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Diyala province welcomes new governor after free elections

Story and photos by
Spc. Natalie Loucks
3rd BCT PAO

BAQUBA, Iraq -- History was made for the province of Diyala, March 24 at the Provincial Government Building, otherwise known as the "Blue Dome."

Governor Ra'ad Hameed

Juwad took over responsibility of the Diyala Province from former Governor Abdullah Rasheed Hassan Al Jaboary after approximately two years.

Ra'ad is the first governor to be elected by free election after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime.

"It's very important for the

people to see the result of their vote," said Col. Steven Salazar, commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Task Force Liberty.

People gathered in the auditorium of the Blue Dome for one common interest; to witness the peaceful transfer of the flag of Iraq from Sunni to Shiite, from

Abdullah to Ra'ad.

"All of the people who attended the ceremony really want something good for Diyala," said Maj. Teresa Wolfgang, commander of Company A, 411th Civil Affairs Battalion.

The transfer of government took place early in the ceremony when Former Governor Abdullah handed the flag of Iraq to Judge Adnon Al Baldwi who, in turn, gave the flag to Governor Ra'ad.

Inscribed with the words "God is Great," in green, the red, white and black flag of Iraq symbolizes the courage, the generosity, the triumph and religion of the peoples of Iraq.

Governmental leaders of Diyala spoke positively on numerous issues regarding the transfer of authority.

Dr. Hussein Al Jaboary, who runs the Al Parlaman newspaper out of the Blue Dome, acted as the moderator for the days events.

Latif Al Qaisy, Deputy Governor of Electricity from the old provincial council, spoke on behalf of all of the dead.

Latif lost his wife, three children and nephew when the vehi-



Former Governor Abdullah Rasheed Hassan Aljaboary watches as new Governor Ra'ad Hameed Juwad hands the flag of Iraq to an Iraqi army honor guard soldier when he took control of the Diyala government March 24 at a ceremony held at the Blue Dome in downtown Baquba, Iraq.

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New Governor, new vision for Diyala

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cle they were in did not slow down or stop when they were approaching a military occupied site.

The widower was pro-Coalition Forces before the incident and, despite the outcome of that fateful event, is still supporting Coalition Forces in Iraq.

Hafed Abid Al Aziz who was formally part of the Anti-Corruption committee under the old Provincial Council, spoke in

memory of the eight council members and assistant governors from the last council who were assassinated.

"We will not forget you," he said.

Throughout the ceremony, Sheiks stood and recited poetry expressing their love for Iraq and the Iraqi people.

Maj. Michael Charlebois, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Civil Military Officer said the poetry readings were supportive of the transfer of

government and stressed the love for all of Iraq, regardless of tribe or association.

"Sheiks tend to see themselves as more educated and they try to demonstrate that by expressing themselves eloquently through words," Charlebois said.

Former Governor Abdullah spoke about the past two years as governor of Diyala. He was pleased with the work that has been

done and stressed the trust the people of the province have in the new government and the new governor.

Abdullah helped organize the Iraqi Police and judges in Muqdadiyah, when Coalition Forces first moved into Diyala in 2003.

Wolfgang said she was very proud of the honorable way he gave up his position in the government.

She said she has seen the way the government has grown and become more efficient in the way they operate in the six months she has spent in country.

"They have gone from the Coalition Forces running the meetings, to the provincial council conducting their own meetings. I am very proud," she said.

The former mayor of Baquba, Ra'ad, addressed his vision for Diyala.

He said his ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for the people of the province.

He spoke about reorganizing the provincial council's committees.

Originally there were 20 committees for the 41 members of the council. After losing one member to the Governor role, one to the Deputy Governor role and one

member to the Assistant Governor role, there are less than two members per committee.

Ra'ad would like to combine

"They have gone from the Coalition Forces running the meetings, to the provincial council conducting their own meetings. I am very proud."

