

The Marne Express

"Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork"

Volume 2, Issue 20

Serving the Soldiers of Task Force Baghdad

November 20, 2005

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Into the 'Lions' Den'

Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell

Soldiers from 526th Brigade Support Battalion unload boxes of bottled water by hand from the trucks at the "Lion's Den." For full story see page 9.

MPs, IPs reflect on deployment, mission success

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

BAGHDAD – Traditional Iraqi food, gifts, photos and pleasantries were aplenty at Baghdad Police Headquarters as the 42nd Military Police Brigade bid farewell to their Iraqi counterparts. After nearly a year of working together side by side, day after day, the 42nd MP Bde. now passes the torch to the 49th MP Bde., their replacement unit from the California Army National Guard.

Col. Rick Swengros, the 42nd MP Bde. commander, spoke before dozens of Iraqi Police officers and MPs, expressing how proud he was to have served with them the past year.

"You have a lot to be proud of," Swengros said. "You've worked hard to defeat the enemy, and you are succeeding."

The success of the IPs in the past year is largely credited to the Police Partnership Program, also known as P3.

Prior to P3, Iraqi Police Services had primarily focused on providing IPs with logistical assistance. Swengros and Maj. Curtis Schroeder, program's operations officer, had a larger vision, setting out to develop police stations in Baghdad by concentrating on the police headquarters.

Originally planned in December 2004 and implemented in January 2005, P3 was formally recognized by Multi-National Corps - Iraq months later after its mission and success became more widely known.

It's mission, "to teach, coach and assist Iraqi Police at the headquarters level in order to enhance police operations throughout

See FAREWELL, page 12

Iraq contractors make payment transition from dollars to dinar

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Iraqi contractors supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 are now counting dinars instead of dollars on payday.

Another milestone in the country's economic development was reached Oct. 14 when a 3rd Infantry Division finance office issued the first payment in Iraqi currency while in theater.

Local vendors and contractors were previously paid in U.S. dollars. This is the first time in all the rotations of Operation Iraqi Freedom that a dinar check payment has been issued to local vendors and contractors within the Baghdad area of operations.

This is a huge step according to Maj. Richard Santiago, commander of 3rd Finance Company, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, Division Support Brigade, who said paying

locals in dinars benefits both the Iraqi people and Coalition Forces.

"This is truly a win-win situation for all," Santiago said. "Issuing dinar check payments improves the economic and financial stability of Iraq by promoting the Iraqi banks while using their local currency. It also decreases the cash requirements our finance offices need in order to meet mission requirements, as we are now able to pay the local vendors and contractors with a check instead of cash."

Implementing the dinar payment took a lot of coordination between several agencies.

The 18th Soldier Support Group, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller), the U.S. Treasury Department and the 3rd Finance Co. were all involved.

"We needed approval from DFAS to set up a Local Depository Account at the Credit Bank of Iraq in order to be able to make payments using the local currency," Santiago said. "Once we had the LDA Account set up, we were ready to make check pay-

ments in dinar. Setting the LDA account at the Credit Bank of Iraq will stimulate their bank systems and procedures, creating the right impact needed to improve Iraq's financial infrastructure."

See DINAR, page 12



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

1st Lt. Tayonia Williams, 3rd Finance Co. dispersing officer, issues a dinar check to a local contractor at the finance office Oct. 18.

Marne Six Sends

Be prepared for anything

Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr.
Task Force Baghdad commanding general

Our Marne Warriors are heroically taking the fight to the enemy every day while helping the Iraqi Security Forces become more proficient securing Baghdad while the people embrace their new-found freedom.

Make no mistake, we are winning, and we are doing what is right!

The Marne division performed magnificently during the recent success of Iraq's vote on their Constitutional Referendum.

It was more than historic; it showed the international community that the Iraqi Security Forces are up to the task and that the people are serious about taking hold of democracy.

I am extremely proud of our Soldiers' courageous sacrifice and for the extraordinary support we receive from our families back home in this noble cause.

Other challenges lie ahead for the division. The Army as a whole must be prepared for contingencies that may arise in support of the War on Terror.

I am fully aware that much has been said unofficially, and through the rumor mill, about what is in store for the division upon our return home.

I want you to hear this from me - NO decision has been made on future missions the division may be required to execute, although all units must plan to be ready.

No unit in the Army ever remains inactive for an extended period after a deployment.

Every unit must receive new personnel into its ranks, send officers and noncommissioned officers to schools, restore physical fitness, account for and maintain equipment, and train new teams for upcoming missions and possible deployment. Coupled with Soldiers' per-

manent change of station moves in, as well as out, personnel turnover across the division is expected to be significant.

Long before 9-11, the Army's units always had a mission to be ready to accomplish at a moment's notice. Our current mission is to successfully complete this deployment and build a lead brigade combat team capable of being deployed if necessary.

Currently, the division's requirement is to build a BCT by December 2006.

Once we return from Iraq, 1st BCT will be the first of the 3rd Infantry Division's four BCTs to refit and reorganize in preparation for future operations.

Keep in mind, as the Army weighs its force requirements, the urgency to rebuild 1st BCT may change.

All four BCTs will refit and reset to combat-ready status in sequence. That is what we do.

Since 1st BCT Soldiers deployed first, they will be the first to redeploy and take a well-deserved block leave prior to beginning the process of achieving full readiness and assumption of a Division Ready Brigade status by December 2006, or later, if changed.

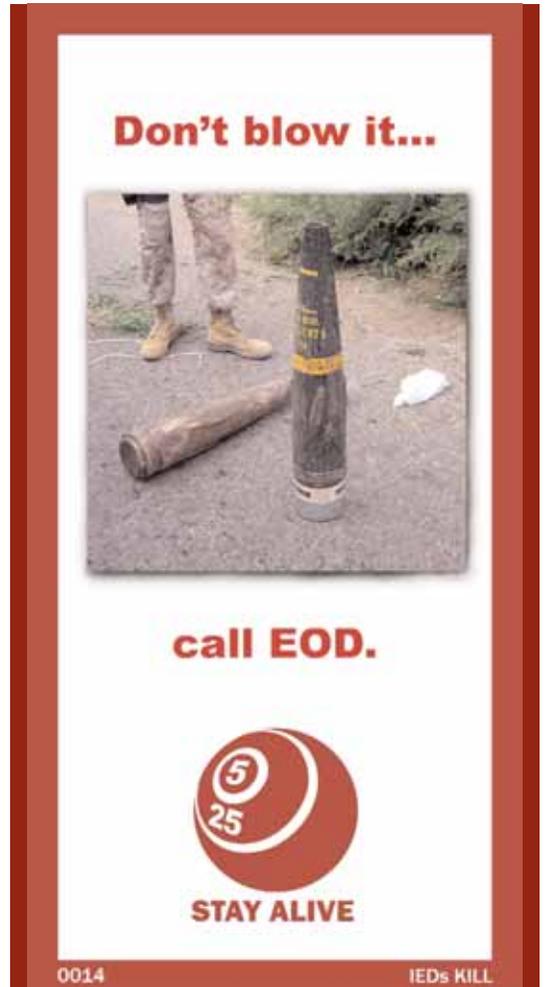
All other brigades to include the Division Headquarters, Aviation Brigade, and the Support Brigade, will follow in sequence to restore readiness for future potential missions worldwide.

More information on block leave and reset will be provided to you.

The entire Marne team has been successful because of the unfailing support of our families who have helped us accomplish the mission of bringing stability and democracy one step closer for the Iraqi people.

We need your continued help in keeping the rumors down as we finish our current mission.

Mission, Soldiers, Teamwork
"ROCK OF THE MARNE!"



The Word on the Street

What are you thankful for?

"God keeping people safe, my friends and family for being there for me, and my husband, Hyland, because he's helped me through a lot."



Spc. Kristina Rountree
226th Med. Bn.
Buffalo, N.Y.

"I am thankful that I have God to carry me through this deployment, and that I have family back home who cares about me."



Pfc. Joshua P. Davis
602nd ASMC
Lumberton, N.C.

"I am thankful for Penn. State football and how good they are doing this year!"



1st Lt. Todd Capobianco
3rd Det., 3rd Sig. Co.
Islandtown, Pa.

"God has blessed me to see another beautiful day, and that He has kept my family strong in my absence."



Staff Sgt. Richard D. Hegens Jr.
HHTC, 1/11th ACR
Washington, D.C.

"I'm thankful I am still alive, things are going okay here and I'm going home to see my family soon."



Sgt. Maj. Israel Martinez
3rd Inf. Div. Surgeon NCOIC
San German, Puerto Rico

The Marne Express

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Commentary

It's the little things we miss the most ...

Spc. Brian Henretta
100th MPAD

Have you noticed how when you return to your hometown after leaving for the first time, things are different?

Maybe after coming home from your first semester at college, or basic training, there might be a new restaurant in town, or the neighbors may have painted their house a new color.

These are nothing major, just little things that might make you do a double-take for a while and they let you know you missed something while you were away. You may also notice how much smaller everything seems after you've been out in a larger world.

I can't even imagine how different things are going to be when I return home from this deployment.

I think about that fairly often. I know that I've changed in many ways. But I'm sure my home in Texas, as well as America, has changed in ways I don't even know about. I just hope it's not too hard for me to deal with it.

It's been a pretty significant year, if you think back. Since I was activated last summer to get ready for this deployment, we've seen a president re-elected, a new pope, a wave kill 100,000 people, a major U.S. city destroyed by a storm, the nation become more divided politically than it's been since the late 1960s, and the Red Sox win a World Series.

Even with all that craziness going on, I know the biggest difference for us returning Soldiers will be the cultural shock we experience.

Things seem quite different when I think back about the differences in popular culture since before I was activated. Green Day was a washed up punk band that hadn't done anything significant since the mid-'90s, Mariah Carey was a joke, and J. Lo and Ben Affleck were the world's most popular couple.

Since I've been away, I don't even know what I've missed out on. I only recently listened to The Game, and now I understand he is pretty big. I couldn't tell you what songs, movies and TV shows are hot right now.

I've experienced this once before when I was in isolation for four months during basic training at Fort Knox in the spring of 2000.

I emerged to a new world - in which I looked like an idiot because I had never heard of the movie Gladiator or Sisco's Thong Song. I considered myself lucky for that last one, but people still teased me for being so out of touch, and that was nothing compared to what I'll experience when I come back this time.

I just hope when my friends see me in the bars when I get back, wearing some out of style shirt and asking who is the artist singing the club song that everyone has heard a million times, they will take it easy on me.

This may not seem like a big deal to most people outside the military.

However, I'm sure no matter how much you may love serving the nation in Iraq, you get the feeling that you've had an entire year of your life pass you by in ignorance of the culture that we've sworn to protect.

A year of my precious youth has gone by without getting to enjoy it. Who knows how many little things have bypassed us that we'll never find out about?

As many changes as there have been without us at home, they are nothing compared to the changes that have gone on in each one of us. As a National Guardsman who attends a large college in Texas, I wonder how I'll deal with the relatively insignificant problems of people around me.

I don't pretend to think I'm anyone special and certainly don't feel I'm above my fellow students - or anyone else in the civilian world.

However, I'm don't know what I'll think the first time I hear a girl act like it's the end of the world when someone down the hall in her dorm calls her the b-word, or when I see some guy in the bar who wants to break another man's jaw because he accidentally stepped on his foot.

Those problems are so petty compared to the raw, sometimes brutal side of humanity we see every day. I think this new way of thinking will be the biggest personal change for me yet, and I'm glad about that.

Regardless, I'm looking forward to seeing all the new things America has to offer - hearing all that new music, seeing what movies have been out over the past year.

I want more than anything to have a normal life again. Our time is coming soon.



Spc. Brian Henretta

... and it's also the little things that keep us sane

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

"The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time," sang James Taylor - and I believe he was really onto something.

We've all had our share of experiences, ups, downs and what have you. Some we see as bad; others we recall



Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

being pretty damn good. Still others, we can barely remember - especially if they are directly linked to one of those "pretty damn good" times which involved large quantities of beer.

It's easy to classify a spe-

cific time of life as being either beneficial, detrimental or ineffective in relationship to the way things ultimately "turn out." For instance, it's simple for me to reflect back to the day I swore my enlistment oath and shudder, thinking, "Man, if only I hadn't joined the Army, I wouldn't be in Iraq right now ... and that would certainly be better than, like, being in Iraq right now."

But what else would be different for me right now had I not made that decision? What else would be different had I not made any of the seemingly tiny or large decisions I've made on a day-to-day basis before and since then?

As I look back on all those choices and remember what led me to make them, and what results they gave me, and how in the world I got wherever I am today, another thought pushes its way into my brain, settles in, sits back and makes itself comfortable:

"Who cares?"

At this point, I have to answer myself

(not out loud, because I'm not that kind of crazy) with a resounding, "Not me!"

One thing I've noticed is that the more I analyze myself and the things I've done, the more difficulties I seem to have accepting whatever my current situation is. The more I focus on the "good" things I "could have" had "if only" I'd done "something" differently, the more dissatisfied I become.

