



# SCIMITAR

Printed in the interest of Multi-National Force - Iraq



Vol. 3, No. 45

Baghdad, Iraq

Nov. 25, 2005



U.S. Navy photo by Airman Eben Boothby

An Iraqi Marine conducts a visit, board, search and seizure mission during training on Al Basrah Oil Terminal in the Persian Gulf. It was a combined training exercise with U.S Coast Guard personnel.

## Killer Blogs

### Posting on Internet may endanger troops

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — This is not your father's war, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker tells troops in a videotaped message emphasizing proper Operations Security procedures and responsible use of the Internet.

The video is part of the Army's comprehensive OPSEC Action Plan that has Mobile Training Teams visiting deploying units to teach how improper information and photographs posted on the World Wide Web could endanger lives.

For instance, photos of combat operations and destroyed military equipment could provide the enemy with clues about U.S. vulnerabilities, said Maj. Michael Pate, the Army's OPSEC officer at the Pentagon.

"This isn't censorship," Pate said about the OPSEC plan he had a key role in devising.

"It's about striking a balance between freedom of expression and protecting sensitive military information," he said.

In World War II and Korea, it took a long time for information to move from the battlefield to the public, Schoomaker says at the beginning of his video. Today with the World Wide Web, it's immediate with the push of a button.

"We have an information-technology explosion that is global," Schoomaker said.

"Our adversaries have the ability to take our utterances, our writings and our pictures and do all kinds of things to harm us."

Web logs, or blogs, are a venue where instances of unauthorized photos and some sensitive information have been inadvertently disseminated, Pate said.

#### MNC-I first with blog policy

So Multi-National Corps-Iraq developed a policy for the increasing number of Soldiers posting blogs in theater.

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# Task Force Baghdad maintenance keeps armor rolling along

Story and photo by Spc. Ben Brody  
2nd Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD** — While an M-1 Abrams battle tank may look indestructible rolling down the highways of Baghdad, a trip to the motor pool reveals how much maintenance the 70-ton machines actually require.

Tankers from 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, are conducting daily operations in eastern Baghdad while constantly making sure their tanks are roadworthy and combat-ready.

“For every hour you spend driving a tank, that’s two hours you spend in the motor pool maintaining it,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Derington, Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry. platoon sergeant. “That’s not to say that they’re delicate – it’s just the reality of operating any machine with that much power.”

Baghdad highways generally do far more damage to tanks than terrorist attacks because tanks are well designed to withstand attacks, but not to endure constant driving on asphalt.

In addition to setting up observation points and creating improvised road-blocks, tankers primarily conduct security patrols on highways.

During a Nov. 13 night mission, tankers patrolled a major Baghdad highway for hours looking for terrorists planting improvised explosive devices.

During the mission, a wheel sheared off one tank and Soldiers rushed to repair it well enough to drive back to Camp Rustamiyah.

“The tanks will almost always roll back in under their own power, but a lot of times there’s work to be done,” said Pfc. Zeb Saul, a Troop B loader. “It’s an unforgiving machine, but tanks are as fun as they are hard.”

Upon their arrival at Rustamiyah, the 4th Platoon tankers worked repairing the damaged tank, an all-day job.

“We’re like a pit crew with this tank, we fix it so fast,” Saul said. “Go on a mission, fix the tank, and get back out there again.”

Troop B’s 4th Platoon tanks have logged more than 7,000 miles during the deployment, said Spc. Eziquel Guitierrez, a Troop B driver.

Tankers are a superstitious group, probably due to the amount of work that goes into repairing tanks. Apricots are seen as bad luck by most tankers, and some refuse to carry any kind of fruit on a tank.

“Never bring an apricot on a tank, you’ll regret it,” Derington said. “Talking trash about your



Tankers from 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry prepare their tanks for a morning patrol in Baghdad.

buddy’s tank is another good way to get your own tank to break down. Just try it and see.”

