replace parts, and do oil changes. Whatever a vehicle needs to have done, we do it," said Staff Sgt. Richard W. David, motor sergeant, A Company, 1st Brigade Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div.

"Most of the time we work on humvees, but we also work on Bradleys (Fighting Vehicles), generators and large motorized transport vehicles," David said.

"In the 11 months we have been here, not one of our vehicles has broken down outside the wire," Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jay Bowen, battalion maintenance warrant officer, 1/3 BTB said.

"Our quality assurance and quality control program has prevented a lot of major problems including vehicles breaking down outside the forward operating bases," David said.

The QAQC program occurs every

Friday when mechanics from 3rd BTB and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team inspect, clean and work on each vehicle or generator within the motor pool to ensure everything works properly.

The purpose of QAQC is to locate problems on the vehicles and fix those problems before they escalate into something catastrophic.

"The program helped us during the Forward Operating Base Dagger closure because at that time, we had to move everything from Dagger to FOB Speicher. It was essential that every piece of equipment was operational," 1st Lt. Timothy Tomes, motor pool executive officer, A Co. said.

QAQC isn't the only time the mechanics repair equipment. Tomes said it doesn't matter what time of the day it is, they have to repair it and put the equipment back into an operational status. When something breaks, they repair it or tow it back so it can be repaired, day or night.

The mechanics are occasionally required to go on missions outside the wire.

"Our week varies as far as mission

requirements go. Sometimes the command needs our Soldiers on missions, such as patrols or logistic convoys, but for the most part, there is a set schedule," Tomes said.

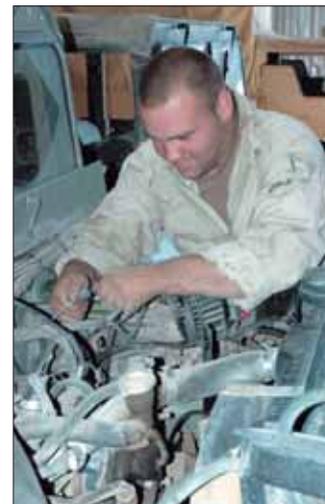
"We get up every morning and have physical training, conduct personal hygiene and then have a meeting on what we need to work on that day. We get that work done," David added.

David said the mechanics' work is tough, and if it weren't for the teamwork from all the troops in the maintenance shop, the mission would not be completed.

"The mission is being accomplished," Tomes said. "There is nothing we go out to do, that we can't accomplish. The morale of the men is high."

Tomes added that all of their missions have gone very well because their equipment is well maintained and the motor pool Soldiers know what they are doing.

"Overall we have done an excellent job. When we redeploy, I believe we will have fulfilled our mission to a higher standard because of the hard working Soldiers in the shop and the way they have taken care of 1st



Courtesy photo

Spc. Scot S. Sheftz, HHC, 1/3 BTB, installs a generator in a humvee.

Brigade's transportation, so they could get their job done," Tomes said.

BALLOTS, continued from page 1

had a deep impact on how they view their mission during Operation Iraqi Freedom 3.

"I felt very good when I saw the people after they voted. I felt this was a good step for Iraq," said Pfc. Garrett Miller, a Soldier in 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery.

Miller helped support the Iraqi Police in their security plan after the Referendum.

Spc. Colin Waszkiewicz also helped provide security for the movement of ballot materials.

He said he was worried the day following the referendum would be a difficult one with potential terrorist attacks, but the ISF and the Iraqi people did not allow that to happen.

"When my mother asks me how the referendum went, I will tell her that everyone came together to make for a positive outcome," Waszkiewicz said. "The Iraqi Police, the people in charge of the elections, our Military Police, security teams and our leadership all came together and worked as a team."

Since he arrived in

Baghdad earlier this year, Waszkiewicz has seen much improvement in the capability of the ISF.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the Iraqi Security Forces can now handle any enemy threat that comes around them," Waszkiewicz continued. "The discipline of the Iraqi Police is outstanding. They have great camaraderie."

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Lewandowski, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, observed the entire election process.

"I was incredibly impressed with the IECE officials," he said. "This was their show. They organized the security and they organized the schedule for the movement of the ballots."

The reason for the success was "we had a good warehouse manager, he had good workers and most importantly our Governorate Electoral Officer (the person in charge of the district's election effort), had a good plan," Lewandowski said.

Training to treat 10th Mtn. Soldiers instruct IA medics

1st Lt. Chad Lawrence
1/10th Mountain Division

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Iraqi Army medics have been sharpening their life-saving skills thanks to some 10th Mountain Division Soldiers.

Four Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment spent two weeks training 10 Iraqi Army medics from 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

The Soldiers received instructions in controlling external bleeding and shock, first aid of open-chest wounds, open abdominal wounds and open head wounds, properly administering an intravenous injection, and making proper trauma assessments.

"This type of training is beneficial for both Iraqi and American Soldiers," Staff Sgt. Ronald Immonen, 1/71 Cav., said. "The language barrier forced our medical trainers to use their visual skills in training the Iraqis."

The IA Soldiers soaked up the training because they knew they'd soon be putting it to use in real-world emergencies.

"The lessons learned in these past two weeks will be put to the test very soon," Immonen added. "Those medics have daily missions and, unfortunately, are often put to the test."

Many of the 1/71 Cav. medics said the course was well received by their Iraqi counterparts.

"The fact that all the Soldiers passed the final exam to this course is a credit to their determination and understanding of the material," Pfc. Adam Kono, 1/71 Cav., said. "Each of these Soldiers continued their normal mission with their battalions during the course. Some days, they



1st Lt. Chad Lawrence

Iraqi medics learn how to administer anesthetic to a shrapnel wound during a class Oct. 13.

showed up haggard from the previous night's mission. This did not deter them in their class work. If anything, it led them to work harder, knowing that what they were doing is vital to their battalion's survival."



DIG, continued from page 1

instead of the piece of string ending, we ended up with a whole sweater."

During their combat operations, the C Co. patrol pulled over a truck and found fuses inside. The Soldiers detained the two men in the truck, questioned them, and got the information that led them to the general area of the weapons site.

Once they were there, they had to rely on their experience and instincts to unearth

all the hidden munitions.

"We started off with picks and shovels," Curry said. "You identify where you think there is a cache, and you call your buddies over with the picks and shovels and start digging."

"The combat engineers in the Kodiak battalion have become very adept at identifying likely places that anti-Iraqi forces have stored their munitions," Cady said. "Just like a good fisherman can

look at the water and say, 'Hey, there are probably fish over there,' our guys have developed the ability to do that (with weapons caches) as well."

"Initially, it's all done by hand with shovels," said the Kodiaks' commander, Lt. Col. Anthony Wright. "There is a lot of hard work involved."

As the troops dug in the fine, powdery sand, which some Soldiers call "moon dust," they realized they

needed heavier equipment to get to all the buried explosives.

"Our ability to get a small-emplacement excavator out here saved our Soldiers from a lot of back-breaking work," Cady said. "Then, they ended up yanking (munitions) out of the hole and carrying them somewhere so the explosive ordnance disposal team could get rid of it for us."

Getting rid of those illegal weapons was the purpose behind the whole operation and an important part of the Army's mission here in Iraq.

"It's one of the key missions we do. Obviously, we're disrupting anti-Iraqi forces' ability to construct improvised explosive devices and put direct fire on our forward operating bases," Cady said. "We're making Iraq a safer place for Coalition Forces and civilians."