My point (surprise! I have one!) is that although it's natural for us to want to complain about, oh, everything, at the same time it's important to hold on to whatever little things make us happy, or else life will genuinely suck.

Now, don't get me wrong - if what makes us happy is something like throwing sharpened knives at people, we might have to look a little harder for those little things - since society isn't known for its tolerance of assault.

But I digress.

Most of us, if I may be so bold as to say so, would rather be spending the

upcoming holidays at home with family and loved ones. Most of us would rather not have to carry a weapon around everywhere we go. Most of us would rather not have to wear shoes to take a shower, unless we are just like that - in which case, more power to us, as well as to our very protected feet.

Still, most of us also can find at least one thing every day to smile at, even if it's just a joke we overhear. We can find one thing to laugh at, even if it's just something stupid that one of our co-workers has done.

We can find one thing to remind us that all the decisions we've made to bring us to the exact place we are now, were the right decisions.

Because really, we can't do anything about the past, and the future will always be there, so why waste the moments we have trying to figure out what will make them better?

As J.T. said, "Try not to try too hard ... it's just a lovely ride."

Unsung Heroes

Command Sgt. Maj. William M. Grant

3rd Inf. Div. command sergeant major

Soldiers throughout the Multinational Division-Baghdad area of operations are working extremely hard on a daily basis. Their jobs range from combat operations to all of the supporting mechanisms required to achieve mission success.

As a result of their efforts, awards are earned by the outstanding Marne Warriors who have taken their commitment and execution of duty to the next level.

Regardless of the level of recognition, we should embrace the recommendations of our leaders while understanding that even though we're all on the same team, the

roles we play in terms of duty and levels of responsibilities differ from unit to unit and Soldier to Soldier.

Remember when you are in formation receiving your awards, that it took a team of dedicated professionals like yourself to make it happen.

This "shout out" is for all of the dedicated Soldiers of the Marne Division's awards section who tirelessly keep the flow of medals and certificates of appreciation coming to deserving military personnel of all ranks and branches of service. Whether it's a Bronze Star with a "V" device, a Purple Heart or a certificate of appreciation, everyone on the team gives your award the attention it deserves.

They have steadily kept up the pace of processing awards

during their entire deployment, including taking care of all of the awards for Soldiers of the now departed 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division; the 256th Brigade Combat Team and for foreign military units as well.

Now that our deployment nears its end, our awards section is even busier than before. On average, there are 1,200 awards processed every week.

Nearly a dozen hard-working troops of all ranks are making sure your awards are logged in, researched, prepared, proof read, and then reviewed to perfection. This is no quick and simple task. Checking the packets is very time-consuming and requires attention to every detail. Everyone in the section works at a level of excellence to make



(From left to right) Sgt. Brian Redman, HHSC; Sgt. Jonathon Ulmer, B Co., 3rd SSB; Pfc. Rickita Hightower, HHOC; and Pfc. Lekeshia Bryson, B. Co., 3rd SSB, help their team in the 3rd Inf. Div.'s personnel section process nearly 1,200 awards every week.

sure the citations and the printed certificates themselves meet the highest standards because everyone here deserves the best.

So far, the tireless teamwork of the awards section has produced more than 25,000 individual awards! They have cer-

tainly set a high standard for the next personnel section to strive for.

The 3rd Infantry Division salutes everyone in the awards section for executing their mission with excellence.

Rock of the Marne!

Soldiers eulogize 4 fallen comrades at ceremony

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces came together Nov. 1 to remember four U.S. Soldiers recently killed in terrorist attacks.

Lt. Col. William Wood, commander of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, and Capt. Michael MacKinnon, A Company, 1st Bn., 184th Inf. Regt., were killed by an improvised explosive device Oct. 27. Wood was posthumously promoted to colonel the day after his death.

Two more 1/184th Soldiers, Capt. Raymond Hill and Spc. Shakere Guy, were killed in action after their humvee struck an IED Oct. 29.

Col. Edward Cardon, 4th Brigade Combat Team commander, began the ceremony by quoting Wood: "Soldiers have fallen, but the line holds steady."

Cardon reminded the audience of nearly 1,500 Soldiers why they were at the memorial ceremony.

"We've come to mourn their deaths, but more importantly to honor their lives and to affirm our resolve," he said.

One by one, the fallen brothers-in-arms from 1/184th – nicknamed the Nightstalkers – were eulogized by their leaders and fellow Soldiers.

The four came from all walks of life and exemplified the diversity that makes up the Army. Guy was from Jamaica and MacKinnon was awarded his commission after graduating from West Point, said Lt. Col. Everett Knapp, 1/184th Bn. commander.

"They have given their hearts, lives, sweat and blood to fight for freedom for the Iraqi people," Knapp said. He finished with a quote from the legendary boxer Jim Corbett: "Fight one more round. When your feet are so tired you have to shuffle back to the ring, fight

one more round. When your arms are so tired you can hardly lift your hands, fight one more round. Remember that the man who fights one more round is never whipped."

Lt. Col. David Funk, commander of 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, said he'd only had the pleasure of calling Wood a friend for the last couple of months. They had run into each other at various times during their military careers, but had never really developed a close friendship.

That all changed once Wood was assigned to 1/184th.

"Bill Wood is a great American, a superb fellow battalion commander, a true and loyal friend and my brother," Funk said.

He bemoaned the fact it took a war to bring the two of them together.

"We have been as close as two brother commanders can be in war," he said. "He loved being 'Nightstalker 6.' He had a great sense of history and a great feeling of pride at being part of this battalion."

Getting to know Wood taught Funk a valuable lesson he was more than happy to share with everyone.

"I ask that you learn from our example and not wait too long to get to know the Soldiers next to you as Bill and I almost did," Funk said. "Life is too short for pretense and pride. I am a richer man today for having known Bill Wood. He made me a better commander, a better friend and a better person."

MacKinnon was remembered by his friend Capt. Danjel Bout as a man who used his powerful will to take something that was broken and make it new again.

"From the moment he arrived (at A Co.), he treated every Soldier with dignity, grace and respect," Bout said. "And for that, we loved him."

Bout said MacKinnon personified America not as it is, but as it aspires to be. That manifested itself in everything he did and everything he touched. Bout shared a story to illustrate how MacKinnon was viewed by the Iraqi people he came into contact with on a daily basis.

"We were visiting a town whose sheikh had recently died and the townspeople had gathered to vote on who the next sheikh was going to be," Bout recalled. "Each of the villagers offered up their suggestions and each one got booed down.

fellow man," Murphy said. "His greatest fear was that his two girls were growing up too fast, that they were too cute for their own good and they were starting to attract boys.

Staff Sgt. Ron Eberhardt said that regardless of the mission before him, Hill would pack enough toys and candy for any lucky children he would meet. Hill's favorite missions involved bringing humanitarian aid to the people of Baghdad and he often posed for pictures with the people he was directly involved with helping.

Guy was constantly going out on missions with Hill. His friend, Spc. Jose Farias, remembered Guy going to the post exchange to buy candy with his own money to share with the children he was sure to meet while helping the psychological operations team.

Guy's company commander, Capt. Jeffrey Dirske remembered him as a fine Soldier who was willing to perform any task, but a tanker who never forgot his first love – tracked vehicles.

"He would never let us forget about his love for the tracks," Dirske said. "When we first got here, he was part of the personal security detachment, and I remember the excitement in his voice and face when he would talk about the tracks.

"What we will never forget was his desire to help others and his commitment to the mission," Farias added. "He was committed to his family, his fiancée and daughter as well as the Soldiers here."

Cardon's final note reminded everyone that the best way to honor the fallen Soldiers is to continue their mission.

"While we honor these brave men's deaths, the best way for us to remember them is to take what they have left with us: professionalism, motivation, passion, resilience – the list goes on and on. Let's take what they left us ... to continue our mission, to have faith in our victory, to persevere against the enemy, to never quit or accept defeat. That is what we must do."

"We've come to mourn their deaths, but more importantly to honor their lives and to affirm our resolve."

Col. Edward Cardon
4th BCT commander

Until one person said, 'I think Capt. MacKinnon should be the sheikh.' As soon as he said that, everyone's face lit up and they all agreed. Mike kept saying 'No, no,' and then he finally asked them, 'Why do you want me to be the sheikh?' They said the same thing: 'Because you are the only one we can trust.'

1st Sgt. Mark Barnes of B Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment shared another story about MacKinnon that had the mourners smiling and laughing in the midst of their grief.

"He didn't like affection from men except in the conservative way in which fathers love their sons. Once on Haifa Street an Iraqi man kissed him and he looked very uncomfortable. Especially when I pointed out to him that from my angle it looked like a kiss on the lips. I told him often that we appreciated him taking one for the team. When I put it on our company website, he started his own (information operations) campaign to tell everyone that he didn't kiss anyone, he was the one kissed."

1st Lt. Cameron Murphy remembered Hill as a kind and gentle man who rarely had a harsh word for anyone. Hill was originally the battalion fire support officer and was in charge of plotting for lethal fire.

"Truth was, he took more delight in plotting the distribution of humanitarian assistance than in the destruction of his



Spc. Dan Balda

Staff Sgt. Ron Eberhardt says a prayer for fallen Soldiers during a Nov. 1 memorial honoring four 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment Soldiers killed recently in terrorist attacks.

**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.



Soldiers re-up under monument

Pfc. Jason Jordan
1/10th Mtn. Div. PAO

BAGHDAD – American Soldiers have the rare opportunity to visit different places in the world and see things in person that most people will never see.

Some Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment, took advantage of this opportunity when they recently opted to re-enlist underneath the crossed swords monument at Sahit al-Shuhada' Memorial Square in Baghdad.

"It felt great to have the chance to re-enlist here, because I know very few will ever have the chance," said Sgt. Jason Wright after re-enlisting for another four years. "For an American to be standing under such a historic monument for the Iraqis is a significant moment."

The crossed swords, on former dictator Saddam Hussein's main parade grounds, was built to symbolize his claim of victory in the Iraq-Iran war.

The huge monument includes two arms holding swords that cross at an angle. The arms are modeled after those of Hussein's, and the swords are made of the iron from destroyed Iranian tanks. The base of the monument is surrounded by speed bumps made from the helmets of fallen Iranian Soldiers.

"This is my third time to Iraq, and I haven't had an opportunity like this to visit these monuments," said Sgt. Charles Beaugard, another of the 1/71 Soldiers who re-enlisted. Beaugard signed up for another six-year hitch.

The Soldiers also took time to visit Nasb al-Jundi al-Majhul, the monument of the Unknown Soldier.

Although the troops realize they are at war, they all have respect for Soldiers fallen in combat.

"You have to pay respect to those who have fallen in combat, whether they were beside you, or out in front of you," said Beaugard. "Maybe many of these men fought under the dictatorship against their will. I'm just glad that we are here to help prevent that from happening again."



Pfc. Jason Jordan

Capt. Gregory Stone (left), fire support officer for 1/71 Cav., administers the oath of re-enlistment for Sgts. Jason Wright, Charles Beaugard and Alex Crowther, all from 1/71, during a recent ceremony at the base of the crossed swords monument.



Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell

The Soldiers of 2/101st Abn. Div. and 48th BCT stand in formation during the transfer of authority ceremony Oct. 31.

101st Abn. unit takes over Baghdad sector from 48th

Spc. George Welcome
2/101st Abn. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – The 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division formally took control of the southwestern Baghdad area of operations from the Georgia Army National Guard's 48th Brigade Combat Team Oct. 31.

The ceremony was ripe with symbolism as Brig. Gen. Stewart Rodeheaver, 48th BCT commander, and brigade Command Sgt. Maj. James Nelson cased the 48th's colors, which represents the end of their mission and responsibility for this area.

Shortly after the 48th's guidon was cased, Col. Todd Ebel, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. commander, and brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Stall uncased the colors of the "Strike Brigade," symbolically accepting responsibility for

the area and the support and security missions it entails.

In his remarks to the troops in attendance, Rodeheaver expressed his pride in his Soldiers and in the job they have done while stationed here since June.

He also wished the Soldiers of the 101st luck and thanked them for their professionalism during the transitional period.

Following the general's address, Ebel said, "This ceremony is not about us, but about Iraq and what we will give to Iraq."

He also emphasized the importance of 2/101's mission which is "to help bring peace to people who have not enjoyed peace as we know it, in their history."

Ebel also praised the 48th for providing a smooth transition and wished them well on their next mission as the theater security force for all of Iraq.

U.S. Soldiers work with Iraqis to clear east Baghdad junkyard of bomb-making ammo

Press Release
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – More than 2,400 rounds of unexploded ordnance were discovered and destroyed in a 12-day operation in rural east Baghdad.

Soldiers from Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, and nearly 45 Iraqi contractors were involved in the operation Oct. 9-23 to deny terrorists the use of bomb-making material.

A scrap-metal junkyard was cleared of unexploded ordnance, which included 1,135 mortar rounds, 632 artillery rounds, 195 rockets, 22 mines and six bombs.

"The operation takes possible improvised explosive devices off the streets," said Sgt. Frank Neal, the small-arms master gunner for the troop.