As the day wore on, the 4th Platoon tankers repaired the tank’s broken arm, and replaced many of the track’s worn-down track pads.

“We’re going to finish up here, grab some chow, take a quick nap, and head right back out,” said Sgt. Jay Schade, a gunner with Troop B. “That’s the tanker’s life for you.”

## BLOGS

from Page 1

Some of the Soldiers found that posting a periodic blog to the Web was easier than sending multiple e-mails to friends and family. Others have found a modicum of fame for their descriptive coverage of life in the combat zone.

The MNC-I policy requires Soldiers to register their blogs through their unit chain of command. A list of blogs is maintained at the division level, complete with Web addresses and points of contact.

The policy also identifies established elements such as Army Web Risk Assessment Cells and Information-Assurance teams that assess Web sites and monitor information for compliance with Army policy.

Such information includes classified information, casualty information before next-of-kin notification, information prohibited by the Privacy Act and details of incidents under investigation.

Commanders are able to develop their own OPSEC policy addressing blogs under the umbrella of Army policy and guidance, Pate said. The Army’s new OPSEC initiatives range from individual to institutional training, he said.

The Mobile Training Teams provide unit-level training-to priority-one units scheduled to deploy, Pate said. The MTTs come from the Army OPSEC Support Element established earlier this year by 1st Information Operations Command (Land) at Fort Belvoir, Va.

MTTs recently visited the 101st Airborne Division to provide OPSEC instruction to one of its brigade combat teams at Fort Campbell, Ky.

Smaller units can access OPSEC training modules through Army Knowledge Online, Pate said. He said users can click on center right of the AKO front page on “Army OPSEC News,” sign in again using their AKO password and enter the OPSEC Portal.

The OPSEC Portal includes a number of briefings that Pate said assist in satisfying OPSEC training requirements.

## Corrections

An article and headline about a Bosnia and Herzegovina explosive ordnance disposal platoon on page 5 of the Nov. 11 Scimitar contained several errors in fact.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is one country, an independent state containing several ethnic groups including Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina EOD platoon deployed to Iraq in June as part of the Coalition Forces.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is part of the Coalition. Croatia and Serbia are not part of the Coalition.

In addition, the name of Zenica, an industrial city of 300,000 on the Bosna River in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, was misspelled in the article.

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## PERSPECTIVES

## Turkey with the troops a noble tradition

By Spc. Rick L. Rzepka  
Assistant editor

For many servicemembers here, spending Thanksgiving in a combat zone will be a new experience. This year we will dine with our weapons close and our friends and families far, far away. While folks at home carry on with their yearly traditions, we too will carry on a tradition — a tradition of patriotism, brotherhood, and giving thanks in time of war.

Taking time to reflect on everything that is good in this world is nothing new to American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines at war. Since December 1777, when George Washington proclaimed a Thanksgiving celebration in honor of the defeat of the British at Saratoga, our military tradition and our thanksgiving tradition have been inextricably intertwined.

Sure, we all know the legend of the pilgrims and Plymouth Rock and the copious amounts of chow they ate, but that's not when Thanksgiving as we know it began. It all started with the "Great Emancipator" Abraham Lincoln in the midst of one of the bloodiest conflicts this nation has ever seen — the Civil War.

After being prompted by poet and writer Sarah Hale to create a national holiday to give thanks, Lincoln issued a declaration which made the fourth Thursday of November Thanksgiving. Lincoln was aware of the hardships troops and their families faced. He urged all Americans to "commend to his tender care all those who have become widows, orphans,

mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged."

The American public quickly responded to the idea, and a movement was established to show the troops they were remembered at home. Along with tobacco, apples and home-made pies, an estimated 50,000 turkeys were sent to the troops on the frontlines in time for Thanksgiving.