"We're pretty pleased with this because it puts a big cramp in the enemy's style and his ability to execute operations," Wright added. "There is a lot of stuff here that he could have used against us and he can't now."

Finding the cache motivated the engineers to keep patrolling and continuing to make a difference in the waning months of their combat tour here.

"It's really a boost to our morale," Curry said. "You do this kind of thing and you feel you're making tangible progress."

He is determined to finish the tour strong.

"We're not done yet," he said. "We've got more progress to make."



Sgt. Matthew Wester

Top: Mortars are stacked and organized at a weapons cache northwest of Baghdad.

Above: Staff Sgt. Owen Williams, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 70th Eng. Bn., carries two artillery shells out of a weapons cache site northwest of Baghdad. The cache was discovered by 3/1 AD Soldiers in a remote rural area.

VSAT helps maintenance section get 'synched'

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Sometimes small is better. U.S. Army maintenance sections across Iraq have seen their jobs made easier and safer with the implementation of the Very Small Aperture Terminal satellite.

"The VSAT uses a small satellite to connect units to the main parts warehouses through an internet connection," said Spc. Ricardo Iglesias, an automated logistics specialist assigned to 703rd Forward Support Battalion.

Iglesias' company works in direct support of 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment.

"We tried it out at (the Joint Readiness Training Center)," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kevin Fiorillo, the battalion maintenance technician. "It was explained that it connected everyone; we were all getting synchronized, getting on the same wavelength by using the same internet server to connect everyone."

Previously there were two means of connecting with the Standard Army Retail System – the internet or diskette. The computer had to be configured to

either one or the other which caused difficulties, Fiorillo said.

"If I'm using the internet one day, and it's not that reliable that day, we would have to reconfigure the box. If they don't reconfigure the box we'd have a loss of data," he added.

Another issue with the diskettes was that they had to be hand carried from each unit.

The information would be copied onto the diskette and dropped off, which was fine if all the information made it onto the disk like it was supposed to. If not, the whole process would have to be repeated, Iglesias said.

Besides being a time-waster, this could also mean putting the unit under extra stress through another trip to the unit needing the information.

"It could save lives just having one

around," Iglesias said.

The unit would not have to pull together the requisite number of Soldiers and vehicles for the convoy to the unit.

If the unit was stationed at a forward operating base in the

"Red Zone," the chance of a t t a c k w o u l d increase, and the time spent a c t u a l l y w o r k i n g on the task at hand w o u l d decrease.

"Instead of copying the disk, which takes about 10 or 20 minutes, conveying down, processing it; we put it in the computer, hit enter and bam! You're done. It saves us a couple of hours a day," Iglesias said.

"Learning the system and getting it connected was a little painful, after that

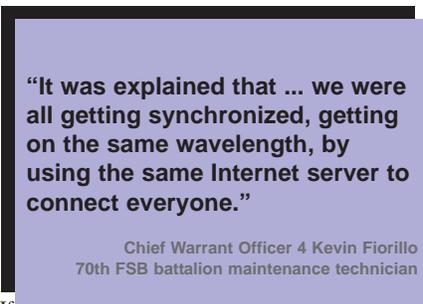
was completed and we all got trained up; it's been a very valuable asset to us," Fiorillo said.

He did offer some constructive criticism as to what he would like to see improved with the VSAT's capabilities. He said it is set up for a maximum of 10 people to work on it at one time, any more and its abilities are severely downgraded.

"One improvement would be to expand its size," he said. "I would love to have each one of my maintenance sergeants with internet capability so they can do their research. All our technical manuals have gone paperless, and as we've headed that way, we've just not provided the team chiefs with what they need to go out and get that information."

Nonetheless, the VSAT is a vast improvement over the previous system and Fiorillo is happy to have one for his unit.

"It has significantly reduced the number of errors of what we are requesting and what we are receiving, by the direct communication link we've established," he said. "It has alleviated the possibility of Soldier error or not configuring the box properly."



"It was explained that ... we were all getting synchronized, getting on the same wavelength, by using the same Internet server to connect everyone."

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kevin Fiorillo
70th FSB battalion maintenance technician

Water project nearly complete in Al Ameen

Spc. Ben Brody
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Residents of Al Ameen will soon reap the benefits of their first-ever water network, courtesy of 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers worked construction management on the \$580,000 project, which is 95 percent done, and is scheduled for completion by Nov. 7.

"This project will provide potable water and fire hydrants to an area that has never had a water network," said Mike Mitchell, a USACE project engineer coordinating the project.

Mitchell said residents previously had to buy water that was trucked into the area.

"The water project complements a recently-completed sewer and paving project in a neighboring mahalla," Capt. Ruth Levy of 2nd BCT said. "The brigade's goal is to spread the projects throughout the neighborhoods to maximize the number of Iraqi citizens who see a tangible improvement in their lives."

Mitchell and Levy coordinate between all interested parties to assure the completion of the project, including the Baghdad Water Authority, 2nd BCT, the Al Ameen Neighborhood Advisory Council, a project contractor, quality assurance inspectors, and the USACE headquarters.

Local laborers have laid about eight kilometers of ductile iron pipes that should last around 50 years, Mitchell said.

Pipes leading to individual residences are made of PVC.

"Each home in Al Ameen will have a spigot installed on their property, which is time-consuming, but worth it," Mitchell said. "If we didn't hook every house up, people would just break the pipes and make their own connections. It's in our best interest to do it this way."

Mitchell relies on local quality-assurance inspectors from an agency that hires well-trained Iraqi engineers to report on quality issues. The brigade's infrastructure cell routinely sends engineer patrols to talk with local residents about the project and its impact on their lives.

"The QA guys are my eyes and ears on the ground," Mitchell said. "They bring me photos of the project's progress and make sure the work is done to the highest standard."

Atheer Mohammed, a QA inspector who works with Mitchell, is a graduate of Baghdad's University of Technology and is a civil engineer by trade.

"I make sure the safety requirements are met, and the work and materials are up to specifications," Mohammed said. "I double-check Mike's designs before the project starts and do what I can to help."

Mohammed said the project will help modernize Al Ameen and pave the way for further development.

"The water network in Al Ameen will raise property values, and help the economy," Mohammed said. "People feel good about the future when they have the basic necessities of life."

Multinational Division Baghdad
Celebrates
National American Indian
Heritage Month

18 November 2005
1830-1930, Camp Liberty MWR

Guest Speaker:
Brigadier General Karl R. Horst
Assistant Division Commander Maneuver
3rd Infantry Division

Sponsored by Division Fires Brigade 242-489 (VOIF)

Soldier thwarts Palestine Hotel attack

Spc. Adam Musil
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – The smoke had barely cleared from an earlier explosion near the Palestine Hotel Oct. 25 when a U.S. Soldier noticed a cement truck bearing down on his position.

Knowing the truck presented an immediate danger, he took aim with his weapon, fired and potentially saved countless lives.

Spc. Darrell Green, a machine gunner with 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, was pulling security from an observation post at the Sheraton when terrorists launched a coordinated attack at the Firdos Square traffic circle in downtown Baghdad.

The attack which occurred in three phases began at 5:25 p.m. when, under the cover of small-arms fire, a terrorist driving a vehicle packed with explosives tried to pierce the defensive barriers between the Sheraton and Palestine hotels.

Seconds later, a vehicle moving toward the traffic circle from the east was engaged by a private security firm and immediately detonated.

Upon hearing the explosions of the first two vehicles, Green stood ready for what was to come.