Neal said the operation to destroy the ordnance was completed with a focus on safety and that none of the Soldiers or Iraqi contractors who helped collect the munitions suffered any injuries during the controlled detonations.



Courtesy photo

A pile of munitions in rural east Baghdad explodes in flames during a controlled detonation. A scrap-metal junkyard was cleared of unexploded ordnance, which included 1,135 mortar rounds, 632 artillery rounds, 195 rockets, 22 mines and six bombs.

Soldiers follow 'teach a man to fish' principle



Pfc. Luke Allen

Sgt. 1st Class Dennis O'Connor, 448th CA Bn., passes a box of blankets to a young Iraqi while Sgt. Marvin A. Menjivar prepares to pick up another bundle from the back of a humvee in Baghdad Oct. 25.

Pfc. Luke Allen
1/10th Mtn. PAO

BAGHDAD – Little by little, a U.S. Army civil affairs team is helping Iraqis learn to help themselves.

Going by the saying, "If you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day; but if you teach him how to fish, you will feed him for a lifetime," the Soldiers attached to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division hope they'll soon have villages full of fishermen.

The brigade currently has more than 130 projects underway, with several already up and running.

"They are doing a very good job," confirmed Nahal Abdulgabar, an official from the Special Needs Institute in Khadra. "We are appreciative of these Soldiers who come to provide these opportunities for us."

These 10th Mountain Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry Regiment dropped much-needed supplies to Iraqi neighborhoods throughout western Baghdad Oct. 25.

Their goal was to help Iraqis help themselves by working with local officials to create jobs renovating dilapidated buildings into sprawling community centers.

The first stop for the day was at a neighborhood committee building in the Khadamiyah district where the Soldiers delivered winter coats and blankets to help the local residents make it through the cold winter.

The Soldiers here consider it a hand-up and not a hand-out.

Through the neighborhood

At the institute, children who are blind, deaf, or have other special needs can receive the care they need in a supportive environment.

"What we are doing today is checking to see how everything is going," said Sgt. 1st Class Dennis O'Connor of the 448th Civil Affairs Battalion. "This is our fourth school that we've done in the last three months. It feels good that we can go in and help these kids and see the smiles on their faces."

The Iraqis have made many improvements to the facility, some of which include new classroom furniture, ceiling fans, restroom and shower facilities, a new power generator, an ambulance, and even a swing set in the backyard.

Before a project is started, an Army engineering team will survey the property to assess the situation and provide advice to the Iraqi committees.

"There was a very bad situation here before and the Soldiers, along with Iraqi contractors, have helped everything change for the better," said Hussin Lalbaryti, Chairman of the Khadra Neighborhood Committee. "One of the most important changes was the improvement in our sewage system and drinking water. We're very happy to get this type of results."

"There was a very bad situation here before and the Soldiers, along with Iraqi contractors, have helped everything change for the better."

Hussin Lalbaryti
Khadra Neighborhood Committee chairman

committees, citizens can voice their concerns to the city council.

According to the Iraqis, results are made and people are able to get what they need thanks to the Iraqi neighborhood councils. The Iraqis make the decisions on what they need, and the Soldiers provide expertise when it is required.

After the Soldiers departed the neighborhood committee building, they headed to the Special Needs Institute in Khadra, a small neighborhood in the Mansour district.

Rusafa water plant expansion provides clean water for millions

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

BAGHDAD – The expansion of a water treatment plant in the Al-Rusafa region has brought thousands of gallons of fresh, clean water into residents' homes since the 18-month project was completed in mid-July.

The Shark Dijlah Water Treatment Plant project included installation of more pipes, the extension of a pump housing area, and installation of more filters.

The expansion has increased the plant's output to approximately 80 million gallons of water a day – enough to supply water to nearly 2 million citizens, said Mr. Mazin, chairman of the provincial council and government representative of the expansion project.

Mazin said it is the Iraqi government's duty to look out for its citizens, and this project is just one way to do that.

"We have promised our dear citizens that we will carry out these projects," Mazin said. "This is just one of the projects we have promised them. We are trying very hard to expand such projects and start new ones in other areas to reach a desirable amount of drinking water being pumped to the city of Baghdad."

The treatment plant was originally built in 1935, according to a project fact sheet. The expansion included more than 42,000 cubic meters of earthwork and more than 23,000 cubic meters of concrete, and 4,800 meters of piping, as well as seven pump machines which

Mazin said are an integral part of the purification process.

"These pools (of water) surrounded by concrete are from the Tigris River, where it undergoes the first steps of purification," Mazin said. "The second step of purification uses the seven pump machines, where it will be put in the large pools where they will add chlorine

and other products of sterilization before it is pumped into pipe networks. From there, it heads for the Al-Rusafa district."

The expansion project also benefited local citizens by employing 700 Iraqi laborers during construction.

Mazin said he hopes to continue expanding projects to areas around Baghdad, but wants to gain the support

of the Iraqi citizens during these projects which often require patience.

"We just need funds and time to start similar projects in other places and we need the citizens' patience," Mazin said. "We want to let the people know that the Baghdad Governorate Council is the representative of the people and is overlooking the process of these projects."



Photos by Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Above: Additional water pumps and other machinery were installed during the expansion of the Shark Dijlah Water Treatment Plant.

Left: Water from the Tigris River is transferred through these pipes at the water treatment plant prior to its filtration.



1st Lt. Kristofer Deniger

An Abu Ghraib resident unloads polyvinyl chloride pipe delivered by 1/71 Cav. Soldiers Oct 30. Abu Ghraib citizens will install the pipe themselves to repair their dilapidated water supply system.

10th Mtn. brings pipe, Iraqi citizens do the rest

Spc. Carlos Caro

1/87 Inf. PAO

BAGHDAD – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers delivered more than 600 feet of polyvinyl chloride pipe to an Abu Ghraib neighborhood Oct. 30.

Thanks to 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 71st Cavalry, the citizens of this neighborhood can now use the PVC pipe to replace the rusted and leaking steel pipes in their current dilapidated water sup-

ply system.

“They will do the work themselves instead of waiting for the contracting process,” said 1st Lt. James Burnett, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry civil affairs officer.

The pipe will service approximately 50 citizens.

The 1/71st Cav. Soldiers also took the opportunity to hand out school books, clothing and toys to the Abu Ghraib residents, who gratefully offered sweet tea to the Soldiers.

1/76 FA medics teach Iraqi Soldiers how to treat trauma patients

Spc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Combat medics are used to giving combat lifesaver classes to U.S. Soldiers to make sure they are ready for any contingency.

What medics from 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery are not used to doing is speaking through an interpreter to a class of Iraqis, eager to learn all they can about saving lives, so they can take their newfound knowledge out to the streets of Baghdad.

The Iraqi students serve as the security forces for prominent political leaders in Baghdad.

The class covers basic human physiology, basic medical terms, intravenous therapy and – most importantly here in Iraq – how to treat trauma.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Daniel Pinnell, wanted to pass on his medics’ field knowledge to their Iraqi counterparts.

Pinnell asked various Iraqi ministries and police groups if they would be interested in sending their personnel through medical training,

according to Spc. Ryan Walker, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn., 76th FA.

The two-week course includes classroom instruction as well as hands-on practice on skills like administering an IV. After they finish the lectures and feel more comfortable with the training, the Iraqis start the trauma assessment with a head-to-toe exam.

“We have medical equipment for them to train on, so they feel confident with their hands, which is the most important thing when it comes to medical stuff,” Walker said. “It gives them a better understanding of how and why they are learning these skills.”

One of the students is taking his second class, not because of failure to grasp the material the first time around, but because he realizes the importance of the training and wants to learn as much as possible.

“He is constantly coming back, asking for more training and more knowledge,” Walker said. “We like to help him as much as we can and let him sit in on some classes. He’s actually saved a couple of guys’ lives in

the unit he is with.”

The only difficulty the American Soldiers run into while teaching the class is the language barrier, but with patience they manage to get the important parts understood by their students.

“I really have to slow it down a lot to make sure I give the interpreter plenty of time to throw out the information,” Walker said. “Sometimes we get a translator who has a harder time turning the medical terms into Arabic. That’s why the slides are a lot of help. We have the Arabic words on there so that helps explain it a little better.”

Walker, a firefighter/emergency medical technician before joining the military, said he has always enjoyed helping to “fix” people.

Training the Iraqis in lifesaving medical techniques is just an extension of that.

“I like doing these classes because if someone gets (attacked) these guys are more than willing to help and they can assist us with their medical knowledge as best they can,” Walker said. “I miss going out on the line, but this is going to help us and Iraq as a whole quite a bit.”



Spc. Dan Balda

Spc. Ryan Walker (center), an HNB, 1/76 FA combat medic, looks on as an Iraqi medic-in-training prepares to give a classmate an IV.

1/10 engineers’ project brings family healthcare to Iraqi neighborhoods

Tom Clarkson

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BAGHDAD – “All too regularly, children are dying from dysentery, right here in metropolitan Baghdad,” said Al Everett, a Quality Assurance Technician assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division’s Brigade Engineering Support Team. “But modern Public Health Centers, like this one, can make a big difference toward substantially improving the overall health of the Iraqi population.”

Rob Helmerick, a resident engineer who also works out of the BEST office located at Camp Liberty, cited how this work is a part of the broader U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Project and Contracting Office reconstruction mission.

Along with Everett and other engineering professionals, Helmerick recently conducted a final check of the new, and nearly complete, 1,155-square-meter, family health care structure, located in Iraq’s capital.

“The Al Hurriyah PHC will save Iraqi lives, provide family medical service at a neighborhood level, afford employment for healthcare professionals, and demonstrate the compassion and goodwill of the Coalition ... for years to come.”

Lt. Cdr. Rod Tribble
Resident Office OIC

“Today’s inspection is an important milestone for our PHC reconstruction program in Baghdad,” said Lt. Cdr. Rod Tribble, the officer in charge of the Resident Office. “While this visit comes near the end of principal construction of this facility, it marks an important, initial step for community healthcare.”

He continued, “The Al Hurriyah PHC will save Iraqi lives, provide family medical service at a neighborhood level, afford employment for healthcare professionals, and indelibly demonstrate the compassion and

goodwill of the Coalition – in this case, particularly, the Americans – for years to come.”

Project manager Dan Ognanovich, from Texas, said, “This general practice/mild trauma service/dental facility is an excellent example of well coordinated, multiple entity cooperation between members of the Coalition and the new Iraqi government.”

According to Ognanovich, many organizations were involved in the budget management, engineering, contract supervision and construction

of the clinic, including many levels within the ACE, the 3rd Infantry Division, the 1/10th Mtn. Div. and the Iraqi Ministry of Health.”

The project team consisted of active duty Army and Navy personnel, as well as Reservists, government service professionals, and an array of U.S. and Iraqi contractors.

The Al Hurriyah PHC will be the first of 120 built throughout Iraq off the same, Type A, architectural plan.

The PHC program was conceived to provide a network of facilities from which medical personnel can provide quality medical and dental care to large segments of the population who may not have had access to medical care under the previous regime.

All, like the one recently inspected, will fall under the auspicious of the Iraqi Ministry of Health as community based, neighborhood public health facilities.

“This outstanding, new PHC is what Iraqi Reconstruction and helping Iraqis help themselves is all about,” Helmerick said.

Medical aid, teddy bears win hearts in Al Rasheed district

1st Lt. Kevin Norton
3/7 Inf.

BAGHDAD – Armed with medical supplies, teddy bears and shoes, Soldiers from 3rd Infantry Division's 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment helped a predominantly poor neighborhood of the Al Rasheed district Nov. 1.

The Soldiers of E Company, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., spoke with local authorities in the April 9th Village about the need for medical care and supplies in the neighborhood.

On Nov. 1, approximately 30 families were given medical screenings by U.S. Army doctors.

One resident, wounded during an improvised explosive device attack, received a wheelchair from U.S. forces.

As the locals streamed in from all directions, a couple of E Co. Soldiers began organizing the crowd.

With the help of two local sheikhs, the Soldiers handed out essential items to the families including 100 sets of children's clothes, 200 teddy bears and toy cars, 250 pairs of shoes and 100 personal hygiene kits.

Perhaps the most important moment came when a man brought his 4-year-old son to see the medics. The boy was born with his intestines protruding from his abdomen.

Although he was brave, he was still scared as he got closer to the medics conducting evaluations.

The Army medics realized they had a case that needed further attention.



Courtesy photo

Sgt. Daniel Watson, a Soldier assigned to E Co., 3/7 Inf., makes a new friend in the Al Rasheed district. Watson participated in the medical visit that treated more than 30 families in a predominantly poor neighborhood Nov. 1.

1st Lt. Daniel Sevilla, the battalion physician's assistant called for permission from Iraqi and U.S. Army authorities for the child to be seen by an Army surgeon.

After he got the green light, Sevilla

brought the child and his father for further treatment.

One of the platoon leaders from E Co., 3/7 Inf., 1st Lt. Ian Sullivan, was pleased with the outcome of the mission.

"From the initial security phase all the way through the medical assessment, everything went smoothly," Sullivan said. "It is missions like these that make me feel like we're making a difference."