Support for America's servicemembers during the holiday season continued into the 20th century. During the vicious trench battles of the Great War, World War I, food was rushed from the home front to the troops for Thanksgiving. Again, during World War II, an outpouring of public support for the troops during the holidays was shown.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, during his 1943 Thanksgiving proclamation, uttered these words which seem to be as relevant now as then.

"God's help to us has been great in this year of march towards worldwide liberty. In brotherhood with warriors of other United Nations, our gallant men have won victories, have freed our homes

**"Our gallant men have won victories, have freed our homes from fear, have made tyranny tremble, and have laid the foundation for freedom of life in a world which will be free."**

Franklin D. Roosevelt

from fear, have made tyranny tremble, and have laid the foundation for freedom of life in a world which will be free. Our forges and hearths and mills have wrought well; and our weapons have not failed."

The hardships of life in a combat zone are many, but they are not new. While aunts cook the turkey and uncles watch football, a new generation of American war fighters will be on guard duty, riding in a convoy, freeing the oppressed and carrying on a proud and noble tradition.

That's something to be thankful for.

## Scimitar Pulse

## What are you thankful for this Thanksgiving?

"I'm just thankful that I'm alive, I have food to eat and a place to stay and a shower with everything that happened with the hurricanes and all."

**Air Force Master Sgt. Deborah Dixon**  
Multi-National Security Transition Command, Health Affairs



"I'm thankful that I get to go home in three weeks in time for Christmas!"

**Army Capt. Scot T. Hasskew**  
Strategic Effects

"I'm thankful for living in Baghdad, because it gives me an opportunity to help people in a profound way."

**Army Col. Sylvia T. Moran**  
Military Assistant to Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad



"I'm thankful for my daughters being born and that my boy is getting good grades in school."

**Army Spc. William Lopez**  
International Zone Billeting

"I'm thankful for the great group of people I work with. By accomplishing our mission we are building a free and better world."

**Marine Sgt. Jeffrey L. Carey**  
Secretary of Combined Joint Services



"I'm thankful that my family is safe and healthy in the states and that my soldiers and I are too."

**Army Master Sgt. Quentin A. Farrell**  
Joint Area Support Group - Central

"I'm thankful for all the support of my family and friends."

**Army Sgt. 1st Class Aaron W. Rosenlund**  
Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence noncommissioned officer-in-charge



## Thanksgiving Past



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Christiansen

Thanksgiving Day 2004 at Camp Cobra. North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers with the 30th Brigade Combat Team, help themselves to Thanksgiving dinner.

# U.S. Soldiers, firefighters help their Iraqi counterparts

Story and photo by Spc. Ben Brody  
2nd Brigade Combat Team

**RUSAF** — 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.

The unit's commander, Lt. Col. Steven Merkel, who is from Fort Wayne, and its intelligence officer, Capt. Matthew Wheeler 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. "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 field artillery Soldiers found a 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 Colonel Laith to increase force protection at his station, and to the dud pit," said Maj. Jay Sawyer, the unit's operations officer. "We just call (explosive ordnance disposal Soldiers) to come over when the dud pit is getting full."

Explosive Ordnance Disposal came to the station recently and removed about a dozen 155-mm artillery rounds, 11 120-mm mortar rounds and many smaller explosives, including



Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery and an explosive ordnance disposal team load 155-mm artillery rounds onto a truck after removing them from a fire station in Rusafa.

hand grenades and rifle grenades.

The assistance runs both ways; 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.

## South Iraqi students reap benefits from improved schools

Story and photo by  
Suzanne M. Fournier  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**BASE CAMP ADDER** — Approximately 80,000 Iraqi children are attending better schools in the nine southern provinces of Iraq because of the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Fund. The affected children attend 368 different schools ranging from innercity to rural, village mud schools.

The process to determine which schools should be replaced, repaired, or refurbished was a joint decision.

First, the director general for education in each province assessed the schools along with Coalition forces and U.S. Army Corps of Engineer representatives.