--Maj. Teresa Wolfgang
Commander, Company A,
411th Civil Affairs Battalion

committees so there are more available members per committee.

The new governor stressed that the people of Diyala are one. "There is not and should not be any difference, no matter tribe or association," he said.

Salazar said the peaceful ceremony gives the people of Diyala an idea of how this kind of freedom is supposed to work. The families and Soldiers who have sacrificed their lives to help accomplish this goal have not done this without a purpose.

"Had it not been for us being present now, this day would not have come and this peaceful transition would not have taken place," he said.

Ra'ad is expected to spend approximately 10 months as Governor of Diyala before a new election takes place in December.

Salazar said the next time the elections come around, the provincial government will plan and execute the entire event. Coalition Forces will be on hand to over watch and assist, if necessary.

"(The people of Diyala) have embraced freedom and democracy," Salazar said. "They know they like it and they know they want more of it. ☑"



Former Governor Abdullah Rasheed Hassan Aljaboory and new Governor Ra'ad Hameed Juwad raise their hands together at the peaceful Transfer of Government Ceremony held March 24 at the Blue Dome in downtown Baquba, Iraq.

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What the 'Hammer' legal office can do

Maj. John Moore

3rd BCT Staff Judge Advocate

Craft a perfect Article 15 so the Commander can render appropriate discipline? Investigate people who commit misconduct? Get Chapter paperwork together to get substandard Soldiers out of the Army? Worse yet, place a Soldier in a slammer and prepare a trial by Court-Martial for him? True, unpleasant things due to those few of the Army "five-percent" account for much of our work.

But the Office of the Brigade Judge Advocate does much more than handle unfavorable actions. Even though we are deployed and have limited resources, you can still take care of many of the legal issues you may face in the rear. For example, we normally handle the following legal services on a routine, walk-in basis:

- Powers of Attorney
- Initiation of wills
- Coordination of suspect advice
- Initiation of separation agreements

We prefer section, platoon sergeant, and company level coordination on these matters.

It is much more efficient to handle groups of Soldiers together by appointment, but let's face it; we can't often do that in this environment.

We handle these issues, but you have to come in and make an appointment first:

- Child support
- Report of Survey rebuttal and appeal
- Execution and finalization of wills
- Filing a claim for missing or damaged property

If you need something done not listed here, just ask. Or, if you have questions and cannot make it in to the office, e-mail us at: barbara.rubio@us.army.mil.

These are our hours:

- Monday through Saturday
8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Sunday
9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

For those of you in the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, we are proud to have an aggressive, perspicacious, paralegal Non-Commissioned Officer out at Forward Operating Base McKenzie who can perform a wide variety of legal services. He will do anything not requiring an attorney, and even in those cases, he can prepare you for and coordinate an attorney visit.

What other positive things do we do at a unit level? First, we provide training in preventive law and Rules of Engagement. For example, if your section or squad needs a refresher course in Detention Operations or the Law of War, you can schedule a class at the office. If you feel there are discipline or morale problems in some areas, an attorney can teach a class in areas of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Foreign Claims is a huge part of our mission. Every week, an attorney and two paralegals travel downtown to the Civil Military Operations Center, in downtown

Baquba, to process and pay claims from Iraqi families who have suffered losses of property, or even lives of loved ones.

Also, there are ethics and administrative law. If you want to undertake a project that may use Army resources or spend unit funds, you can ask us for a legal opinion.

We take pride in our abilities as a force multiplier. Remember, whether we are giving commanders legal advice to help win the war, or counseling a Soldier who has been hit with a paternity suit,

HAMMER JUSTICE! is here to help. 



MOORE
3rd BCT SJA

2-69 Soldiers work to understand Arabic culture

Story and photo by Capt. Chaz Cannon

2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment

FOB SCUNION, Iraq – Since stepping foot into the country of Iraq, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment have been immersed in a culture that differs greatly from what they are used to as citizens of the U.S. In order to counter this, understanding basic local customs and courtesies, as well as some mastery of the language, has been stressed by the 3rd Brigade Combat Team leadership at all levels. Part of helping to restore democracy in Iraq requires at least some knowledge of how the Iraqis go about daily life.