502nd Inf. Soldiers find large weapons cache

Maj. Frank Garcia
2/101st Abn. Div. PAO



Courtesy photo

Soldiers of D Co., 2/502nd Inf. stand behind some of the munitions and other items found south of the Baghdad International Airport. Nov. 4.

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division discovered a large weapons cache during combat operations south of Baghdad International Airport Nov. 4.

Members of D Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment discovered the cache at approximately 8 p.m.

The search revealed more weapons and munitions in a total of 18 different caches before concluding at 5 p.m. Nov. 5.

Three terror suspects were detained for further questioning.

The weapons cache included 90 82-millimeter mortar shells, 40 hand grenades, 22 rocket-propelled grenade rounds, eight rocket-propelled grenade launchers, seven rockets, four 155-millimeter artillery rounds, four 60-millimeter mortar systems, three AK-47 assault rifles, two automatic grenade launchers, two mortar sights, two sacks of mortar propellant charges, two pipe bombs, one 120-millimeter mortar round, one case of 7.62-millimeter ammunition, one improvised rocket launcher, 800 grams of TNT, 300 feet of detonation cord, bomb-making materiel, 25 ski masks, and four sets of body armor with protective plates.

An explosives ordnance disposal team later destroyed the cache through controlled detonation procedures.

Iraqi firefighters to team up with Florida city

Spc. Ben Brody
2nd BCT PAO

RUSAF, Iraq – Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery; firefighters from Fort Wayne, Ind.; and residents of Kissimmee, Fla., have a friend in Col. Laith Abbas, fire chief of central Baghdad.

Firefighters from Fort Wayne have given Abbas training aids, while Kissimmee is in the process of becoming a "Sister City" to Rusafa.

Lt. Col. Steven Merkel, the 1st Bn., 9th FA commander, who is from Fort Wayne, and Capt. Matthew Wheeler, 1/9 FA intelligence officer from Kissimmee, were instrumental in pushing the project.

"It really shows that people in the U.S. want to help make things better here – it's a big confidence boost," Merkel said during a visit to Abbas' station Nov. 3. "I'm extremely proud of the Fort Wayne firefighters – it says they believe enough in what we're doing in Iraq to donate their time and resources."

Like the military, U.S. firefighters have common task training, which involves a lesson plan and tests.

Among the donated items were CD-ROMs and training manuals to help develop the Rusafa firefighters' skills.

The Soldiers of 1/9 FA have found at least one small way to lend a hand at the Rusafa fire station. Local residents routinely bring unexploded ordnance to the firefighters, and so U.S. troops assist in its proper disposal.

"We're working with Col. Laith to increase force protection at his station, and to the dud pit," said Maj. Jay Sawyer, 1/9 FA operations officer. "We just call (explosive ordnance disposal Soldiers) to come over when the dud pit is getting full."

EOD came to the station Nov. 3 and removed approximately a dozen 155-millimeter artillery rounds, 11 120-millimeter mortar rounds and many smaller explosives, including hand grenades and rifle grenades.

The assistance does not run one way; Abbas and his men have aided U.S. troops on numerous occasions.

"We will respond to any bomb strike, no matter who is hit – American or Iraqi," Abbas said. "We come to put down the fire, and help our friends."

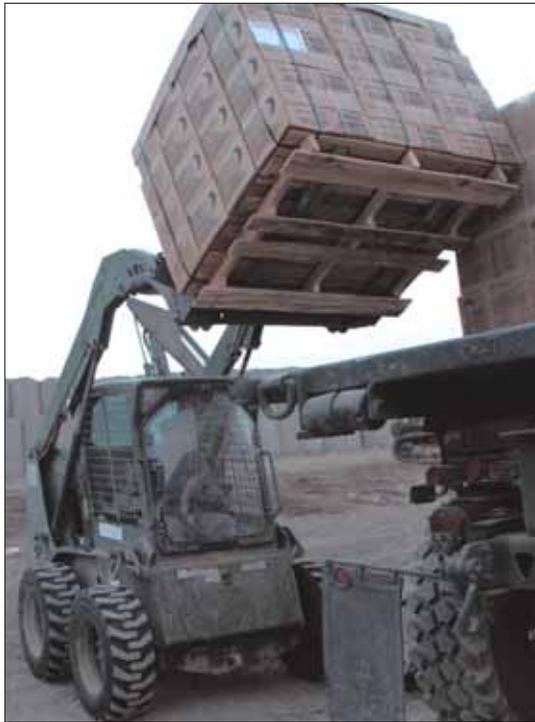
Abbas' firefighters responded to a blast near Sadr City in which one U.S. vehicle was damaged, and helped extinguish the resulting fire.

"We don't care if the TV cameras are filming, we want to show that we work together and support each other," Abbas said.

"We come to put down the fire, and help our friends."

Col. Laith Abbas
Central Baghdad fire chief

Support Soldiers convoy into 'Lion's Den'



Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell

Support troops from 526th BSB download cases of MREs as the battalion delivers supplies to Soldiers working in the area southwest of Baghdad International Airport called the "Lion's Den."

Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell
2/101st Abn. PAO

BAGHDAD – Before the sun heated the cool desert sands of Iraq, the Soldiers of 526th Brigade Support Battalion prepared for yet another mission in support of the many elements within the brigade.

The Soldiers, who support 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, but fall under 526th BSB, spent Oct. 29 loading trucks and trailers with supplies for the troops supporting the Iraqi Soldiers stationed west of the Baghdad International Airport. The support battalion is part of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

Then, in the early-morning darkness of Oct. 30, the Soldiers gathered for a prayer and final safety checks before embarking on their mission to the "Lion's Den."

"Even though we are mainly a support element platoon, our pride is extremely high," said Staff Sgt. LaDale Sumerall, platoon sergeant, F Company, 526th BSB.

Sumerall said the Soldiers of 526th BSB know they are just as much in the fight to help the Iraqis by performing their support mission.

The unit rotates the troops who are to go on convoys and Soldiers who stay behind in

the different camps.

Some spend up to five days with the Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi Soldiers, helping them build their camps by filling sandbags, working on construction projects, manning checkpoints and improving hygiene facilities.

"This gives us a chance to do our part to support the troops," said Sumerall. "Some of the Soldiers may not be able to get phone calls, e-mail or regular mail, or even religious services. We can go out there and deliver these things to the fighting troops, the infantry."

Sumerall said the company even found a way to surprise 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. Regt. by bringing the battalion chaplain and the chaplain's assistant along in a convoy to the "Lion's Den" for religious services.

The supply platoon also brought them hot meals, fruits, juices and energy bars to help give the troops a bit of comfort during their long days.

The Soldiers who have spent days away from the comforts of Camp Striker were high-spirited and positive about their mission.

"It's good stuff," said Spc. Michael Remaley, F Co., 526th BSB, as he took a break from downloading cases of bottled water from the deliv-

ery trucks and trailers. "We are here helping to better the (Iraqi Soldiers') way of life. Out here, we have been able to talk to the Iraqis, get to know them ... and we are becoming friends."

Remaley said his days in the "Lion's Den" have been filled with rewarding work.

"I love it out here," he said. "We work side by side with the Iraqi Soldiers. We have completed their buildings, secured the buildings with sandbags, issued out fuel and at the end of the day we all sit by the fire and eat dinner together."

As the sun rose over the camp walls, the convoy had successfully unloaded at least three water buffaloes of both potable and non-potable water, multiple cases of bottled water, crates of MREs and comfort items such as foam mattresses and mail from home.

After rolling back into Camp Striker, the Soldiers gathered for an after action review and debriefing before heading back to the unit's building to start planning for the next mission.

"Our days do not end when we return from a mission," Sumerall said. "We perform maintenance on the vehicles and begin to prepare for our next mission which could be the next morning or four days away, you just never know."

Medal of Honor recipients visit 1/10th Mtn. Soldiers at Camp Liberty

Pfc. Jason Jordan
1/10th Mtn. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty."

These words prelude the citation that is read for Medal of Honor recipients.

Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division had the opportunity Oct. 30 to meet two of the men who have heard those words read in their honor.

Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Gary Littrell and retired Marine 2nd Lt. John McGinty III visited Soldiers serving during Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 to talk

about the Medal of Honor and to boost the Soldiers' morale.

"We were asked last year if we could send some representatives from our society to Afghanistan and Iraq to meet with Soldiers," said Littrell, president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. "The response and enthusiasm of the Soldiers were so overwhelming that we were asked again to come back this year."

McGinty and Littrell met with Soldiers from each battalion of the 1st BCT and attended a luncheon with them at the Blizzard Inn dining facility.

"I am so proud to be here today among these Soldiers," McGinty said. "It is honestly doing more for my morale

than I think I am doing for yours. I see no less bravery and honor among the Soldiers today than I did years ago. The 10th Mountain Division Soldiers are a great bunch and it makes me proud to be an American citizen."

The Soldiers listened to accounts of each MOH recipient's combat action and later had the chance to ask questions.

"These guys were closer to action and danger than most of us will ever be," said Spc. Michael Simpson, B Company, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment. "They stayed brave and risked their lives to save others in the kind of situations you only see in the movies."

Littrell was serving as an adviser to the 23rd Battalion, 2nd Ranger Group of the South Vietnamese Army when his battalion came under intense enemy mortar attacks and several ambushes starting on April 4, 1970. Over the course of four days, Littrell redirected the battalion's fire, called in air support by day and marked enemy locations by night – all while redistributing ammunition and shouting words of encouragement to the Vietnamese in their own language.

"We got caught in a bad situation that day," Littrell said. "I didn't feel like a hero. I just felt like I had a job to do. I think I was only a sergeant doing his job on that hill. That's all."



Pfc. Jason Jordan

Above: Medal of Honor recipients Gary Littrell (back to camera) and John McGinty III (right) meet with Col. Jeffrey J. Snow (left), 1/10th Mtn. commander, and other leaders. Right: As Soldiers pass around Gary Littrell's Medal of Honor, the retired sergeant first class talks about his actions during combat in Vietnam at Camp Liberty Oct. 30.



McGinty was with Company K, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division in Vietnam in July 1966. His MOH citation describes how his platoon was providing rear security to protect the withdrawal of his battalion from a position in which they had been under attack for three days.

The battalion came under heavy small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire from the enemy. With each wave of attack that assaulted his platoon during a four-hour battle, McGinty rallied his men to beat off the enemy.

In one particular assault, two squads became separated from the rest of the platoon. McGinty charged through intense enemy fire to reach the squads, where he found 20 men wounded and the medical corpsman dead.

McGinty reloaded ammunition for the wounded and directed their fire at the enemy. He killed five of the enemy at point-blank range when they attacked again, and then he directed artillery fire to within 50 yards of his position – which helped rout the enemy.

When asked if he knew that he was committing heroic acts that day, McGinty replied, "I never considered myself a hero, and I don't to this day. I acted upon instinct and training that day. Ten of my fellow Marines died. I don't wear this star for me, I wear it for them."

The visit made a distinct impression on the Iraq-based troops.

"You see people like these men, and talk to them – men who have displayed courage during life-and-death situations – and it motivates you," said Spc. Daniel Nieto, 1st Bn., 87th Inf. "These men have seen war as ugly as it gets, but they are still happy to be here – motivating us and encouraging us to drive on. It makes you feel differently about being here."

Feeding the ma

1/11th ACR

Capt. Marc Pelini
1/11th ACR PAO

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq - 2nd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Muthana Brigade of the Iraqi Army along with 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment distributed 5,000 kilograms, equivalent to 12,000 pounds, of food along with clothes and shoes to four local mosques in Abu Ghraib.

The distribution was to celebrate Eid Al-Fitr, a three day holiday at the end of Ramadan emphasizing direct charitable actions for the poor.

"This is the reason we are here and conduct civil military operations," Cpt. Aaron Ashoff said. "At the end of the day, nothing feels better than helping the people that need it and seeing our Iraqi brothers succeed."



Capt. Aaron Ashoff

Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Muthana Army Brigade, distribute more than 12,000 pounds of food and clothes to residents of Abu Ghraib.



Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army Brigade had repeated opportunities to meet ci



Pfc. Jason Jordan

Soldiers from 2/22nd Inf., 10th Mtn., pull security at four different distribution points throughout the district during an aid mission conducted by the Iraqi Army.

asses



Pfc. Jason Jordan

izens of Abu Ghraib while delivering food during a humanitarian aid mission Nov. 2.



Pfc. Jason Jordan

Above: A member of the Iraqi Army hands out bags of food to the citizens of Abu Ghraib during a humanitarian aid mission on Nov. 2. IA Soldiers took control of the operation. Below: Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Iraqi Army Brigade search citizens of Abu Ghraib before they enter a secure area to receive food supplies.



2/22nd Inf.

Pfc. Jason Jordan

1/10th Mtn. PAO

ABU GHRAIB, Iraq — Soldiers of the 1/10th Mountain Division's 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, assisted the Iraqi Army in a hand out of food supplies in Abu Ghraib on November 2.

The Soldiers provided security and outer cordons while the Iraqi Army continued displaying its capabilities as they took control of the operation.

The Iraqi Army handed out enough beef, rice and sugar to feed approximately 500 families.