Second, schools were evaluated in order to provide a safe, healthy learning environment for schoolchildren.

Third, a list of school renovations and replacements was prioritized by the director general and matched to available Coalition funds. The final step was to award contracts and start construction.

Eight thousand students who previously attended deteriorated,



The principal of Zubieda School, one of the new improved schools, cuts a red ribbon for its opening.

unhealthy schools made of mud and reed, now attend 39 new schools. Mud schools were demolished and replaced because the structures were beyond repair.

Construction renovation activities varied from school to school depending on the needs of each school and the priorities set for the

school. After construction started, if a school needed more repairs than the original assessment, more improvements were done if funding was available.

Typical renovations included adding classrooms and toilet rooms; building perimeter courtyard walls; repairing roofs;

installing floor and ceiling tiles; repairing electricity and installing ceiling fans; and replacing doors, windows, water and sewer systems. Workers repaired, plastered and painted the walls to complete inside and outside appearances.

Twenty-five schools are under renovation and expected to be fin-

ished by the end of this month. Workers soon will begin renovations on three additional schools recently added to the list.

In addition, many Coalition forces have collaborated with schools to equip them with desks, chalkboards, and other equipment. Countless other individual and group efforts have connected schoolchildren in the United States with schoolchildren in Iraq. Their efforts resulted in donations of thousands of boxes of school supplies and backpacks shipped to students in Iraq.

Local Iraqi contractors received the majority of construction contracts; they, in turn, hired local Iraqi workers to perform the construction and renovations.

Other government and non-governmental agencies and Coalition forces' programs served to perform additional school renovations.

# Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers keep pressure on terrorists

Story by Spc. Michael Leslie  
3rd Brigade, 1st Armor Division Public Affairs

**CAMP TAJI** — The lights are out.

The streets are dark.

Soldiers are trudging down the alley in silence to find a target.

Early in the morning recently, Soldiers of 2nd Mechanized Battalion, 1st Mechanized Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division walk from their patrol base in Saba Al Bor to a strategic area to catch terrorists before they escape.

They start at their target house, knocking on the front door as an early-morning surprise. Their suspect is in the house and the Soldiers detain him without a struggle.

"I think they did really well," said Maj. Steve Lutsky, 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division operations officer. "This was their first dismounted attack. We moved, dismounted in the cover of darkness, and doing that, they did very well."

The Iraqi Army's participation was part of a bigger operation by the 2nd Battalion., 70th Armor Regiment. searching the surrounding area.

Iraqi Soldiers were conducting most of the mission on their own.

"We let them do their own thing," said Sgt. Troy Krahmer, a member of the battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company. "We were just there to kind of look over them, but we were always there to point them in the (right) direction."

"They had their own objectives, so they conducted a company operation," Lutsky said.

The Iraqi Army was successful in finding who they were looking for — as well as someone they weren't expecting during this operation.

"The IA caught one of the targets, and also a target of opportunity that we have been looking for," Lutsky said.

As the Soldiers went from house to house, they also found contraband.

"They found a couple of weapons that the Iraqis aren't allowed to have," Krahmer said.

Lutsky said the operation also showed local residents that



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Kevin Bromley

**Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 9th Iraqi Army Division, patrol the streets of Sab al Bor in the early morning hours.**

the Iraqi Army is here to help them build a safer life.

"The goal of the operation was to cordon and search areas to provide a safer environment for Iraqi people in Saba Al Bor and also show that the Iraqi Army is here and capable of protecting them," Lutsky said.

"(The Iraqis) want their own people. They see their own people; they're going to respect them because it's Iraq."

On the streets, the Iraqi Soldiers joked with kids and gave out Iraqi flags.

"Everybody seemed to interact with them and liked what was going on," Krahmer said.

Lutsky said continuing to conduct company-level operations will help guide the Iraqi Army to bigger operations in the future.

"Eventually they will be conducting battalion-level operations without our assistance," said Lutsky.