As dust and debris from the explosions subsided, he noticed the defensive barriers had been breached and a cement truck was heading through the gap, toward the Sheraton and Palestine hotel complex, a home

for many international journalists in Baghdad.

The vehicle was 50 feet past the breach when Green took aim and engaged the truck with his machine gun, preventing the vehicle from going any further.

As he shot and killed the driver, the truck detonated.

"He was trying to kill people," Green said. "It was good we stopped him because he would have killed more people and destroyed the building."

At the same time, the opposite side of the hotel was being bombarded with small-arms fire and what Soldiers believed to be rocket-propelled grenades.

"I don't think capturing journalists was the goal," said Capt. John Newman, B

Company, 3/15 Inf. command-er. "They were just trying to cause death and destruction, and get on the news."

Once the attack was over, the area was secured by Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

Soldiers worked into the early hours of the morning repairing the breach in the wall.

Newman said there is still a lot of cleaning up to be done, but Soldiers and local residents are starting to get back into their regular routines.

This includes Green, who plans on continuing to do his best to keep the hotel secure.

"My heart goes out to the Iraqis who were injured in the attack," he said. "I'm just glad the Coalition Forces



Courtesy photo
Task Force Baghdad Soldiers examine the remains of a car bomb shortly after three suicide bombers detonated their explosive-laden vehicles near the Palestine Hotel Oct. 25.

were ready for this and we were able to stop any further destruction."

U.S. Soldiers, IHP make joint humanitarian effort success for Baghdad residents

Pfc. Laura M. Bigenho
42nd MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – Hundreds of local Iraqis benefited from a joint humanitarian effort conducted by American Soldiers and Iraqi Highway Patrol officers, reinforcing what the Soldiers already know: American and Iraqi forces

are making a positive difference.

Working together, dozens of Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment and over 50 Iraqi Highway Patrol officers awoke at the crack of dawn Oct. 22, to establish a security perimeter around the site for the day's mission: an old elementary school, situated in a neighborhood frequently targeted by insurgents.

A short time later, more Soldiers from 42nd Military Police Brigade arrived at IHP Headquarters, to help load boxes full of clothes, medicine, toys and other supplies into several Iraqi patrol trucks.

After following the IHP trucks to the school Soldiers helped transform the outdoor basketball court into a shop full of tables adorned with free clothing, toys, and other supplies.

Inside the school, doctors used three classrooms as makeshift offices. By the time Soldiers and IHP officers took their

positions local Iraqis had lined the sidewalk, eagerly awaiting their chance to enter the front gate.

Iraqis were searched for weapons and explosives, and then were led across the basketball court and down a path leading to their first stop, a medical doctor.

Dr. Ulkarem works at the Baghdad University Medical Center and has seen his fair share of patients, including a large increase of transmitted diseases in Iraq.

"I've come here to examine patients and give them medicine. The people of this area will make benefit of these medicines," Ulkarem said.

He arranged a visit to the nearby hospital for those in need of intense medical care.

Patients who had extreme difficulty walking were given a wheelchair, courtesy of Free Wheelchair Mission, a non-governmental organization out of Santa Ana, Calif. Not your typical wheelchairs, these modes of mobility were made out of plastic lawn chairs and durable bicycle wheels.

For Maj. Lisa Forsyth, public health team, 322 Civil Affairs Brigade, the wheelchair mission is well worth every minute involved. The mission became a passion of hers last year after learning about it. Since October 2004, Forsyth has distributed over 180 wheelchairs to needy Iraqis.

"One of the things that we're trying to do is to enable the Iraqi health care system to help their own citizens," Forsyth said. "Being able to provide this type of service to disabled Iraqis makes a huge, positive impact immediately; not only to their quality of life, but to their surrounding communities."

Michvid, a paraplegic, couldn't be happier after being the first wheelchair recipient of the day.

"It's going to help me, especially if I don't use the fake leg. It will help me when I move around to different places," Michvid said. "This is very nice of you. I thank everybody for sharing this humane side."

Although Dr. Ulkarem's clinic may have been the highlight of the efforts, both ailing and healthy Iraqis left the school with plenty of supplies. Maj. Jeffrey Bryan, civil affairs officer, 42nd Military Police Brigade acquired boxes full of shoes, clothing, jackets, stuffed animals and school supplies; all of which were donated by fellow Soldiers and civilians at nearby bases.

Expressing the importance of handing out toys and supplies, Staff Sgt. Stacy Bruno, noncommissioned officer in charge of IHP, 42nd MP Bde., described

a situation involving an IHP officer and a young child.

She recalled handing an IHP officer a toy to give the child. At first, the officer didn't want to give the toy away himself; he wanted Bruno to do it. He continued to be resistant, but after Bruno insisted he present the toy to the child, the officer agreed.

He handed the girl a stuffed animal, and in return, received a hug from her. The officer's actions caused a chain reaction, leading other officers and children to follow.

"Once the kid hugged the Iraqi patrolman, (the IHPs) started stuffing the toys in their pockets and strapping them on their weapons, drawing attention to them," Bruno said. "The kids are used to fearing weapons from the other regime; today was different. It was awesome."

From the moment Bruno and Maj. Niave Knell, the officer in charge of IHP, witnessed the incident involving the officer and child, they began noticing a level of trust build between the citizens and IHP.

They hope that the trust will build, especially with the younger generations, as Iraqi security forces take on a larger role in the building of a new Iraq. Iraqis are beginning to associate the color blue, Iraqi's security forces uniform color, with being safe, which is a huge step forward, they said.

"We want the Iraqis to love and trust their police officers. Instead of going to (the Americans) for help, they're going ... to start relying on their own people," Bruno said.

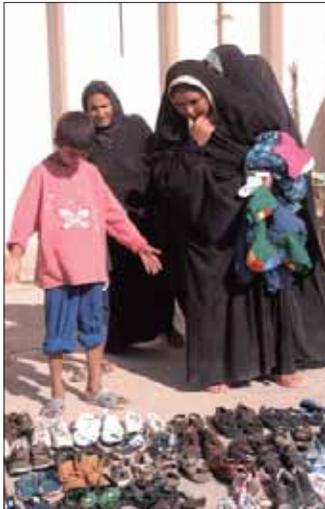
Today's humanitarian effort was just one example of how Iraqi security forces are earning the trust of their own people.

"If (the Iraqis) start trusting the IHP and IPs, a lot of people will start reporting incidents to them. Intelligence gathering is going to be bigger," Bruno said.

"We wanted to affect the Iraqis in that particular area so they feel more comfortable with the police and may come forward with information so attacks on the police stop," Bryan said.

Everyone involved agreed that the mission was a success. The American forces were able to stay in the background of events while the Iraqis took charge, from start to finish.

"We were able to service some of the Iraqis while putting an IHP face on (the event). It's even better if we can reduce the attacks on IHP," Bryan said. "We'll know in a few weeks if the attacks go down or not; that's our real measure of effectiveness."



Photos by Pfc. Laura M. Bigenho

Top left: An Iraqi boy and his mother look in amazement at the variety of shoes available for them to choose from.

Top right: An Iraqi man is assisted to the gate by an IHP officer and Maj. Lisa Forsyth. An Iraqi mother hands her child a beanie baby, given to her by an IHP officer. The officers handed out toys and other supplies at a Baghdad school Oct. 22.

Big Easy Run raises more than \$6,200 for hurricane relief

1Staff Sgt. Robert Timmons
22nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, TIKRIT, Iraq – While Iraqi citizens were taking a step forward to a representative government during the constitutional referendum, some U.S. Soldiers were helping those struck hard by Hurricane Katrina by donating time and money to the Big Easy 5K run held Oct. 16.