A vast majority of Soldiers from the 2-69 Armor, "Panther" team interact with local Iraqis everyday. Whether meeting with the town mayor, conducting a vehicle check point, or simply riding in a vehicle convoy, Soldiers come face to face with a culture that is somewhat different. However, Iraqis get an impression of U.S. and Coalition Forces at each of these encounters, and the "Panther" battalion wants to make sure it sets a good example. Every Soldier is an ambassador of U.S. values and goodwill.

Culture briefs, language books, and other informative materials were distributed among the companies in order to help facilitate a fundamental awareness of the Iraqi culture. Some cultural examples are removing shoes before entering a mosque, avoiding eye contact with women, accepting tea or coffee during a social meeting, and even being prepared to be kissed by Iraqi males. Additionally, a basic understanding of the language, Iraqi claim, helps to open doors with the local populace.

"I think it's very important to understand the language. It plays a huge part," said Sgt. 1st Class Raul Betancourt, of Headquarters,

Headquarters Company. "As a (Non-Commissioned Officer), understanding some of the language helps me relate to younger Soldiers who may not know as much (about the culture)."

"I think it makes the Iraqis respect us more," said Pvt. Gary Mendoza.

The "Panther" Soldiers are eager to learn more about the Arabic culture. Identifying with the culture helps to improve relations between Soldiers and Iraqis. Looking ahead for the rest of the deployment, the "Panther" Soldiers are confident they will have a firm grasp on the Iraqi culture. 



Lt. Col. Robert Roggeman attends a weekly council meeting with local Iraqi civic leaders in Khalis, Iraq.

Why we wear seatbelts

By Harley Chase

3rd BCT Safety Liaison

There have been 135 Class A through C Army humvee accidents from the start of fiscal year '04 to present, resulting in 42 Soldier deaths. Recent analysis of the effectiveness of humvee seatbelts in Operation Iraqi Freedom accidents showed 97 percent of those Soldiers who were wearing a seatbelt during an accident received only minor or no injuries. Seatbelts greatly reduce the likelihood of death and severity of injuries when they are used.

There have been 30 Class A through C Army M1114 accidents from the start of fiscal year '04 to present, resulting in 16 Soldier deaths. Of the 30 accidents, 19 involved rollovers and 15 of the 16 fatalities occurred in a rollover. ☑

(Class A, B and C accidents are accidents that result in a servicemember missing more than 24 hours of work as a minimum to include fatalities.)



Looking in Baquba



Photo by Spc. Brandon Barger

After a series of coordinated attacks by insurgents on Iraqi Army checkpoints, Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Liberty, along with a platoon of Iraqi National Guard, block a road during a cordon and search mission March 21 in Baquba, as local residents look on.

WARHORSE CHAPEL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Friday

1 to 3 p.m.
Muslim Juma Prayer

6 to 8 p.m.
Jewish Prayer and Fellowship

Sunday

8 to 9 a.m.
Early Bird Protestant – Chaplain
(Capt.) Smith

9 to 10:30 a.m.
Gospel – Chaplain (Capt.) Pickens

11 a.m. to Noon
Mid-Morning Protestant – Chaplain
(Maj.) Rauch

12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Latter Day Saints

1:45 to 2:45 p.m.
Roman Catholic

8 to 9:30 p.m.
Evening Protestant – Chaplain (Capt.)
Smith

Bible Study

Tuesday:
6 to 7 p.m. at Education Center –
Chaplain (Capt.) Pickens

Wednesday:
7 to 8 p.m. at Warhorse Chapel-
Chaplain (Capt.) Smith

Mid-Week Service

Thursday:
7 to 8 p.m. at Warhorse Chapel –
Chaplain (Capt.) Pickens

Friday:
10:15 p.m. – Chaplain (Capt.) Smith
'Movie of the Week'