Lutsky said the Iraqi Army is getting close to taking over their areas and leading the way.

"I think we are well on our way to turning this area of Iraq back over to the Iraqi Army with their set of governance and security," he said. "At this rate, we will have the Iraqis leading Iraqis very soon."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Matthew Wester

**Sgt. Adam T. Mauldin, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 70th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, reports his element's progress during a cordon and search mission in Saba Al Bor.**

## Sanitation Seabee keeps sewer pipes clean in the IZ

Story and photo by Capt. Chris Watt  
Joint Area Support Group  
Public Affairs

**BAGHDAD** — Petty Officer 1st Class David Pedreira is washing his hands of Iraq after a year of trudging through the muck and grime of the International Zone's drainage system.

The Seabee Sailor advised an Iraqi contractor on troubleshooting a project to fix a burst water pipe on Al Kindy Street.

Pedreira was responsible for the clearing of more than 18,000 meters of storm and wastewater pipelines throughout the IZ. That's roughly the size of a drainage pipe from here to Baghdad International Airport and more than 11 miles.

When Pedreira arrived earlier this year, he saw flooded areas throughout the Iraqi living areas of the IZ. Those flooded areas turned out to be raw sewage backup from blocked drainage systems all over the IZ.

"I saw children walking through these pools of wastewater just to get to school," said Pedreira.

From his Navy Seabee experience, he knew the storm-drain system, which was



**Petty Officer 1st Class David Pedreira, left, briefs Army 1st Sgt. Rafael Tirado about the International Zone's Al Kindy wastewater lift station.**

doubling as a wastewater system, was not adequate size for the amount of waste it was receiving.

"There were rock formations that had built up in the pipes and lift stations from sand that storm runoff had dumped into the pipes," he said. "They completely blocked off the pipes. In some cases, we found plastic bags and trash blocking the pipes — even dead animal carcasses."

In July, he started cleaning out a few manholes with the help of a local Iraqi contractor. Less than five months and more than 800 manholes later, Pedreira, and the 30 Iraqi workers he hired, cleaned out more than 18,000 meters of pipeline and lift stations throughout the IZ.

According to Pedreira, the most significant area affected by the cleanup was the area near the apartment complex known as the 215 Apartments. The complex has more than 1,250 units.

"All of that wastewater drains into a single lift station," said Pedreira. "The pipes in the complex were completely blocked with trash and garbage that had been thrown into the lift station, as well as leaves and sticks that fell from the overhanging trees."

Working in 120-plus degree heat during the Iraqi summer, the workers labored in the sludge-filled manholes. Pedreira taught

them the basics of maintaining a city water system, while cleaning out and improving their own system.

Eventually, they cleared the main lines around the 215 Apartments and rebuilt the pump in the lift station. They also crafted modified covers for the lift station to keep debris and garbage out of the pipes.

Pedreira said the next project for the apartments will be to clear the many smaller wastewater lines running through the center of the complex. He said that there is still a lot of work to be done, but he believes he has improved the conditions here.

"I would say we are only about 50 percent complete with the (water) lines in the IZ," said Pedreira. "The plan after I leave is to concentrate on the 215 Apartments and improve conditions there."

Though work on the drainage system will continue after Pedreira redeploys, his supervisor, Air Force Maj. Brian MacDonald, Joint Area Support Group chief of infrastructure, said Pedreira's efforts will be tough to emulate.

"Dave was so proactive ... and cared so much about what he was doing here," said MacDonald.

# Iraqi Electoral Process: The Road to Democracy

Commentary by Maj. Lawrence King

Strategic Effects Directorate - Communications Division

Iraq has been liberated. Since then, the people have made monumental strides toward a free and democratic national government. On Jan. 30, the people of Iraq held the first democratic election in three decades and formed an interim Iraqi government and a transitional national assembly. It is the job of the TNA to draft the new Iraqi constitution. Fifty-eight percent of Iraqis eligible to vote participated in the January election.