“It is important because it shows solidarity,” said Damian Gonzalez, a member of the FOB Speicher Fire Department and overall winner of the race. “We saw it after Sept. 11 when we, as Americans, came together.”

Gonzalez added that the race was part of the relief and a way deployed Soldiers in Iraq can help raise money.

Along with Gonzalez, 500 signed up for the run and another 200 donated money to the American Red Cross Hurricane Relief Fund. The event raised more than \$6,200.

“This is way beyond the money,” 1st Lt. Alisha Ramsey, a platoon leader with 578th Signal Company, 17th

Signal Battalion based out of Darmstadt, Germany said. “It is a symbol of everyone who cared. It allowed everyone involved to release their stress and closed out their frustration.”

Even though Soldiers were arriving and leaving Iraq, the race was planned to coincide with that transition to allow a maximum of participants.

“Soldiers are starting to redeploy,” said Ramsey, the event founder and coordinator. “A lot of stuff is going on, I wanted to act fast. A lot of Soldiers were able to take part in the race because of the timing. The sooner they (those affected by the hurricane) could get the money the better.”

“Donating money online didn’t help make me feel like I was contributing,” she said. “If I could get 500 people to participate, it would compound it.”

The overall second place finisher, Michael Laforest, said it was a worthwhile cause he was more than happy to support.

“I like to run and it was a good cause,” said Laforest, a laundry and textile specialist with 16th Quartermaster

Company. “This was the best way I could help those affected by the hurricane.”

“Soldiers told me their houses were flooded by 18 inches of water and their pets survived because they climbed on top of something. They have come up to me and

said thank you,” Ramsey said. The winners of the race were:

Men’s Division
1st – Damian Gonzalez, 14:52
2nd – Michael Laforest, 14:55

3rd – Timothy Bobakov, 15:25

Women’s Division
1st – Jessica Reed, 17:20
2nd – Staci Hopkins, 18:42
3rd – Cynthia Hargrove, 19:14



Photo courtesy of 22nd MPAD

Runners line up behind a Forward Operating Base Speicher fire truck seconds before the truck’s siren wailed signifying the start of the Big Easy 5K run at FOB Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq, Oct. 16.

TF Baghdad officer lifts away stress at Taji Ironman Bench Press Competition

Sgt. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Sweat glistens on a Soldier’s face as his powdered hands grip a silver bar.

A judge stationed behind a bench drops his hand and the lift begins. The Soldier brings the weight down slowly and explodes as the bar, which sags at its sides because of the tremendous weight, rises to



Sgt. Matthew Wester

Maj. Craig P. Boston, commander of B Co., 125th FSB, 3/1 AD, lifts during the Taji Ironman Bench Press Competition at Camp Taji Oct. 2.

the rack.

The official says, “The lift is a ‘go.’”

This is power lifting, and this is how Maj. Craig P. Boston relieves the stress of his third deployment to Iraq. He competed at the Taji Ironman Bench Press Competition Oct. 2 and, earlier this year, won the Taji Ironman Squat Competition.

The 87th Corps Support Battalion sponsored both events.

Boston, commander of B Company, 125th Forward Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, said he loves the intensity of competitive weightlifting.

“It’s a pretty wild thing,” Boston said. “You can’t hear the judge or the crowd. You’ve got a storm raging in your head.”

Boston did his best to quiet that storm and focus all his thoughts on bench-pressing as much weight as he could for one smooth repetition.

“That’s a big part of the game, the mental part, knowing you can do the weight,” he said. “If you don’t think you can do the weight, you aren’t going to put it up.”

At the competition, spotters loaded 325 pounds on the bar. The announcer said, “The bar is loaded,” and Boston walked confidently to the bench.

He waved off the optional spotter behind the bench and calmly pressed the weight. After several rounds of lifting, Boston achieved his “max” lift of 345 pounds. The amount was good enough to earn him sixth in a field of more than 50 competitors.

It took many hours of training to get to that level, but he has put in his time at the gym. He’s been pumping iron for a long time – ever since he joined the Army.

His history with weights goes back even further than that.

“My father didn’t have a regular squat rack, but he had this big rack that he put together from plumbing pipe to make a squat rack. He and my brother would be squatting, lifting, and getting big. I was never really into it,” he said. “I guess I was a late bloomer.”

Boston took his father’s ingenuity to heart and, in the absence of gym facilities during the liberation of

Iraq in 2003, worked with his Soldiers to build his own makeshift gym equipment out of unserviceable vehicle parts.

The welder from the company’s service and recovery section welded metal plates to bars to make dumbbells. Soldiers from the motor pool used scrap to construct benches and racks.

“Next thing you know, we had fabricated this little ‘gym’ and we had everyone on our little camp going to it to work out,” he said.

Boston inspired others to get involved in his passion for weightlifting at the beginning of this combat tour. A noncommissioned officer from B Company, Sgt. 1st Class Ivy L. Guido, started working out with Boston to improve his strength and for motivation.

“He said, ‘I need help with my bench,’ and I said, ‘Well, I need help with my legs,’” Guido said. “So, we started off from there, and the more we went to the gym, the stronger we kept getting.”

Guido said Boston’s strong showing at Taji’s squat contest motivated him to start training for the bench press competition.

Both men see weightlifting as a great way to relieve stress and keep in fighting shape in Iraq.

“Staying fit is the best way to relieve stress,” Guido said. “If you aren’t doing weightlifting in your training, you aren’t getting the best level of fitness.”

“People need to stay fit. It’s part of the Army philosophy,” Boston said. “If you’re not fit on the battlefield, you’re going to be a liability not only to yourself, but to your fellow Soldiers. (Weightlifting) only makes sense.”

Boston said he wants to compete in one more weightlifting contest before his tour here is over — maybe a combination of different events or another squat competition.

Guido said he has similar goals: “We plan on getting in on the next one, and stopping the show for that one, too.”

“If you’re not fit on the battlefield, you’re going to be a liability not only to yourself, but to your fellow Soldiers. (Weightlifting) makes sense.”

Maj. Craig P. Boston
B Co., 125th FSB commander

GOING HOME!

Soldiers must keep heads 'in the game' while training replacements

Sgt. Maj. Kenneth A. Hinckley
STB Safety sergeant major

The redeployment of 3rd Infantry Division and most attached units is drawing near.

It is natural for all of us to be thinking of that great day when we step off the airplane, on American soil. We look forward to seeing the smiling faces of all those who love us, and who we have missed beyond words.

We will have "made it!"

The long work-hours for months-on-end, the danger from combat patrols and war, the long separation, ended.

It will be a shock for some, but for all, a chance to reintegrate at home in our beloved United States of America.

This is a safety article. It is not meant to put out neat little safety slogans, but it IS an attempt to make you STOP and THINK.

Two more months of war is a long time. For those Soldiers leaving the wire, day after day, every day, each mission until their last is full of danger.

For those who don't leave the wire, the chance of an accident is greater now than when you first arrived. Soldiers are in a hurry. There is packing and moving, and a thousand other tasks to be finished.

You have "made it" when your feet step down on American soil back in Georgia, or the city you live in.

Until that date, the war is "ON." Not only are there those thousand tasks to be completed, but we MUST train-up those who follow on to continue the fight we have waged for a year.

We must keep our "head in the game" to make sure stupid mistakes are not made which cost us our lives and limbs.

The key is to train our replacements with an attitude of confidence, professionalism, with our heads still "in the game."