"The day was a real success," said Sgt. 1st Class David Larson, 2/22 Inf. "It was great to see the Iraqi Army handling the operation so well for their people, and to see the excitement of those who came for the help."

Comics bring laughter to combat zone

Spc. George Welcome
2/101st Abn. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – If laughter is the best medicine, then Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division were given a healthy dose of good humor Nov. 5 as comedians from the Comics on Duty World Tour visited Iraq.

The troupe began its 10-day tour to military bases in the Middle East Oct. 29.

The comedians said they felt duty-bound to visit the Soldiers in the desert.

"I just wanted a chance to try and give back to the troops," said Matt Isemann, a licensed physician who gave up a career in medicine to pursue stand-



Pvt. Decassel Sanford, F Company, 526th BSB, laughs with the performers of the Comics on Duty World Tour.

up comedy. "I appreciate what they're doing, putting their lives on the line, so I figured it would be something we could do to bring them some humor."

Although the comedians all had different styles and personalities, they were united by a common thread – a desire to make the troops laugh.

"I am glad to get a chance to make people laugh," said comedian Tom Simmons.

Most of the comics said they were surprised to find the Soldiers were really down to earth and friendly. They were also surprised at how much more built up the camps are than what they expected.

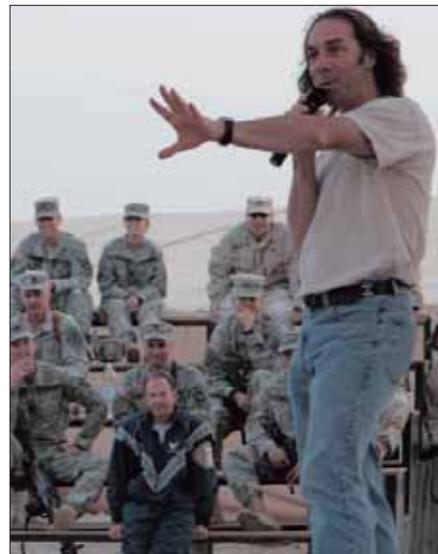
After the two-hour show concluded, the comedians gave away two satellite radios to Soldiers in the audience. In turn, the comedians were given brigade T-shirts and coins by Lt. Col. Richard White, the brigade's deputy commander, who told them, "You were our best show ... you were our only show."

After all the presentations were made, the troops filed onto the stage and shook the comedians' hands.

That's when Simmons realized the Soldiers' attendance that day was as fulfilling to him as the comedy show was to them.

"At the end of the show when you are shaking their hands, it's really humbling. I actually feel kind of stupid, (when it's) them thanking me for coming," Simmons said.

"The show was really entertaining and the guys were all funny," said Pvt. Matthew Black of 526th Brigade Support Battalion. "I think the event has boosted people's spirits. I know it did mine."



Photos by Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell

Comic Jeff Capri entertains the Soldiers of 2/101st Abn. Div. as part of the Comics on Duty Tour that visited Camp Striker Nov. 4.

FAREWELL, continued from page 1

Baghdad," has brought stability to more than 120 IP and Highway Patrol stations, Schroeder said.

Using a team of Soldiers specialized in operations, training, logistics, budget planning, intelligence gathering and managing personnel, progress was anything but fast

in the beginning. However, as the MPs were able to break down some of

the obstacles getting in their way, the IPs began working harder, transforming into a stronger, capable force.

"First, we had to understand Iraq's own current system, which takes a great deal of time and patience because you're dealing with a completely different way of life from your own," Schroeder said. "Then came automation ... that was also a huge obstacle."

When the 42nd MP Bde. arrived in Iraq, the IPs didn't have any method of automation; everything was handwritten ... and stored in boxes. The MPs taught them how to use computers and the Internet for everything; from keeping track of personnel and supplies to using them as a leadership teaching tool, Schroeder said.

"It took an entire year to get standardized reports that are actually important and meaningful to (the IPs)," Schroeder said. "They've seen how beneficial these programs are, especially during an event such as the elections or referendum."

Once the IPs became proficient in automation, P3 shifted its focus to developing a primary staff, much like the military police, capable of managing their own resources, people, equipment and budget.

"As each section of their staff learned what the other does, they began to realize that they must work together in order to succeed," said Staff Sgt. Ruben Covarubias, IPS logistics noncommissioned officer in charge.

"Now they can actually see where they are short personnel, weapons, ammo and where the (dangerous neighborhoods) are. They're able to manage their own people to carry out missions," Schroeder said.

For a security force that was barely in existence when the 42nd MP Bde. arrived last November, the progress they've seen has been tremendous and only continues to grow. Along with managing their own personnel, IPs are also learning to train their own people. Until

recently, the MPs conducted all aspects of training. Whether they're at a weapons range or inside an office typing reports, IPs are gradually replacing the MPs' roles. Schroeder said their goal is to develop a training program that is tailored to their culture and needs, enabling them to sustain and train their own.

Clearly, P3 has made a significant impact in the security and development of IP forces. The program's list of accomplishments is extensive, yet there are more goals to be met.

"We stabilized all the police stations in Baghdad and every place we had military police," Swengros said. "We developed the provincial and director police headquarters where they are probably able to stand on their own two feet with very little support from Coalition Forces."

Swengros reassured the IPs that the 49th MP Bde. will continue assisting them in developing their police stations. "There is still plenty of work to do," he said. "There will be more challenges in developing the districts and stations as we've developed (Baghdad Police Headquarters) this year."

As P3 expands beyond Baghdad, Schroeder sees a promising future for the program and its police. He said the Iraqi Security Forces will continue to progress as long as Coalition Forces keep the IPs as a priority.

"This group of professionals has really stepped up in providing safety and security for the people of Iraq," Swengros said. "They can do anything once they put their minds to it."



Pfc. Laura Bigenho

Maj. Gen. Abd-al-Razzaq, Baghdad police chief, presents Col. Richard Swengros, commander, 42nd Military Police Brigade, with a gift. The Soldiers were served Iraqi food during a farewell dinner held at Baghdad Police Headquarters.

DINAR, continued from page 1

Santiago foresees the banking system in Iraq will increasingly show signs of improvement as Army finance offices continue to make payments in the local currency.

"The ultimate goal is to have all the local vendors and contractors paid in dinars while maximizing the use of the local banking system," Santiago said. "It's difficult to estimate when we will reach this point, but just to disseminate funds in

their currency is a major step in the right direction."

Iraqi vendors and contractors are likely to appreciate the change from payments in U.S. dollars to dinars because it will help their economy, said 1st Lt. Tayonia Williams, 3rd Finance disbursing officer.

"Paying Iraqis in their own currency also has the benefit of limiting the large amount of cash that vendors and contractors have to

carry after getting paid for their supplies and services," Williams said.

Santiago said the switch to dinar will also help the Coalition Forces fight against terrorism.

"By limiting the U.S. dollars in the region, we are cutting down the dollars that could possibly be used by insurgents," Santiago said. "These steps are setting the right path for the rebuilding of Iraq."



Spoc. Derek Del Rosario

Maj. Richard Santiago, 3rd Finance Co. commander, signs a dinar check Oct. 18.

Deployed cops reflect on service to nation, community

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – For three Task Force Baghdad Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, it wasn't enough for them to serve their country in the Army National Guard, they also decided to protect and serve their local communities. Two chose to be police officers while the third joined the U.S. Marshals.

Cpl. Tim Scarrott, a police officer in Oakland, Calif., had always been told by his father to have a career where he could put in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay and to stand for something.

"I believe that is what a police officer does," Scarrott said. "We protect and serve, and I felt it was a worthwhile career that would give me the ability to help people."

Once he joined the police force, he put his thoughts of being a Soldier by the wayside until 9-11.

"After 9-11, the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and ... there was a need for people to serve in the military," Scarrott said. "I love my civilian profession, but I felt there was more I could do for my nation and my community by serving in the National Guard. I chose the National Guard because I love

my job ... I wanted to help during a time of need."

1st Lt. Jon Minnich, a native of Las Vegas, and the fire support officer for C Company, 1st Bn., 184th Inf. Regt., pursued a job with the U.S. Marshals while enlisted in the Air Force.

"I was coming up on my 10-year point in the military and I realized that regardless if I did 20 years active duty, I would still have to get out and find another career," Minnich said.

In the mid-1990s, he attended a law enforcement job fair and, after speaking with a U.S. Marshals representative, was impressed by what they had to offer.

Like Scarrott, Sept. 11, 2001 brought Minnich to a crossroads and made him rethink why he had joined the military.

"I was getting close to 15, 16 years in (federal service) and could have ridden my last four years out, retired and been done with it, but that wasn't what I wanted to do," he said. He chose to become an officer because a part of him had always stayed with the military.

Another 1/184th Soldier, Staff Sgt. Richard Sanchez, joined the military at a young age because he wanted to jump

out of airplanes.

His friends told him how much they enjoyed being a part of the 82nd Airborne Division and he followed suit, eventually serving in the Special Forces. When he came to the end of his enlistment contract he decided to put himself

to be done in a uniform way. You can associate what we are doing here with being a cop, patrolling the streets, gathering information, building a rapport, searching vehicles and houses – everything we do here is associated with police work."

For Sanchez, the deployment has not been without its losses – both in Iraq and back in the U.S. His platoon has been hit hard since they have been in Baghdad and, in August, he lost his police partner of nine years.

"I've taken my losses here, and I've taken a couple back home, but we came to do a job," Sanchez said. "We came with the possibility of not coming home every time we go into sector. (In Compton) what are the odds of getting shot or hurt? It does happen, but it's very rare."

"Being a Soldier is a lot more dangerous and more difficult than any civilian job back home as far as set hours and a set schedule; here it is 24/7, the hours are longer and the work is more difficult," Scarrott said.

In their civilian jobs, Scarrott and Minnich work

either by themselves or with a partner which differs from the Army's emphasis on teamwork among a large group of people.

"As a police officer, you go out on a call and take reports," Scarrott said. "A lot of your work is going to be all individual effort that will later be supervised by a sergeant. Here, as a team leader, I supervise my men directly and there's a lot more teamwork involved."

Sanchez said there are some similarities between his tour of duty here and back in Compton.

"Some of these insurgents are just like gang members back home," he explained. "They work in groups. They adapt to our way of working and try to counteract that. They're always trying to find a way to beat us. It's a battle."

Sanchez compares patrols in Iraq to a rollercoaster.

"Sometimes you go out there and see something you can laugh about," he said. "But sometimes ... you go out and something happens that hurts your buddies. It's an emotional challenge being in Iraq versus the States. Back home, you can shut it off when you go home after work – turn the power switch and worry about it the next morning. Here, that switch is on all the time."

"I've taken my losses here and I've taken a couple back home, but we came to do a job."

Staff Sgt. Richard Sanchez
1/184th Inf.

through the Rio Hondo Police Academy. From there, he joined the Compton (Calif.) Police Department where he has served as a gang detective since 1991.

All three men believe there is a direct correlation between their careers, especially while deployed; which is why so many Soldiers choose to continue serving through law enforcement after getting out of the military.

"I think the taking and giving of orders and the structure (lead to the correlation)," Sanchez said. "Everything has



Capt. Jon Fausnaugh

Cell phones rigged for bomb detonation sit on the hood of a humvee on a rural road in Abu Ghraib Nov. 6.

Tip leads to discovery of terrorists' weapons stash

Capt. Jon Fausnaugh
1/11th ACR

BAGHDAD, IRAQ — Acting on a tip from an Iraqi civilian, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers discovered bomb making materials Nov. 6, in the back yard of an Abu Ghraib farm house.

The tip led Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, a unit from Fort Irwin, Calif., to five possible terrorist safe houses.

The search began early in the morning at about 6 a.m. It was not until noon when they discovered cell phones with wires attached and a video

camera in a bucket buried behind a farm house.

This find led the unit to conduct a more extensive search of the area, which netted several more items intended for Improvised Explosive Device construction.

The Soldiers found one car battery, 10 cell phones with wires, four voltage regulators, one video camera, a ski mask, eight cell phones wired for IEDs, 15 feet of detonation cord, a washing machine timer, eight sticks of dynamite encased in rock plaster form, one 60 millimeter rocket, two 107 millimeter rockets, and eight ounces of plastic explosives.

1/10th Mtn. Soldiers awarded for bravery

Pfc. Jason Jordan
1/10th Mtn. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Several Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division's 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment were recognized for their bravery and selfless service during a ceremony Oct. 25.

The Army Commendation Medal was awarded to Pfc. Jeffrey G. Morris for saving the life of an Iraqi citizen injured during a firefight.

Acting on the skills he learned in the Army's Combat Lifesaver Course, Morris applied a pressure dressing and a tourniquet to the victim's leg to control the bleeding. His quick action kept the man alive until a medic arrived.

Pfc. James S. Carlson was awarded the Purple Heart Award for wounds received during action Sept. 5 when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.

Carlson, a vehicle gunner, received shrapnel wounds to his face, but climbed back into the turret to continue to cover his sector of fire. After getting medical attention and having the shrapnel removed from his face, he returned to duty the next day.