On Oct. 15, a general referendum took place to approve the nation's new constitution. There was only one question on the ballot: yes or no. The people approved their new constitution by a nationwide 79 percent majority vote. This time, despite the threats of terrorist attack, 63 percent of eligible Iraqis cast their votes.

Under the rules of the Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period regardless of the majority vote, had three governorates voted against the constitution, each by a two-thirds majority, the constitution would have been defeated. That would have meant December's election wouldn't be for a permanent Iraqi government, but for a new TNA which would be tasked with drafting another constitution.

The Anbar and Salahadeen governorates voted against the constitution by a two-thirds majority. The Ninewah governorate voted against it by a majority vote but less than two-thirds. Since only two governorates voted against the constitution by a two-thirds majority, the constitution passed.

The next step on Iraq's road to democracy is a national election, which will be held in Dec. 15. The people of Iraq will elect a 275-seat Council of Representatives to serve for a four-year term. The Council of Representatives will select the president of Iraq and two deputy presidents (the Presidency Council). The president will, in turn, appoint the Iraqi prime minister.

Around 320 entities and 21 coalitions are registered with the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq as candidates for the December election. Iraqis will be able to vote by party or may select independent candidates. It is interesting to note that 97 percent of eligible Iraqis are registered to vote compared to only 72 percent of Americans. Under the provisions of the TAL, the new Iraqi government will be seated no later than Dec. 31.

Truly, the democratic nation of Iraq is on its way!

***"We believe, and the Iraqis believe, the best way forward is through the democratic process. Al Qaeda wants to use their violent ways to stop the march of democracy because democracy is the exact opposite of what they believe is right. We're making progress toward peace. We're making progress toward an ally that will join us in the war on terror, that will prevent al Qaeda from establishing safe haven in Iraq, and a country that will serve as an example for others who aspire to live in freedom."***

President George W. Bush  
October 16, 2005

## CHAPLAIN'S TALK

### Glass half full: Being thankful under miserable conditions

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.)

Guy E. Glad

Multi-National Force - Iraq  
Strategic Operations

I'd like to share a secret with you today.

If you have ever asked the question, "Why?", or wondered if "this" was ever going to end, then this secret is for you.

If you have ever felt like you were searching in vain for something to be thankful for, then this is a secret you must learn.

I'm not sure what the "why" or the "this" is in your life, but too often we allow our circumstances to dictate the condition of our heart. Being surrounded by difficult circumstances, perhaps the loss of a friend or loved one, a broken relationship, financial difficulty, or other disappointing or painful events, may lead to feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, or worthlessness. We wonder, how in the world will we ever have something to be thankful for ever again?

If you find yourself reading and relating to these words, then there is a secret you must know about. This secret is found in the Bible.

In Philippians 4:11-13 the Apostle Paul twice talks about the "secret of being content" and declares that "he has learned the secret of being content in whatever circumstances I am" (Phil. 4:11). If anybody understood what it meant to learn this secret, Paul was the champion. His life is a study of learning how to be content or thankful in difficult circumstances. The Bible tells us

at least three things we should know about learning how to be content or thankful.

First, we must focus on the power of Christ. In 2 Corinthians 11:24-30, Paul summarizes a difficult time of

his life. He recounts that he was whipped five times with 39 lashes, beaten with rods three times, stoned once, shipwrecked three times, and on one occasion had to tread water for a full day and night in the Mediterranean Sea. He was frequently on dangerous journeys; in danger from robbers, from persecution, dangers in the city and in the wilderness, dangers in the sea, and dangers from false teachers. He had suffered labor and hardship, through hunger and thirst, often without food and exposed to the cold and the elements. Throughout this he concludes that in his weakness God's "grace is sufficient for you, for His power is perfected in our weakness ... that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Corinthians 12:9). Back in Philippians 4:13 he states "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me".