They don't want to hear how close we are to going home; they just arrived, and they know that.

What they want and desperately need are the little things we have

learned in the year that will keep them alive - they will copy our professionalism, or flounder due to our complacency, and desire to "get the hell out of Dodge!"

We owe them. We don't owe them because they are here to replace us - that is just the way it works.

We owe them because they are American Soldiers just like us, with the same wants, needs, desires and dreams. They want to know one day they will go home walking upright, back to those who are waiting for them the same as our loved ones are waiting for us.

We can have a tremendous impact on whether a lot of our comrades in the new units do go home - the way we train them.

When it is time for the "right-seat, left-seat ride" with your comrades from the units who will replace you, do so with the thought in your mind that the 4th Infantry Division Soldier, noncommissioned officer or officer you are training needs what you have

learned, whether you are a clerk or a grunt or anything else.

What they DO NOT need is a cram-course to turn over the keys ASAP and relieve you of the responsibility.

There is no greater way to stay safe than to keep your "head in the game" until your boots touch down on American soil.

Until then, be a Soldier, be proud of every day of your tour here in Iraq, up to and including that last day.

Give the follow-on Soldiers the best chance to GET their heads in the game.

You can show them many things which will help keep them alive until they gain their own experience.

There is a lot to be done. What you leave behind to those who take over your mission should be the most important - to keep them alive.

There is no greater task to be completed, or gift you can give to those who will take up our fight, than your knowledge and what you have learned.

Court-Martial Report

• On Aug. 25, Spc. Patrick Legrand, 3rd Finance Company, pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial. He was convicted of conspiracy to commit larceny by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$823 per month for 3 months, 3 months of confinement, a fine of \$1000 and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

• On Aug. 25, Pvt. Nathan Fay, HHC, 2/70 Armor Battalion, pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial. He was convicted of AWOL and false official statement by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$823 pay per month for 3 months, 3 months confinement and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

• On Aug. 27, Sgt. Charles Grigsby, HHC, 199th Forward Support Battalion, pled not guilty at a General Court-Martial. He was convicted of indecent assault, adultery, assault consummated by a battery, violation of a general order by possessing alcohol and dereliction of duty by an enlisted panel. The panel sentenced him to reduction to E-1, confinement for 225 days and a fine of \$2000.

• On Aug. 29, Spc. Tyrus Johnson, HHC, 1/156 Armor Battalion, pled guilty at a General Court-Martial. He was convicted of wrongful use of marijuana and wrongful possession of marijuana with intent to distribute by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, confinement for 3 years, and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

• On Aug. 31, 1st Lt. Willie Davis, HHC, 4th Brigade Combat Team, pled guilty at a General Court-Martial. He was convicted of dereliction of duty and negligent homicide by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to forfeiture of \$2500 pay per month for 30 months, confinement for 30 months and a dismissal.

• On Aug. 31, Pvt. James Vige, C, 3/156 Infantry Battalion, pled guilty at a General Court-Martial. He was convicted of use of marijuana, use of cocaine, use of ecstasy, distribution of marijuana and distribution of cocaine by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, confinement for 4 years and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

• On Sept. 5, Sgt. David Fimon, A Company, 1/184 Infantry Battalion pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial. He was convicted of conspiracy to commit maltreatment of detainees, dereliction of duty, maltreatment of detainees and obstruction of justice by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to be reduced to E-1, forfeiture of \$823 pay per month for 12 months, confinement for 12 months and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

• On Sept. 7, Pfc. Hal Wales IV, HSC, 92nd Engineer Battalion, pled guilty at a General Court-Martial. He was convicted of attempt to distribute valium, conspiracy to obstruct justice, false official statement, use of valium, distribution of valium and buying stolen goods by a military judge. The military judge sentenced him to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, confinement for 3 years and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

• On Sept. 8, Staff Sgt. Joseph Romero, B, 3/156 Infantry Battalion, pled not guilty at a General Court-Martial. He was convicted by an enlisted panel of distribution of cocaine, possession of valium, possession of marijuana, obstruction of justice, solicitation to distribute marijuana and communicating a threat on 9 September 2005. The military panel sentenced him to reduction to E-1, confinement for 14 months and a Bad-Conduct Discharge.

• On Sept. 11, Sgt. Louie David, A, 1/184 Infantry Battalion, pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial. He was convicted of dereliction of duty and maltreatment of detainees by a military judge. He was sentenced to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$823 pay per month for 6 months, confinement for 6 months and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

• On Sept. 12, Spc. Brandon Rawls, E, 26th Forward Support Battalion, pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial. He was convicted of false official statement and wrongful appropriation by a military judge. He was sentenced to reduction to E-2, forfeiture of \$500 pay per month for 2 months, inement for 1 month and hard labor without confinement for 2 months.

• On Sept. 11, Sgt. Luis Gomez, A, 1/184 Infantry Battalion, pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial. He was convicted of dereliction of duty and maltreatment of detainees by a military judge. He was sentenced to reduction to E-1, forfeiture of \$823 pay per month for 6 months, confinement for 6 months and a Bad Conduct Discharge.

• On Sept. 12, Spc. Brandon Rawls, E, 26th Forward Support Battalion, pled guilty at a Special Court-Martial. He was convicted of false official statement and wrongful appropriation by a military judge. He was sentenced to reduction to E-2, forfeiture of \$500 pay per month for 2 months, inement for 1 month and hard labor without confinement for 2 months.

Information Requested

THE FOLLOWING PROPERTY WAS STOLEN IN RECENT WEEKS IN/AROUND THE CAMP LIBERTY AREA. CID IS CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR THE PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE AND ANYONE HAVING KNOWLEDGE IS ASKED TO COME FORWARD. YOUR NAME CAN REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL.

CASE # 0236-05-CID899-37809- WHITE GOLD, PRINCESS CUT DIAMOND RING, STOLEN FROM LIVING TRAILER ON PAD 11 BETWEEN 19-21 AUG 2005

CASE # 0265-05-CID899-37858- \$2,655.00 STOLEN FROM A QIT EMPLOYEE WALLET, QIT AREA, 16 SEP 2005

CASE # 0268-05-CID899-37860- MISCELLANEOUS ELECTRONIC ITEMS (PSP GAME STATIONS, MP3 PLAYERS, VIDEO CAMERAS, EXTERNAL HARD DRIVES) FROM THE LOCAL NATIONAL STORE IN RIVA RIDGE (10th MTN DIV), 22-24 SEP 2005

CASE # 0276-05-CID899-37863- AN/VRC 91A RADIO MOUNT AND AMPLIFIER, STOLEN FROM HMDMIV IN THE DELEURY DENING FACILITY PARKING LOT 29 SEP 2005

CASE # 0285-05-CID899-37865- TWO SENC GARG, SN# 009604A & 008478A, STOLEN FROM RADIO HILL, 27-28 SEP 2005

CASE # 0302-05-CID899-37877- \$1,100.00 WAS STOLEN FROM AN INTERPRETER'S WALLET WHICH WAS LOCATED IN HIS PERSONAL DRAWER INSIDE THE TENT PAD 5, RIVA RIDGE

ANY PERSON HAVING INFORMATION REGARDING THE ABOVE PROPERTY SHOULD CONTACT THE CAMP LIBERTY CID OFFICE AT DSN: 847-2151, VOIP: 242-4223 OR THE LOCAL MILITARY POLICE AT DSN 822-4790.

LEGAL PROBLEMS?