Several Soldiers were awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge for participating in ground combat operations under hostile enemy fire.

The following Soldiers were awarded the CIB: Pvts. Timothy W. Simpson, Gary W. Leafly, Nicholas R. Courmoyer, Jose L. Carrera, James S. Carlson, and Mark D. Borotkanics Jr.; Pfc. Frank J. Salazar, Michael D. Potts, Alex Martinez, Meryll A. Manalo, Sofala Maiava Jr., Ronnie J. Cochran, and Roger D. Anderson; Spcs. Israel D. Martinez, Thomas A. Keller, Robert J. D'Agostino, and Brandon L. Beaver; and Sgt. 1st Class Juan Trevino.

Four Soldiers were also awarded the Army Achievement Medal for their technical and tactical expertise provided to their battalion: Pfc. Stanley Jackson and Sofala Maiava; and Spcs. Christopher A. Shearer and Robert J. D'Agostino.



Pfc. Jason Jordan

Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Carlson, 1/10th Mtn. Div., congratulates Soldiers of the 2/22nd during an awards ceremony Oct. 25.

Diverse infantry company similar to mini-U.N.

Sgt. Matthew Wester
3/1 AD PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Troops who patrol Iraqi streets encounter a different culture every time they leave their base – unfamiliar customs, food and languages are the norm.

However, members of B Company, 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, don't have to leave the wire to experience different cultures or languages. All they have to do is spend some time with their fellow Soldiers.

There are immigrants from 13 countries serving in the diverse Maryland National Guard unit, which works with 2nd Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

"In our company, we have Soldiers from all over the world," said 1st Lt. Michael Kirtland, a B Co. platoon leader. "In my platoon alone, we have guys from Jamaica, El Salvador, Germany, Sri Lanka and Korea. It's educational serving with men from all over. You get to learn many things about all the different cultures. It's almost like a U.N. meeting."

The troops are constantly exchanging information about their native customs and look forward to learning more about other parts of the world.

"I've been to some of (the other Soldiers') homes and they are different from mine," said Pfc. Enoc Cabezas, a B Co. infantryman from El Salvador. "They live in a different world, but I was excited to get to know the people I was serving with."

Spc. Raymond Ritzau is a gunner for B Co. who immigrated to Maryland from Hamburg, Germany in 1999. He

said he's always been interested in different cultures.

"I like different languages," Ritzau said. "I've tried to learn some Spanish (from the other Soldiers). To me, it's interesting to talk to people from different countries."

The myriad languages spoken within the company have caused a little confusion, but also a lot of humor.

Kirtland said during patrols, radio transmissions are sometimes difficult to understand because the different accents of some of the Soldiers make communications a little more challenging.

Although the infantrymen joke around about their differences, when they're patrolling the streets northwest of Baghdad, they work together as a team.

"We just see each other as Soldiers no matter where we come from," Kirtland said. "The guy next to you depends on you, you depend on him."

"We're all Soldiers who are getting along, just working together," Ritzau added.

The foreign-born Soldiers said they take pride in their adopted country and see military service as a way to show their thanks for the opportunities the U.S. has afforded them.

"A lot of these guys want to return something back to the country that has given them so much," Kirtland said.

"(Military service) was calling my name. It was something I wanted to do," said Cabezas, who grew up amid civil war in El Salvador. "My family looks up to me. They think I'm doing something great for the country."

Deploying to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom 3 has given some of the Soldiers an even greater appreciation



Sgt. Matthew Wester

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Sgt. Andy B. Vinh, a team leader for 2nd Platoon, B Company, 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, loads a .50-caliber machine gun before a recent patrol. The Maryland National Guard Soldier was born in Vietnam. When he was an infant, his family immigrated to Silver Spring, Md., one of the last planes out of Vietnam as Saigon was being overrun.

for America.

"There are a lot of opportunities in the United States and I plan on staying there for the rest of my life," Ritzau said. "If I can make it safer for me and my family to live there, then I'm proud to do it."

The U.S. government is rewarding that sacrifice by allowing immigrant Soldiers who have served in a combat zone for a year to apply for citizenship.

Thirteen Soldiers in B Co. are cur-

rently applying to become U.S. citizens.

"They feel like America is their home; it is their country," Kirtland said. "We're a country of immigrants. When you see a military unit of immigrants fighting for that country, you're seeing that representation. We're showing the world that there is a place where people with different cultures, backgrounds and religions can get along."

Sadr City flooded with essential services projects

Press Release
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – The impoverished neighborhood of Sadr City in eastern Baghdad, once filled with violence, is now benefiting from millions of dollars pumped into projects designed to improve the basic services of water, electricity, sewage treatment and trash clean-up.

Residents' faucets are now flowing with fresh water, thanks to more than a dozen new water networks in the district.

One of the first priorities undertaken by 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team to improve the infrastructure was to provide the residents of Sadr City with drinking water.

Prior to the rebuilding effort, clean water had to be brought in

by trucks.

The water network, decayed from years of neglect, did not provide sufficient drinking water for its residents and suffered from low pressure and contamination.

Additionally, residents in homes without a proper water connection resorted to illegal taps into the network, which led to a further decrease in pressure and made the network even more vulnerable to breaks and contamination.

All this would soon change.

In early October 2004, a \$22.5 million project was funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development to provide Sadr City residents with clean drinking water.

The Parsons Corporation was contracted to design a network for 83 water sectors and install

networks in 14 sectors, which would bring water to about 200,000 residents.

While Parsons personnel completed the design of the networks, they subcontracted the actual installation to two Iraqi contractors who employed local residents, making them active participants in the rebuilding of their community.

Parsons recently completed the installation of the 14 networks.

Nearly 100 kilometers of main line water pipe were installed and 15,000 house connections were completed.

Parsons and the Baghdad Water Supply Authority coordinated to ensure minimal interruption of water service when old networks are disconnected.

The 14 water networks are a model for the rest of the net-

work rehabilitation for Sadr City.

The designs for water networks in the remaining 69 sectors are now complete. Contracts for five of these sectors were recently awarded to three Iraqi contractors.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is managing these projects with the help of Iraqi quality-assurance personnel.

A complementary short-term water project is the installation of 57 compact water purification units in Rusafa, including 27 throughout Sadr City.

Each unit draws water from drilled wells and provides nearly 15,000 liters of clean drinking water per day.

This project is intended only as a short-term solution to Sadr City's water shortage until the new networks are in place

throughout the city, according to Lt. Col. S. Jamie Gayton, 2nd Brigade Troops Battalion commander.

USACE works closely with BWSA in their efforts. This partnership ensures the local Iraqi government has ownership over how the city is rebuilt.

Additionally, the government representatives can garner trust from the Iraqi people through the successes displayed by their municipal authority.

Once the networks are complete and accepted by BWSA, responsibility to maintain those networks is turned over to the Iraqi government.

The 14 new networks are just a small part of the effort to provide a better future for Iraq, but will have a huge impact on the lives of the people of Sadr City.



Soldiers treated to a few tricks at Halloween bash

Spc. Brian Henretta
100th MPAD

BAGHDAD – Camp Liberty Soldiers performed their best tricks at the Riva Ridge Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center, treating the crowd to a “spooktacular” Halloween talent show Oct. 29.

The show’s format followed the 1970s TV game “The Gong Show,” with three judges giving performers a score of one to 10, with the truly terrible acts getting “gonged.”



Pfc. Dustin Moon (left) and Pfc. Christopher Jones, 10th BSB, 1/10th Mtn. Div., perform handstands during their break dance routine at the Riva Ridge Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility Halloween talent show Oct. 29.

The talent show featured singers, dancers, poetry reading and even an Elvis impersonator. Acts of all types are welcomed and encouraged at future talent shows.

“You can do anything you want,” said event judge Maj. Nick Mauldin, of 17th Field Artillery Brigade and the life support area mayor for east Camp Liberty. “Sing, break dance, magic, stand-up comedy, anything goes. Soldiers don’t even have to be very good at what they’re doing. In fact,

being good might even work against them when it comes to the gong.”

Soldiers were treated through the night to singers, both talented and terrible, performing selections such as “Mountain Music,” by Alabama; “Killing Me Softly,” by the Fugees; “Blue Suede Shoes,” by Elvis Presley; “Do Your Own Thing,” by King El the King; and Halloween favorite “The Monster Mash.”

The winning “spooktacular” performance was a dance routine by the duo Big Moon and Jones, composed of Pfc. Dustin Moon and Christopher Jones, both truck drivers with 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division.

The duo’s showcase of break-dancing, flips and “the robot” elicited a roaring ovation from the audience. Judges awarded Big Moon and Jones the event’s only perfect overall score.

Jones and Moon may have defeated their talent show challengers with ease, but only because they have spent years dancing and building team chemistry.

“I’ve been dancing for 12 years,” Jones said. “(Moon and I) met each other a year and a half ago at Fort Drum and start-

ed doing routines together.”

“We began practicing and battling other dancers at clubs in the area,” Moon added. “After a while, we gained a great chemistry as a team, which helped us out tonight.”

Moon said he and Jones feed off each other’s energy. Although they come from different dance backgrounds, they have developed such knowledge of the other’s moves that during a routine they are able to anticipate what the other will do and communicate with just head nods and other non-verbal signals.

During his 12 years of dancing, Jones has taken formal lessons and been a member of a break dance crew. Moon said he began dancing five years ago after a neck injury. He taught himself moves as a way to rehabilitate his neck and challenge himself.

While Big Moon and Jones were excited about winning, they look forward to defending their title at future talent shows.

“We had some great competition,” Jones said. “There were a few singers that were amazing and I thank everyone for competing. Hopefully next time there will be another dance group for us to battle with.”

Big Moon and Jones’ score was just enough to top Pfc.

Erreka Bennett’s rendition of “Killing Me Softly.”

Bennett, an A Co., 10th BSB truck driver, said she chose this particular song because she has always loved it and it fits her voice well.

The Georgia native has sung her entire life, and she said all the hard work paid off with the praise she received for her performance.

“Like Randy [Jackson] from ‘American Idol’ would say, ‘Girl, you got it going on,’” Mauldin said as he gave the performance a perfect ten.

Although Mauldin was impressed by most of the entertainers, he had to give out one gong for a botched Elvis impersonation.

“I couldn’t let you continue to disgrace the King like that,” Mauldin jokingly said to the contestant to explain his gong.

He said the evening was a great time for everyone involved.

“It was awesome, Mauldin said. “We had 200 plus people in the crowd, eight great acts and everyone enjoyed themselves. Tonight is just a start. We are going to do this the last weekend of every month. Hopefully, it will become even more popular and we can get some performers from other camps.”

STB mechanics teach tae kwon do

Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Confidence, discipline, passion – these may sound similar to Army values, but they are also the leadership traits that tae kwon do instructors Spc. Fred Jean-Francois and Sgt. Jean Valnues strive to instill in their martial arts students.

Both Jean-Francois and Valnues are mechanics with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion.

Jean-Francois, a second-degree black belt, has nearly 20 years of experience. He began teaching in 1992 in his native country of Haiti, where he has won two national championships. His interest in martial arts began as a youth, when a classmate showed him the passive nature of tae kwon do.

“I was a bit of a trouble-maker as a kid and I would get in a lot of fights,” Jean-Francois said. “One classmate had a very calm character that I admired. I saw him practice tae kwon do one day and I was very impressed, so I became interested as well.”

Valnues first attended Jean-Francois’ class in March and was immediately inspired. He trained diligently, earned his green belt, and is now an assistant instructor.

“When I first came to the class, it was the first time I’d ever participated in tae kwon do,” Valnues said. “I was hooked from the beginning. I found it very competitive and challenging.”

There are two aspects of tae kwon do – form and fighting.

Form is basically like imaginary fighting or kata. Fighting is more active and self-defense driven, and it is Jean-Francois’ specialty.

“It is not only a sport, it’s a lifestyle,” Jean-Francois said. “It’s a way of life, like a religion, for me. I think people who study tae kwon do learn self-control in every aspect of life, and most importantly, discipline.”

The fundamentals of the ancient discipline as taught by Jean-Francois have made Valnues a better martial artist.

“(Jean-Francois) is truly a master of his art,” Valnues said. “He makes sure people understand the moves, he’s very informative and takes a step-by-step approach to teaching. He remains very relaxed and approachable.”

Maj. Susan Robinson, a 602nd Area Support Medical Company staff physician, said she takes the class to keep herself connected with her family.

“I think the class is very fun and informative,” she said. “The instructors are very professional. My 6-year-old son is taking tae kwon do (in the U.S.), so talking to him about it is a real bonding experience.”

Jean-Francois and Valnues remain dedicated to their duties as mechanics, but they both agree that tae kwon do has boosted their moral and helped them stay positive during some of the most trying periods of their deployment.

“When it comes to Army life, I have no stress despite being away from family or being in Iraq,” Jean-Francois said. “Tae kwon do gives me the discipline to stay positive no matter what happens during this tour. That’s just the way I am, and I try to pass that positive attitude onto others.”

Valnues also sees parallels between tae kwon do and the Army. He is a teacher in the motor pool, but a student when it comes to tae kwon do.