Despite all of his hardships, Paul chose to focus on the power of Christ.

Second, we must focus on honoring God. Psalm 50:23 declares, "He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; and to him who orders his way aright, I shall show the salvation of God." What a wonderful



Chaplain Glad

promise! When I focus on honoring God for who He is I experience His peace and salvation.

Third, we must focus on the character and works of God. Psalm 100 says, "Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the

earth. Serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the Lord Himself is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the Lord is good; His loving-kindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness is to all generations."

So, what is the secret of contentment and a thankful heart? Here it is: instead of focusing on "what" I must focus on "who". As long as I focus on what is happening around me, than I make myself a victim of my circumstances. Rather, if I focus on God-His power in Christ, honoring Him, and honoring His character and works then I will enjoy contentment and a thankful heart. My circumstances will never again dictate the condition of my heart. Instead, God will bless me with peace and a thankful heart when I focus on Him.

Which leaves me with a final question: Are you focusing on the "what" in your life or the "Who" the author of peace, thankfulness, and salvation?

Happy Thanksgiving!

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Coalition Forces capture high-level Ba'ath Party leader in Diyala province

**BAGHDAD** — Coalition Forces captured Hamid Sharki Shadid, the leader of the New Ba'ath Party in Diyala Province, during a patrol Nov. 9.

Coalition members apprehended Shadid along with physical evidence at his home.

Shadid is a former member of the Ba'ath Party in Diyala Province and is suspected of being responsible for all anti-Iraqi forces Ba'ath Party activities in that area.

Shadid's capture is a major achievement for Coalition Forces as they believe he can provide crucial information on the whereabouts of former Staff General Jamal Karki, a suspected Ba'athist insurgent, and Abd-al-Baqi al-Sa'adun, who has been a fugitive since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003.

Up to \$1 million is being offered to capture or kill Abd-al-Baqi al-Sa'adun.

### Disruption operations help reduce terrorists attacks by 60 percent

**CAMP BLUE DIAMOND** — Approximately 150 Iraqi Army soldiers and 300 Marines and Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Marine Division began Operation Dhibbah (Bruins) in northern Ramadi Nov. 19.

Operation Bruins is part of a series of disruption operations in Ramadi, designed to set the conditions for successful elections in December.

Operation Bruins comes on the heels of Operation Panthers, which disrupted operations in the Sophia district of eastern Ramadi. Additionally, Bruins follows the Nov. 17 engagement where 2nd BCT successfully repelled a terrorist attack in which 32 terrorists were killed in downtown Ramadi.

Attacks against Coalition Forces in the Ramadi area have decreased 60 percent in the last few weeks as a result of these ongoing operations.

### Iraqi Soldiers seize terrorists' weapons, detain three suspects in west Baghdad

**BAGHDAD** — Iraqi Army Soldiers confiscated a large number of terrorists' weapons and bomb-making materials and detained three suspects Nov. 21, during cordon-and-search operations in the Ghazaliyah area of western Baghdad.

Acting on information provided by Iraqi citizens, Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division discovered explosives, weapons, improvised explosive device components and numerous other devices used by terrorists to attack Iraqi civilians, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

A small group of U.S. Soldiers from D Company, 1st Battalion, 87th Infantry helped with the two-hour search which started about 9 a.m.

The cache was discovered in four different locations. A large number of the items were found in buses parked in the area. Others were buried in burlap bags.



# Coalition Forces help build soccer field in Tall Afar

Story and photos by Pfc. James Wilt  
82nd Airborne Division

**TALLAFAR** — Coalition forces, in cooperation with local residents, constructed and opened a soccer field at the Al Zahawe School in the neighborhood of Sarai.

“It is basically a goodwill gesture from the Coalition Forces to the Sarai neighborhood,” said Capt. Ryan Hambleton, a team leader in the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion.