CONTACT YOUR UNIT'S SJA FOR GUIDANCE

DESERT JUSTICE

When redeploying, make sure belongings comply with standards

1st Lt. Jason Wong
Legal officer

As the Transfer of Authority with the 4th Infantry Division quickly approaches, the military vans are being packed, footlockers are being shipped home, and personal belongings are being packed in anticipation of return to Ft. Stewart.

Marne soldiers must be aware that some items, although legally acquired in theater, will be inspected and potentially seized by US Customs.

Items acquired in theater fall into three categories: Prohibited, Restricted, and Authorized.

Prohibited items are items that will not be allowed into the United States under any circumstances.

These items include:

- Sand, (including rocks, dirt, seashells, or other soil)
- Privately owned firearms, not issued for use by the US Government
- Ammunition, including shell casings of any type, projectiles, explosives, land mines, unexploded ordnance, grenades, flares, or pieces of these items
- Historical or cultural artifacts
- Any medication not labeled or prescribed for the individual (no bags of mixed pills allowed)
- Cigarette lighters that resemble firearms (regular lighters are acceptable, but all liquid or compressed gas fuel must be removed)
- Switchblade knives, machetes, or brass knuckles (government issued knives, including Benchmade brand knives are allowed if shipped in a mil-van, shipped within checked luggage, or sent via US Mail)
- War trophies are prohibited and may not be brought into the U.S. No units or individuals will be allowed to bring back weapons of any type. Attempts by units or individuals to bring war trophies back to the U.S. will result in confiscation of the item and potential UCMJ action.

This list is not exclusive; items prohibited under General Order Number 1A

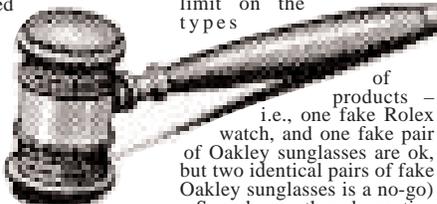
(including alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, pornography, or wild animals) may be legal to import into the United States, however military regulation does not allow possession.

Items which violate General Order 1A will be seized during Customs inspections.

Restricted items include items which may require a permit for importation, or have a limit on the number that may be possessed.

Restricted items include:

- Dietary supplements (must be in original packaging)
- Counterfeit or knock-off goods (One counterfeit item may be possessed, with no limit on the types



of products – i.e., one fake Rolex watch, and one fake pair of Oakley sunglasses are ok, but two identical pairs of fake Oakley sunglasses is a no-go)

- Swords or other decorative knives purchased at the PX. Swords may not have a sharpened blade, and must be shipped in a mil-van or within checked luggage.
- Tobacco products. A maximum of 100 cigars or 10 cartons of cigarettes may be possessed. No Cuban cigars may be imported into the US.
- Bootleg copies of DVDs, CDs, or any other copyrighted material. One copy of each title will be permitted.
- Personal belongings, uniform items and any other item not prohibited by law or regulation.
- Souvenirs, but not war trophies.

Souvenirs include Iraqi military uniform and uniform items, (including hats, helmets, bayonets, and knives), Iraqi flags, books, posters, currency of the former regime, and all other items that do not pose a health or safety risk.

Soldiers wishing to redeploy with Iraqi military items should contact their chain of command and the Judge Advocate General office prior to redeployment to determine if additional inspection and documentation is required by military regulation or U.S. Customs.

In addition, Soldiers who have questions regarding what may be brought back during redeployment should contact the nearest JAG office for guidance.

Chaplain's Corner

Yes, I know my Redeemer lives

Chaplain (Capt.) Christian Goza
4/3 Avn (AHB)

Who taught the sun where to stand in the morning?

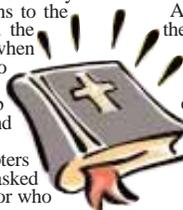
Who told the ocean, "You can only come this far," and who showed the moon where to hide till evening?

Whose words alone can catch a falling star? Nicole C. Mullen's song "Redeemer" offers some answers to these questions. "The very same God that spins things in orbit runs to the weary, worn, and the weak; and the same gentle hands that hold me when I'm broken, they conquer death to bring me victory."

Listen to the words from Job 37:14: "Listen to this, Job, Stop and consider God's wonders."

Throughout the next few chapters Job is reminded and continually asked to consider this and consider that or who does this and who does that?

In Job chapter 38 and 39, God asks several questions: "Where were you when I established the earth?" "Who enclosed the sea behind doors when it burst from the womb?" "Have you ever in your life commanded the morning or assigned the dawn its place, so it may seize the edges of the earth?" "Do you know the laws of heaven?" "Can you impose its authority on earth?" "Does the eagle soar at your command and make its nest on



high?"

God was asking, "Who are we to question the things that we have no control over?"

Only He has the control.

Things in this world seem to be out of our control.

The war in Iraq and the storms that hit our coastlines are things that we have no control over. It seems that life at times can become unbearable, but the Scripture in Job also tells us that God does have control.

At all times, we must trust in the one that has the control, especially now. When we have this confidence, we will be able to overcome the difficulties that come our way.

If Timothy 4:9-10 gives us great confidence: "This saying is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. In fact, we labor and strive for this, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of everyone, especially of those who believe."

Believe that the living God will give you strength for the tough times that lay before

us.

I started with the words to a Nicole C. Mullen song "Redeemed," I'll end with the words to the chorus, "Well I know that my Redeemer lives. Yes, I know my Redeemer lives. All of creation testifies that this life in me cries, I know my Redeemer lives."

Trust in the living God and we can all make it through these tough times.

Camp Liberty religious services

Division Chapel

- Mon. - Fri.**
12 p.m. Catholic
- Mon., Wed., Fri.**
6 p.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief
- Saturday**
10 a.m. Seventh Day Adventist
- Sunday**
9 a.m. Contemporary Protestant
10:30 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
1 p.m. Lutheran
3 p.m. Gospel Protestant
5 p.m. Church of Christ
8 p.m. Collective Protestant

Engineer Chapel

- Wednesday**
7 p.m. Bible Study
- Friday**
9 p.m. Prayer & Praise
- Saturday**
10 a.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief
- Sunday**
8:45 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
10 a.m. Traditional Protestant
12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. Latter Day Saints
7 p.m. Traditional Protestant

Tiger Chapel

- Wednesday**
7:30 p.m. Wicca Circle - briefing tent
- Wed & Sat**
10:30 a.m. Reunion & Suicide Brief
- Saturday**
7 p.m. Catholic Mass
- Sunday**
9 a.m. Roman Catholic Mass
10:30 a.m. Contemporary Mass
1 p.m. Gospel Protestant
3 p.m. Traditional Protestant
7 p.m. Non Denominational Christian
9:30 p.m. Evening Christian Service

In Memory of ...