“Tae kwon do has definitely given me more confidence and discipline, which is important in the Army,” Valnues said. “The Army structure is very similar to tae kwon do, they both have a rank structure and there is a level of respect among us. (Jean-Francois) is my Soldier at work, but (in class) we switch positions. I salute him by bowing to show respect.”

Jean-Francois believes that one’s physical ability is not the most important characteristic necessary to succeed in tae kwon do.

“You have to believe in yourself in



Spc. Fred Jean-Francois, an HHOC, STB mechanic, teaches tae kwon do self defense moves to Maj. Susan Robinson, 602nd ASMC staff physician, at the 3rd Inf. Div. gym.

order to succeed,” he said. “When I teach, it doesn’t matter if my class has one or 100 people. I’m going to stay dedicated to teaching, and that mindset is what you need to be successful in tae kwon do.”

“If your heart is in it, you will get to where you want to go,” Jean-Francois advised. “When life gives you a punch, you have to get back up. Never stay down.”

He said he wants the martial arts classes to continue for the troops even after his tour of duty ends, so to ensure the lessons and ideals of tae kwon do inspire others, Jean-Francois is working with Pfc. Michael Ross, a black belt

from B Company, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, and will hand over the duties of class instructor to Ross when his unit redeploy.

Jean-Francois, who is training to earn his third-degree black belt, plans to open his own school called the Haitian Tae Kwon Do Academy.

Valnues anticipates participating in tae kwon do competitions and hopes to earn a black belt rating.

Tae kwon do classes are offered at the 3rd Infantry Division gym at 6 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays, and 7 p.m. on Fridays. Tae kwon do classes are open to servicemembers and civilians.

East Baghdad gets wired for reliable electricity

Spc. Ben Brody
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Residents of east Baghdad should be getting more reliable electricity after more than 24,000 meters of new electrical cable was laid

during a project to connect the Adhamiyah main station with the Kriahat substation.

“Adding this feeder line means the Ministry of Electricity will eventually be able to provide power to more homes from the substations,” said

Robyn Thomas, project management specialist for Army Corps of Engineers. “It is an added capability, providing redundancy if there is a failure in the power supply or distribution along another line. The project has the potential to improve service for about 200,000 people.”

The project started July 19 and employed more than 180 Iraqis in either full- or part-time work on the project. An Iraqi engineer and his crew were charged with quality control of the project.

“We visited the site about three times each week and the workers are doing a good job,” said Ismael, an electrical engineer who serves as the deputy resident engineer for east Baghdad. He was trained at a Baghdad engineering college and worked as an engineer for the Iraqi government.

He said that he and his crew “represent the best interests of the Iraqi people at work sites to make sure the contract is being adhered to. The people can have faith that we are monitoring these projects very strictly.”

In this project, where more than 4,000 meters of trench were dug for the cable, checking the standards was very important.

Ismael said the trench has to be dug to the correct depth and there is a need

for a specific amount of fine soil under and over the cable. If the cable needs to cross a road, there is a requirement for other material such as gravel to make a base that can handle the extra weight.

In all cases, the contractor must seal the trench with concrete pavers and then put fresh soil on top of that.

“The goal is to return the ground to what it looked like before the digging took place,” Ismael said, adding that he feels the job was done very professionally.

Safety is another concern he looks at while on the job sites.

“We look to keep the project running smoothly, but we also check to make sure the workers are being safe,” he said. “We can stop the project if we see unsafe activity.”

He said he has noticed an improvement in the safety procedures on site.

Ismael said his role representing the government and the people at the project sites is fairly new.

“During the Saddam regime, the workers and managers were government employees – now we deal with private contracting companies,” Ismael said. “The competition for projects means that a contractor must establish a reputation for high quality, efficient and safe work. The system is working well.”



Courtesy photo

Iraqi workers move cable into a trench during a project in east Baghdad. More than 4,000 meters of trench were dug for the electrical cable.

Soldiers locate source of deadly rocket attack

Maj. Russ Goemaere
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – After a rocket attack in east Baghdad Oct. 31 killed one Iraqi and wounded three others, U.S. Soldiers arrived at the scene to determine the rocket’s launching point.

Local Iraqi Police evacuated the wounded and secured the site as Iraqi fire fighters doused flames caused by the explosions.

Task Force Baghdad Soldiers investigated the scene and questioned local residents at the suspected launch site of the rockets.

“The Iraqi Police responded very quickly to this terrorist attack,” said Lt. Col. Edward Chesney, deputy commanding officer, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. “It is impossible to know who the terrorists were targeting in this attack, but in the end it does not matter – they murdered and maimed innocent civilians.”

A crater analysis team from 2nd BCT went to the site the next morning to verify the type of munitions the terrorists used in the attack.

The crater analysis team often deploys to the site of any indirect fire attack to verify what the fire direction computers tell the unit about the enemy

fire.

“I am 100 percent confident that the rocket was 127-millimeter due to the range it was fired from and the acquired acquisition,” said Chief Warrant Officer Chad Barrett, a radar technician and targeting specialist with 2nd BCT.

The crater analysis team uses well-proven devices and techniques to get their data.

“We use parachute cord to measure the intersection of the point of impact in the crater, a compass to discover the direction of where the round was fired and a Global Positioning System for confirmation,” said Sgt. Kenneth Sutton, a fire support non-commissioned officer.

Shrapnel discovered at the site will also provide information on what type of munitions were used, he said.

“I wish the terrorists would stop shooting indiscriminately into the city and killing innocent civilians,” said Sgt. 1st Class Chad Ullery, brigade targeting non-commissioned officer in charge. “As long as they do, I know I can use the art of crater analysis to help the Iraqi Security Forces and our maneuver battalions catch more terrorists in the act of shooting and help to save lives.”



Courtesy photo

Chief Warrant Officer Chad Barrett, 2nd BCT, uses parachute cord to measure the intersection of a point of impact at the site of a terrorist rocket attack in east Baghdad Nov. 1. Sgt. Kenneth Sutton, also with 2nd BCT, uses a compass to determine the azimuth of the Oct. 31 attack.

Interested in Officer Candidate School?

Boards are scheduled for one week, but may last longer. OCS application files must be sent to Department of the Army Headquarters a minimum of 30 days before the start of each board.

Late applications will be held until the next scheduled board.

Dates for OCS selection boards:

- Board one: Jan. 30, 2006 - Feb. 3, 2006
- Board two: Apr. 10, 2006 - Apr. 14, 2006
- Board three: July 17, 2006 - July 21, 2006
- Board four: Sept. 11, 2006 - Sept. 15, 2006

Mail applications to:

200 Stovall St.,
Alexandria, VA 22332-0413

The DA photo can be taken in DCUs and Soldiers can go to the photo lab next to the Camp Liberty PX to have their photos taken.

DESERT JUSTICE

When redeploying, make sure belongings comply with standards

Capt. Chris Glascott
MND-B chief of claims

Redeploying Soldiers have several important issues to consider before arriving back in the U.S.

Soldiers who plan on shipping personal property home in military containers should be aware that the Army will not compensate them if their property is damaged or lost. For this reason, Soldiers are encouraged to use the United States Postal Service to ship valuable property (greater than \$100) home.

The military has a claims program that will compensate Soldiers for loss of personal property when the loss was caused by their military service.

However, this is a morale program, not an insurance program, and as such, it has various limitations.

In the case of redeployment, even though your commander may allow you to place personal property – such as rugs or electronic devices – in a military container, it does not mean the Army will compensate you if they are damaged during the trip.

On the other hand, shipping through the USPS allows you the opportunity to insure your goods and protect your investment.

Other types of personal property that you intend to carry on the aircraft should be well documented.

Be sure to inventory your personal property just as you inventory military property before redeployment.

If one of your bags is lost or damaged during transport, you should visit the claims office at Fort Stewart to file a claim. Be prepared to produce receipts and detailed inventory forms.

Many Soldiers will need off-post housing upon return to Stewart or other home bases.

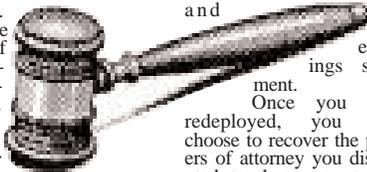
If you have a trustworthy representative available to enter a lease or real estate purchase on your behalf, then you may be able to get your residence established before you are even home. That person will need a power of attorney from you to execute the lease or pur-

chase.

Many companies will not accept a general power of attorney, so your representative should inquire early to find out if any specific forms are needed, or if a special power of attorney authorizing the action will be accepted.

You may also need a power of attorney for delivering your household goods and vehicles from storage.

Georgia remains difficult in its vehicle registration requirements. If you need to register a vehicle in Georgia, but you are a resident of another state, then you should not have to pay the ad valorem tax on Georgia vehicles. You will need a power of attorney specifically to register your vehicle and an affidavit that you remain a resident of another state, along with a recent leave and



earnings statement.

Once you have redeployed, you may choose to recover the powers of attorney you distributed to those you trusted while you were gone.

On the other hand, you may want to allow those powers of attorney to continue when you return, if your relationships have not changed and your financial and personal affairs remained in order.

Finally, if your family situation has changed significantly, you may want to change your Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, and DD Form 93 designating next-of-kin, and your will.

Most wills anticipate additional children in a marriage. However, pending and completed divorces, deaths or incapacitations of designated guardians, or changes to other beneficiaries may increase your reasons to execute a new will.

You do not need to retrieve an old will before you execute a new one. Write the new will with your unit judge advocate, execute it, and mail it to your designated personal representative or executor.

Eventually, you should retrieve and destroy the old will, but it is better to have the new one written upon your new circumstances.

Consult your judge advocate early regarding these and any other redeployment issues.

Chaplain's Corner

The end of ourselves is the beginning of God

Chaplain (Capt.) Glenn Palmer
2/70 Armor, 3/1 AD

“HEAR INSTRUCTION AND BE WISE, AND DO NOT NEGLECT IT.” – Proverbs 8:33

“ELISHA KEPT WATCHING AND CRYING OUT, “FATHER, FATHER! THE CHARIOTS OF ISRAEL AND ITS HORSEMEN!” – 2nd Kings 2:12

Dear friends,
Many years ago when I was a teenager, being fairly self-absorbed and self-centered like most teens, I would snap at my father. “Don’t tell ME what to do.”
It’s hard to appreciate the wisdom of others when you are young and know/have all the answers.

My father, the man who with tears rolling down his face whispered these words in my ear as I was heading off to Marine Corps boot camp some 25 years ago “Be the best Marine you can be. Keep your ears open and your mouth shut.” This man died suddenly when I was 26 years old.

Four days prior to his death, he met the woman who would change my life, my wife Pamela. Only by the time of his death did I realize how much he had offered me in life and how much he truly did know.

In the above verse from 2nd Kings, a man named

Elisha will take over for the prophet Elijah. In the Hebrew language his words are a way of saying “this one who comes before me is more important than I am.”

The truth is that it is difficult at any point in life to be corrected by others. Even our loving God’s correction can make our heads and hearts hard; especially when we are full of ourselves, which really is sin defined.

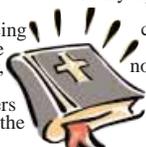
When we come to the end of ourselves, we come to our beginning in God.

Laying aside pride and stubbornness is not easy. But what a change God works in our lives, what a witness and glory we give to God when we listen to and are alert for the hand of our involved Lord, God with us, at work in our lives

It is a good thing to be around those who have learned to keep God as the center of their lives and who, in response to God’s grace, have learned and model patience coupled with wisdom, humility and integrity in their lives.

What a blessing they are. What a gift to have a God who gives us ears to hear, spirits to receive and who loves us enough to provide us with his truth and those Saints in our lives who care enough to teach us the ways and beginning of wisdom, the “fear of God.”

God be with you all.



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

Reducing stress risks for Soldiers heading home

Lt. Col. Virginia Yates
Division Surgeon, 3rd Inf. Div.

Most veterans who are exposed to combat and combat environments return from deployment and transition into civilian life very productively. Combat experiences can result in changes that benefit our families and society. Some of these changes we undergo from being in combat include:

- Improved sense of own vulnerability
- Sense of increased competence and self-reliance
- Increased gratitude for relationships with significant others
- More compassion and empathy for others
- Greater efforts directed at improving relationships
- Greater appreciation for life
- Positive changes in one’s priorities
- Stronger religious/spiritual beliefs

Unfortunately, research shows that some people who have trouble adapting back to family or society after combat do not seek help.

One reason is a fear of the stigma that peers and superiors will think we are weak or crazy. The Army has a program to address this problem – called the Post Deployment Health Assessment. Every Soldier leaving a combat zone is required to complete a PDHA and review it face to face with a medical provider. This is to make sure every Soldier has the opportunity to seek help for mental stress without being singled out.

Soldiers also receive required briefings before returning home, to include medical and chaplain briefings which teach us and our leaders how to identify whether we or our buddy have signs or symptoms of stress that need professional help.

After a deployment, Soldiers adapt to the stress of dealing with family and society better if there is a period of decompression and reintegration prior to going on block leave.