Sarai, a Sunni area, was one of the more deeply effected neighborhoods during the military actions in early September.

With more than 50 children attending the opening of the field, the day was filled with joyous yelling, laughter and soccer.

Elements from the 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment aided elements of the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, who coordinated the event.

A flatbed tractor trailer brought the newly constructed goal posts to a dirt field behind the school. Soon the

posts were placed at opposing ends.

Carefully laying down lines of chalk, an Iraqi man marked the field’s boundaries and goal lines.

Nets, donated by Presbyterian College in South Carolina, were strung up with black wire ties by the children.

Once the field was ready, the anticipation built as the children waited for a ball.

Lined up, the children waited anxiously for the battalion commander of the 2nd Battalion,

325th Airborne Infantry Regiment and an Iraqi general to open the field.

As several paratroopers and Iraqi policeman took to the field to challenge the children in a friendly game, the field was christened.

The children of the neighborhood were given 10 balls by the Coalition Forces to use on their new field.

A similar project is in place to create a soccer field in a Shiite populated neighborhood.



**Capt. Ryan Howell, the commander of G Troop, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, holds a soccer ball over his head while playing with the children of Tall Afar, Iraq.**



**Capt. Ryan Hambleton, a team leader in the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, watches children tie a net onto new soccer posts, which they received from the Coalition Forces.**

## Martial art mechanics teach Tae Kwon Do to Soldiers

Story and photo by Spc. Derek Del Rosario  
Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs

**CAMP LIBERTY** — Confidence. Discipline. Passion. These may sound similar to Army values, but they’re also leadership traits Spc. Fred Jean-Francois and Sgt. Jean Valnues strive to instill in their martial arts students.

Jean-Francois and Valnues are mechanics with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion. In their off-duty time, they teach Tae Kwon Do to Soldiers at Camp Liberty.

Jean-Francois, a second-degree black belt, brings almost 20 years of experience to his students. He began teaching in 1992 in his native country of Haiti, where he has won two national championships. His interest in martial arts began in his childhood, when a classmate he looked up to showed him the passive nature of Tae Kwon Do.

“I was a bit of a troublemaker as a kid, and I would get in a lot of fights,” he 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 (in martial arts) as well.”

Valnues came to the sport later in life. After he attended Jean-Francois’ class in March, he said he was immediately interested. 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 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 like imaginary fighting or kata. Fighting is more active and self-defense driven. It is Jean-Francois’ specialty.

Tae Kwon Do is not just a hobby for him.

“It’s a way of life, like a religion for me,” Jean-Francois said.



**Spc. Fred Jean-Francois (black belt), a mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company corrects the form of Spc. Mario Gonzales, 860th Military Police Company, at the 3rd Infantry Division gym.**

“I think people who study Tae Kwon Do learn self-control in every aspect of life, and most importantly, discipline.”

The ideals of the martial art as preached by Jean-Francois have made Valnues a better martial artist.

“He 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, yet he remains very relaxed and approachable.”

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

“My 6-year-old son is taking Tae Kwon Do (in the United

States), so talking to him about it is a real bonding experience,” Robinson said.

The instructors have stayed dedicated to their duties as mechanics, but they both agree that Tae Kwon Do has helped boost their spirits during some of the most trying periods of 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 agrees that martial arts helped boost his morale. He also sees parallels between Tae Kwon Do and the Army. He is a leader 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.”

He is a fellow Soldier at work, but in class they switch positions, said Valnues.

“I salute him by bowing to show respect,” he said.

Jean-Francois believes that physical ability is not the most important characteristic to have in order to succeed in Tae Kwon Do. He advises those who want to be successful in martial arts to have the mindset to never quit.

“You have to believe in yourself in order to succeed. 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,” Jean-Francois said. “Tae Kwon Do is an art that is all mental. If your heart is in it, you will get to where you want to go. When life gives you a punch, you have to get back up. Never stay down.”