- Sgt. 1st Class Lawrence E. Morrison, 490th CA Co.
Sgt. Mike T. Sonoda Jr., 1/184 Inf.
Sgt. Andrew J. Derrick, 411 MP Co.
Sgt. Howard P. Allen, 42 MP
Master Sgt. Tulsa T. Tullau, 314 FA
Sgt. 1st Class Casey E. Howe, 314 FA
Lt. Col. Leon G. James II, 314 FA
Sgt. Marshall A. Westbrook, 126 MP Co.
Cpl. Jeremiah W. Robinson, 860 MP Co.
Staff Sgt. Jerry L. Bonifacio, 1/184 Inf.
Sgt. Jeremy M. Hodge, 612 Eng.
Spc. James T. GrJalva, 2/130 Inf.
Sgt. Robert W. Tucker, 3/278 Armor
Spc. Timothy D. Watkins, 2/69 Armor
Staff Sgt. Vincent E. Summers, 2/69 Armor

- Spc. Thomas H. Byrd, 2/69 Armor
Spc. Jeffrey W. Corban, 2/69 Armor
Spc. Richard A. Hardy, 2/69 Armor
Spc. Russell H. Nahvi, 5/7 Cav.
Sgt. Arthur A. Mora Jr., 5/7 Cav.
Spc. Jose E. Rosario, 5/7 Cav.
Staff Sgt. Dennis P. Merck, 648 Eng.
Staff Sgt. George T. Alexander Jr., 1/15 Inf.
Sgt. Evan S. Parker, 422 Inf.
Sgt. Michael T. Robertson, 1/15 Inf.
Master Sgt. Thomas A. Wallsmith, DSB
Sgt. 1st Class Ramon A. Acevedo-Aponte, DSB
Capt. Michael J. Mackinnon, 1/184 Inf.
Col. William W. Wood, 1/184 Inf.



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



Faces & Places



Staff Sgt. Kevin Bromley

A Rhode Island National Guard unit is silhouetted by the setting sun as they patrol the streets of Husseinia, Iraq. The Rhode Islanders of D Company, 172nd Infantry Battalion are deployed to Iraq with 1st Battalion, 118th Field Artillery, assigned to 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division.



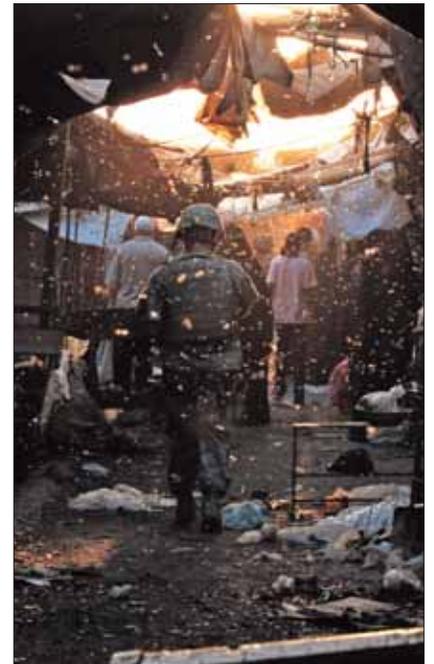
Staff Sgt. Kevin Bromley

1st Lt. David Disi, a Rhode Island National Guard Soldier, patrols the Husseinia market.



Sgt. Matthew Wester

Above: Spc. Juan Ruiz Hernandez, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 46th Corps Support Group sings a traditional Mexican song during the Hispanic Heritage Month Observance at Camp Taji on Sept. 29.



Staff Sgt. Kevin Bromley

Right: Sunlight illuminates flying insects surrounding a Rhode Island National Guard Soldier patrolling the litter strewn market in Husseinia, Iraq.

Sgt. Matthew Wester
Sgt. Sean M. Caffyn, a West Hartford, Conn., native and infantryman for the Rhode Island National Guard's D Company 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment, swims a lap during the Taji Triathlon. Caffyn's unit supports 3/1 AD.



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

Spc. Derek Del Rosario, 100th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, takes a minute to look a little bit closer at a ladybug perched on his hand at a Camp Victory pool.

Lady Ballers crush competition in first-ever women's basketball tourney

Maria Mengrone
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY – Female Soldiers from Task Force Baghdad found a way to showoff their athletic talent during the first all women's three-on-three basketball tournament sponsored by the 3rd Infantry Division's Morale, Welfare and Recreational section.

The two day tournament was packed with moves that left fans cheering in amazement. Women demonstrated their basketball proficiency in an open forum that, in the past, was only available to their male counterparts.

Taking matters into their own hands, several female Soldiers asked for an all women's basketball tournament.

That is exactly what they got, according to Prince McJunkins, 3rd Inf. Div. MWR facility supervisor.

"We didn't want women to feel left out of the activities, especially in the physical aspect of the sporting events," McJunkins said.

The women's basketball teams kicked off the tournament in double-elimination rounds Oct. 22-23. Fans acted sur-

prised and delighted at what these Soldiers could do on the basketball court.

During the nail-biting semi-final round, the 92nd Engineer Battalion's Lady Black Diamonds gave the Lady Bladerunners of 3rd Signal Company, an exhausting run for their money by taking the game into double overtime.

"They're rough and tough and want to win. I knew they could all play," said Lady Bladerunners' fan Capt. Ericka Brooks, commander, 3rd Detachment, 3rd Sig. Co.

Despite their aggressive defense and outstanding performances by notable players such as Marietta Squire, the Lady Black Diamonds failed to pull in the pivotal win to take them to the championship game.

The Lady Bladerunners' Lstephanie Frazier finished with the breathtaking crucial point to claim their semi-final victory of 24-23 over the Black Diamonds.

"It feels glorious to win! I have four brothers and I have been playing since I was five years old," said Frazier, the tournament's semi-final champ.

The championship showdown between the Lady

Bladerunners and the Lady Ballers was packed with an equally intense rivalry and ball scrambling excitement.

Unfortunately, the emotional high of the semi-final win for the Lady Bladerunners was short-lived.

In the end, the Lady Ballers, comprised of players from Special Troops Battalion and 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, proved they were a force to be reckoned with by overpowering their competition 13-9.

"We got together the day of the tournament. We didn't practice together at all," said Lady Ballers' Shakira Gray.

"Defense makes victory," said fellow enthusiastic teammate Erica Larkins. "I dedicate our victory to Staff Sgt. Brown, who was hurt, and to the whole team!"

Clearly, the success of this first ever women's basketball tournament will help pave the way for future female Soldiers to showcase their nimbleness on the basketball court.

"We enjoyed the participation and we want more numbers to come out," McJunkins said. "We're looking for a quick turn around to get another tournament set up for next month."



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brenda Benner

Above: Jennifer Brown, far right, of the Lady Bladerunners shows her nerve by shooting over Lady Black Diamond defenders.

Below: Jeffrey Garner, (left) of Det. 3, 3rd Sig. Co. and Lady Ballers fan Antoinette Ellis of 3rd SSB, express their range of emotions as they support opposing teams.



Left: Front row fans (left to right) Joshua Nunally of 341st Postal Company, Jakera Wilkerson and Rawley Harris, both of 3rd SSB, are caught up in the hoops excitement as they enthusiastically show their support for their teams.

Below: Lady Bladerunner Lstephanie Frazier battles Lady Black Diamonds Marietta Squire for the ball during their action-packed double overtime semi-final matchup.



Marietta Squire (left) of the Lady Black Diamonds makes sure that Tracy Gillispie of Det. 3, 3rd Sig. Co. works for every pass to fellow Lady Bladerunners.



Shooting from the thumbs: the gamer's review

Like an overbearing parent, Sims 2 gives you all the control

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PAO

I learned a valuable lesson in The Sims 2. It only cost the life of my first Sim: buy a smoke alarm.

On a cosmetic level, the graphics are a lot smoother, bringing a little more realism to the series. The artificial intelligence has been improved, so your Sims will wander about doing the things they want until you intervene.

I learned the hard way you shouldn't let your Sims roam unsupervised for too long. I was gone for about an hour, and the house was a mess; my Sims stayed up late and were exhausted, and they hadn't eaten the entire time.