Upon returning home, Soldiers are placed on a short pass then work half-days for couple of weeks attending classes. During this time, Soldiers spend relaxing time with fellow Soldiers to discuss deployment experiences and go to classes to learn about anger management, communication skills, and the many division, community, and anonymous resources available for help handling stress if needed.

Delaying leave for a very brief period of time after deployment for decompression and reintegration is a technique currently being used by several western armies after deployments to reduce stress related events during the block leave period.

And finally, medical studies show that people who are under stress and who have a peer as a buddy report less anxiety, stress, and depression than those who do not have a buddy.

Partnering with another person is recognized in many weight loss programs because a buddy helps to keep us motivated and committed to our program.

Gen. George Patton is quoted to have said, “The Army is a team. It eats, sleeps, fights, dies as a team. This individuality stuff is a bunch of crap.”

Throughout the history of the Army, the buddy system has been a way to ensure Soldier safety and wellbeing. Not only do buddies help build trust in a unit, but a battle buddy is another set of eyes for a Soldier to ensure safety.

A buddy looks out for your well being and receives the same in return from you. The result is improved physical and mental health.

In Memory of ...

Spc. Kenny D. Rojas, B Co., 2/7th Inf.
Capt. Raymond D. Hill II, HHC, 1/184th Inf.
Sgt. Shakere T. Guy, D Co., 1/184th Inf.
Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Tessar, A Co., 2/502nd Inf.
Spc. William J. Byler, A Co., 2/502nd Inf.
Pfc. David J. Martin, A Co., 2/502nd Inf.
Pfc. Adam R. Johnson, A Co., 2/502nd Inf.
Pfc. Derence W. Jack, E Co., 100/442nd Inf.
Staff Sgt. Wilgene T. Lieto, E Co., 100/442nd Inf.
Spc. Joshua J. Munger, HHC, 1/502nd Inf.
Spc. Benjamin A. Smith, A Co., 1/502nd Inf.
Pfc. Tyler R. MacKenzie, B Co., 1/502nd Inf.
Spc. Dennis J. Ferderer Jr., HHC, 1/15th Inf.

Spc. Darren D. Howe, A Co., 1/15th Inf.
Capt. James M. Gurbisz, A Co., 26th FSB
Pvt. Dustin A. Yancey, B Co., 26th FSB
Staff Sgt. Jason A. Fagler, C Co., 1/502nd Inf.
Sgt. 1st Class James F. Hayes, A Btry., 1/320th FA
Capt. Joel E. Cahill, B Co., 1/15th Inf.
2nd Lt. Justin S. Smith, 3rd Sqdn., 3rd ACR
Staff Sgt. Brian L. Freeman, 3rd Sqdn., 3rd ACR
Spc. Robert C. Pope II, 3rd Sqdn., 3rd ACR
Pfc. Mario A. Reyes, 3rd Sqdn., 3rd ACR
Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn C. Cashe, A Co., 1/15th Inf.



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





Spc. Derek Del Rosario



Spc. Derek Del Rosario



Courtesy photo

Spc. Michael Pinter, 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery, opens packages from home at Camp Liberty.



Spc. Derek Del Rosario

Above: 2nd Lt. Jamie Garcia, A Company, 2/22nd Infantry Battalion, 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, patrols near the remains of a factory in an Abu Ghraib neighborhood. Top left: Sgt. 1st Class Mark Woelzlein, 335th Theater Signal Command, sings a hit by Three Doors Down during the Camp Liberty MWR center's karaoke night Nov. 3.

Left: Staff Sgt. Charles "Chuck" Curry, a member of the 3rd Inf. Div. Dixieland Band and a Kentucky native, shows off his trombone during a concert at Camp Liberty Nov. 11.

Faces & Places



Sgt. Matthew Wester

Pvt. Chase R. Cannon, of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, provides security at a patrol base nicknamed "The Alamo" in Saba Al Bor, Iraq. The unit's infantrymen regularly patrol the crowded streets of the city northwest of Baghdad.



Ironman races through Victory

Sgt. Andrew Miller
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – A Task Force Baghdad Soldier completed his own version of the renowned Ironman Triathlon Oct 17 in Baghdad's combat zone, shortly after his wife finished in the original event in Hawaii.

Capt. Christopher Harris, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, ran, cycled and swam his way through a course of his own design. The course, longer than 140 total miles, spanned several bases in the greater Camp Victory area in west Baghdad.

Harris began by swimming more than 100 laps in the Camp Victory pool. After a quick change of clothes, he was on his bike and moving hastily toward Baghdad International Airport. Racing around the airport complex until he had accumulated 112 miles, he then changed into his running shoes.

His course took him back through Camp Victory and into the adjoining Camp Liberty, where he ran around the installation's lake until completing his marathon run. Finishing in front of the Task Force Baghdad headquarters, he had for the first time become an Ironman.

Ironman triathletes refer to any unofficial copycat event as an iron distance triathlon. Harris calls it the ultimate per-

sonal test of physical and mental endurance.

"I was spent by the end of it all," he said. "Actually, I was spent somewhere around mile 15 of the run."

In addition to the rigors inherent in any iron distance triathlon, Harris had to cycle his way through heavy winds. Before long, the winds became a dust storm.

"Winds and dust kicked up all around, making the bike very difficult," Harris said. "It was not fun, and the exertion required on the bike just to keep it upright really hurt my legs for the run."

Harris said he was satisfied to have finished just one minute after his goal of 13 hours, although he failed to best his chief competitor, his wife Amanda.

Amanda completed the Ironman Triathlon, held annually in Kona, Hawaii, in 12 hours, 36 minutes. Her triumph crowns a perfect record of triathlon victories over her husband and friendly rival.

Amanda said her husband is the faster runner and swimmer and that she doesn't expect to beat him forever.

"Now, on the bike, I can beat Chris," she said. "However, he wasn't that far behind me in this last race, and his conditions were much worse than mine." She added that with more training, he may surpass her on the bike as well.

"But," she said, "I will make him have to work at it!"

While his wife's reign of dominance is yet unblemished, it hardly deters the 3rd Inf. Div. officer.

"She is a tremendous athlete and the primary motivation for my performance," Harris said.

Both said their competition is a healthy one, and that it helps them deal with the long separations which come with military service.

"I strongly feel that training together during this deployment has made it go by so much faster," Amanda said. "We have been able to focus on something positive that we can do 'together.'"

Oddly enough, it was their own story that motivated the couple to become Iron people.

"In March of this year, my wife was having difficulty remaining motivated for a half-Ironman she was to race at Walt Disney World in Orlando," Harris explained. "So, to motivate her, I promised to race with her in Baghdad."

He did, and of course, she beat him. But during their training for that event, the couple's latest challenge began to develop.

"During the prep for the race, Triathlete magazine got wind of the story," Harris said. "They wrote an article and posted stories on the website."

A TV producer caught wind of the story and proposed that



Photos by Sgt. Andrew Miller

Top left: Capt. Christopher Harris, HHC, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., swims through the 2.4-mile leg of his Ironman Triathlon Oct. 17. Above: Harris speaks to his chief rival competitor, his wife Amanda, as he bikes through a dust storm during the Triathlon.

the Harris couple do the same for the Ironman Triathlon in Kona, Hawaii.

Harris said they were left with eight weeks to prepare.

"The first race was for us to bond," he said. "This race was to see if we could rise to the challenge together."

In line with his goal to cross the finish line before his wife, Harris draws motivation from another challenge. For the last 10 years, he has endured a series of potentially crippling injuries, he said. An injury in airborne school, a car wreck, and a medical evacuation from the combat zone have led to two spinal fusions and a serious neck injury.

Harris said he has had to fight to keep his place in the Army.

"When I graduated Ranger school, it was the same statement," he said. "A doctor told me on the eve of my first surgery, while sitting at his desk in front of pictures of him completing marathons, that my injury would preclude me from ever running at a competent level and that I could never join the physically-demanding Infantry. Is there ever any more motivation needed than that?"

Harris and his wife Amanda are already planning their next race. They've been invited to compete in next year's Ironman Triathlon.

"And this time I will do it in lovely Hawaii and won't have to face a dust storm," he said, with his fingers crossed.

Heat take 10th tourney victory, edge out Victory Bumpers 53-49



Sgt. Andrew Miller
100th MPAD

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The Camp Liberty Heat exhausted the Camp Victory Bumpers for a 53-49 victory during the final match of a Morale, Welfare and Recreation basketball tournament Oct. 31.

The Heat went undefeated in the three-day double-elimination tournament, making this latest win their tenth tournament victory. The team has participated in 12 tournaments, with an overall record of 38-3.

While the Heat dominates both tournaments and statistics, the Bumpers stayed with them until the end. The Bumpers have been the Heat's strongest rival, owning the two tournament wins given up by the Heat this year.

"It feels good to win, and especially when we beat Southside (Camp Victory)," said Stevie Pringle, coach of the Heat. "That makes it even better."

Pringle, a division fire support sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion, and all of his players come from within the ranks of the 3rd Infantry Division.

Pringle said this tournament may be the last appearance of the Heat. With 10 tournament wins and little time left in their deployment, the players are ready to go out on top.

"The Heat is officially retired," said Pringle. "There is nothing left to prove."

Photos by Sgt. Andrew Miller

Above: The Heat's Byron Johnson sizes up a jump shot during an MWR basketball tournament.

Left: The Heat's George Tatum shoots "the J" during the double elimination competition at Camp Liberty Oct. 31.



In the Movies



Reap the spoils of *The Constant Gardener*

Spc. Adam Musil
2nd BCT PAO

Not since Sally Struthers sobbed on television and asked people to spend a dollar a month in support of a dying child, has Africa ever been so popular.

For those of you not up on current events; Africa – along with suffering through poverty and bad government-is dealing with an AIDS epidemic.

Once again, this time sans the emotional spokeswoman, Africa is asking for help and people from U2's Bono to Angelina Jolie are coming out in droves to do their part.

I roll my eyes whenever I see celebrities come out "for a cause," especially when I hear people like Bono talk about the need to end world hunger.

That was the best the man behind "The Joshua Tree" could come up with? Is there anyone who thinks we shouldn't end world hunger?

Instead of rambling nonsensically about topics they barely understand, I prefer artists put their beliefs or world views into their art, and that brings us to the week's movie review, *The Constant Gardener*.

Based on the novel by John le Carre and directed by Academy Award nominee Fernando Meirelles, *The Constant Gardener* is, on the surface, nothing more than a better-than-average thriller about a murdered woman and a corrupt government organization.

What makes the film notable is the style and the setting. Meirelles, known best for the film *City of God*, employs the same use of shaky camera shots and quick edits that made *God* so memorable.

While this style is overused in many movies, in *Gardener* it works, giving the film a raw feel as if had just been plucked from the news.

The film centers around two main characters; Justin Quayle a member of the British High Commission, played by Ralph Fiennes, and activist Tessa Quayle, played by *The Mummy* star Rachel Weisz.

The story begins with Tessa, Justin's wife, leaving on a business trip with an associate with whom, unbeknownst to Justin, she is having an affair.

When the two turn up murdered, it is up to



the grieving Justin to figure out why.

The first three-fourths of the film is told in a non-linear fashion with various scenes cutting in and out, flashback-style.

What begins as a stylish contemporary film quickly becomes a *Fugitive* knock off by the end.

However, the film is worth a glance because it is topical.

The plight of Africa is rarely dealt with in contemporary film and even if you find the story contrived, it is hard not to gain more of an understanding and sympathy for the African people with little to no hope of changing their fate.

If you are looking for a film with good acting and a little more style than your average movie, I suggest you grab a copy of the *The Constant Gardener*.



What is it they say about Thanksgiving?

"An optimist is a person who starts a new diet on Thanksgiving Day." – Irv Kupcinet, author

"The pilgrims made seven times more graves than huts ... nevertheless, set aside a day of thanksgiving." – H. W. Westermayer, author

"I love Thanksgiving turkey... it's the only time in Los Angeles that you see natural breasts." – Arnold Schwarzenegger, actor/politician

"Thanksgiving, man. Not a good day to be my pants." – Kevin James, actor

"Thanksgiving dinners take 18 hours to prepare. They are consumed in 12 minutes. Half-times take 12 minutes. This is not coincidence." – Erma Bombeck, columnist

"It was dramatic to watch my grandmother decapitate a turkey with an axe the day before Thanksgiving. Nowadays the expense of hiring grandmothers for the ax work would probably qualify all turkeys so honored with "gourmet" status." – Russell Baker, journalist

"Coexistence: what the farmer does with the turkey – until Thanksgiving." – Mike Connolly, author

"My mother is such a lousy cook that Thanksgiving at her house is a time of sorrow." – Rita Rudner, comedienne

"I celebrated Thanksgiving in an old-fashioned way. I invited everyone in my neighborhood to my house, we had an enormous feast, and then I killed them and took their land." – Jon Stewart, actor

Cartoon Corner

★ OPERATION ELUSIVE CONCEPT ★

BY CHRIS ASHBY - WWW.ELUSIVE-CONCEPT.COM



Have something you'd like to contribute to the bi-weekly comic strip? Contact emily.wilsoncroft@id3.army.mil.