Of course, they shouted accusations that I wasn't taking care of them. I ignored their accusations, but not their plight, and got them back on the right path.

The controls are pretty easy to use, but it can be a little tricky getting the angles right and getting furniture in place. A little patience, practice and a lot of zooming in and out, and it gets a little easier.

There are three pre-built communities, or you can get brave and create one of your own. Each community has its own

families and houses. You can choose a pre-made family and start right away or create your own Sims and buy a house and furnish it. Electronic Arts built upon the success of the original Sims, adding many new features that make the game enjoyable and addictive, while keeping those things that made the Sims a hit in the first place.

One of the biggest changes is that your Sims have DNA – their physical characteristics are passed on to their children. Your Sims live-on through their children as their family grows from generation to generation.

The Sims themselves now have more personality. They dream and set goals based upon their fears and aspirations.

If you create your own Sims you can set their desire for popularity, fortune, family, knowledge or romance. They have daily goals which help to lead them to realizing their dreams.

But at the same time, each Sim has fears that can keep them from achieving their goals.

The first Sim I created wanted to see a ghost. His girlfriend was terrified of ghosts. If my Sim saw a ghost, he received an award to his aspiration, while she suffered a penalty, and gibbered madly. After seeing a ghost too many times, she went crazy. Luckily, a psychiatrist came swooping in to help her recover.

If you cater to their goals, you can set your Sims on the road to success; cater to their fears, and you risk putting your Sim on the path to ruin. As with everything in The Sims, the choice is yours.

Your Sims work for a living, and that has a lot of potential. When a Sim gets a job, he starts at the bottom and works his way up.

Your role in the Sim's job is to improve his skills along the way. Once you reach a certain skill level, the Sim is promoted and starts making more money, and more money equals better stuff.

I had one Sim who was a master criminal, but she started out as a pick pocket and went to work in a beat-up hatchback. As she rose in skill and ability, she became a master criminal and went to work in a limo.

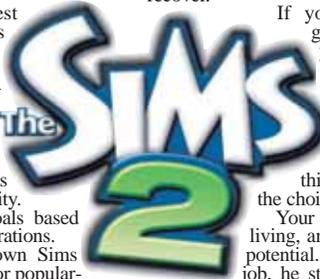
Occasionally, you're given a choice while your Sim is at work. Choose wisely, and you get a reward – either in skills or cash. The day my master criminal held the city hostage, she made a cool \$60,000.

On the other hand, my nurse found out the hard way that you don't treat llamas in the emergency room and suffered a penalty to his logic skill.

The game is addictive. If you don't have a couple hours to kill, I wouldn't start playing it. Like an overbearing parent, once you start running your Sims' lives you won't want to stop.

If you're a fan of the original Sims, you're going to love this game. If you've never played, but the idea of running or ruining the lives of generations of computer-generated people piques your interest, I recommend picking up a copy.

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The Book Nook

Bryson's 'Short History of Nearly Everything' makes science fun, easy

Sp. Brian Henretta
100th MPAD

I am not the world's smartest guy, but I try to be as knowledgeable about as many things as I can.

During high school and college, science classes were my downfall because until recently, I didn't care about the subject.

It's not that I thought it wasn't important or worthwhile to learn – I just never had it presented to me in a way I could understand.

Years of formulas, graphs and textbooks that read like they were written by men who had never interacted with another person in their lives left me feeling like I was just not meant to understand certain subjects.

There are so many questions that I have about everything around me that we often take for granted or don't think about. What are stars made

of? If atoms aren't living but I'm made of them, how can I be alive? How long has the Earth looked the way it does?

I suppose if you look through the proper science books for long enough and manage not to bore yourself to death, you could find the answers to these questions. However, the one question that has most intrigued me but never gets explained is "how do they know these things?"

It's one thing to read what the mass of the Earth is, but how did they ever figure that out? No one ever put the planet on a huge scale.

Bill Bryson discusses these and many other topics in *A Short History of Nearly Everything*. His book is one of the most enjoyable I've ever read.

"A science book that you actually enjoyed reading?" you ask. I know, it's hard to believe, but Bryson combines useful, easy-to-comprehend information with the readability of a novel and a humor that made me laugh out loud, even while reading the book in public.

Bryson is not a scientist. He is the author of several best-selling travel books. He also grew up hating science because he never understood it. But during his travels, he decided that he wanted to understand.

Thus, *A Short History* was written.

Bryson succeeded in his attempt to describe sub-atomic particles, extinctions, black holes, DNA and plate tectonics in a way that I was able to

have fun understanding.

The author's vivid yet simple descriptions of events can be intriguing, yet terrifying.

One section of the book, called "Dangerous Planet," I found most interesting.

Bryson discusses the asteroid strikes hitting Earth since the creation of the planet. They happen all the time, on a cosmic scale, and one could be on its way now.

He mentions that chances are extremely small that we would ever see it coming – contrary to what Ben Affleck taught us in *Armageddon*.

In fact, we wouldn't know that the Earth was about to be hit until the comet reached our atmosphere. It would heat the air underneath it to ten times the temperature of the sun, instantly vanishing everything near it within a second before it pulverizes the ground.

Bryson describes the rest of the grand scenario in such explicit detail that you become thankful this hasn't happened already.

In another chapter, he informs us that the beautiful Yellowstone National Park is what's known as a supervolcano. Every 600,000 years, a massive underground magma chamber about 40 miles across explodes, covering much of the U.S., Canada and Mexico in up to dozens of feet of ash and soot. He explains the last such explosion occurred 630,000 years ago – meaning we are overdue.

There is more to *A Short History of Nearly Everything* than these doomsday scenar-

ios.

It is an all-encompassing book that, in the words of Bryson, describes "how we went from there being nothing at all to there being something, and then how a little of that something turned into us, and also what happened in between and since."

Bryson discusses the universe from the grandest scales across time and space, down to sub-atomic particles and the smallest life forms in the most riveting ways.

One shocking (and disgusting) example of this was learning just how many bacteria are on you right now.

If you're a person who practices normal hygiene, there are about 100,000 on each square inch of your skin, hair, eyelashes and eyeballs. This doesn't even count the hundred trillion bacteria present in your digestive system.

With the wealth of facts and information presented in this book, one might think man is pretty smart and has most everything figured out.

However, as the saying goes, "It's not what you know, but what you don't know."

Bryson talks quite a bit about how little our scientists actually know, and how far they are from figuring things out.

He states that we haven't even scratched the surface of figuring out how most things work.

It is truly humbling to read that we know far more about cosmic dust clouds – tens of thousands of light years away – than we do about our

oceans' bottoms.

Bryson spent three years reading historical accounts and journals of the most brilliant and eccentric thinkers of the past few centuries to collect information for this book.

He traveled the world to meet with many of the most knowledgeable minds and experts to ask them "a lot of outstandingly dumb questions," as he puts it.

His "dumb questions" add up to a book that will leave any reader a much more informed, well-rounded person.

I am thankful that these new facts have already benefited me in casual conversation.

While on four-day pass to Qatar recently, I found myself in a conversation with a group of land surveyors stationed in Kuwait.

It would be an understatement to say that I impressed them by having an intelligent conversation about land surveying thanks to what I learned earlier that very day about changes in the Earth's crust causing a lake to spill over its banks.

A Short History of Nearly Everything is just that.

It has enough interesting information to allow you to pretend to be an expert on a variety of subjects that you might not really know anything about.

Aside from being able to impress your friends with your new knowledge, you will be impressed yourself – because someone has finally made science fun.