Finding perfect peace is just a word away

By Chaplain (Capt.) Eddie Kinley
1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment

"I will keep him in perfect peace; whose mind is stayed on thee." Isaiah 26:3

If there is one element in life that continues to elude man, it is peace. I am not referring to world peace, marital peace or a society of peace. The peace we find so evasive, so vague and intangible, is inner peace. Yet man claims to have the answer! Go to the nearest book store and you can unearth countless volumes written on this very subject. You would be amazed how many books are published monthly on the subject of inner peace. Here's a few I found interesting: "Ten Secrets for Success and Inner Peace," "The Power of Now," "A Course in Miracles, Living Through the Meantime," the list is endless. With so many published books, not to men-

tion articles and journals, you would think by now we would have arrived and perhaps perfected this subject of inner peace. But suicide statistics tell us differently; anxiety and stress related illnesses paint a much different picture.

But there is a solution. God has the only viable remedy for obtaining peace. He states in his word that he will keep us in perfect peace if our minds remain on Him. This means I must develop and maintain a relationship with God who is the only authorized distributor of peace. Not only does God provide peace, but he has perfect peace. The key to obtaining this peace is keeping my mind stayed on him. Not the promotion, not my finances, not the frustrations, but allowing my mind to merge with His will. If you are in doubt try it, take God at his word. ☑

Sheiks Meet at Warhorse



Photo by Spc. Natalie Loucks

Governor Abdullah Rasheed Hassan Aljaoary of the Diyala Province in Iraq speaks to approximately 150 Sheiks who attended a dinner hosted by Col. Steven Salazar, Commander of 3rd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., March 16, at the dining facility located on FOB Warhorse, Iraq. Both Salazar and Abdullah spoke at the dinner on the change of the government to democracy. "The future is democracy. We want to be your partners in peace," Salazar said. Also mentioned were the many projects to improve the unemployment problem in Baquba, Iraq.

Marne Soldier to receive first Medal of Honor awarded for operations in Iraq



By Noelle Phillips

Knight Ridder Newspapers

WASHINGTON -- The first Medal of Honor awarded for service in Iraq will be presented April 4 in a ceremony at the White House, White House spokesman Scott McClellan announced March 29.

For the family of Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, the honor, the nation's highest military award, brings conflicting feelings: pride that he'll be remembered among America's bravest Soldiers, grief that he died two years ago in Iraq.

"At least my mind is at rest because with the Medal of Honor, Paul's name will go on in history," his wife, Birgit Smith, said March 29 from her home in Holiday, Fla. "His name will never die. This is very important to me."

Courtesy graphic

President Bush will present the medal to Smith's 11-year-old son, David, during the White House ceremony, Birgit Smith said.

There will be a second ceremony April 5 in the morning at the Pentagon. Then in the afternoon, the family will attend another ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, where Smith's headstone will be unveiled.

Smith was nominated for the Medal of Honor by commanders of the 3rd Infantry Division after his death on April 4, 2003.

Smith, 33, died behind the trigger of a .50-caliber machine gun as he fought off an Iraqi attack near Baghdad's international airport. He's credited with saving more than 100 American lives and killing at least 50 Iraqis.

"This was something beyond the call of duty," said Col. Will Grimsley, one of the commanders who signed the medal nomination. "But with a guy like him you knew what he would do to take care of his guys."

Smith, who also served in the 1991 Persian Gulf War, was well-known among his Soldiers for being demanding, insisting on constant training to prepare them for combat.

Birgit Smith said she thought Smith would have been embarrassed by the honor.

"Paul would think 'wow,' and shy away from all the attention," she said. "He would want to share the recognition with his Soldiers."

The past two years have been hard on the Smith family. Besides his wife and son, Paul Smith left behind a daughter, Jessica, 18.

The family moved from Hinesville, Ga., to Florida after his death. They live in the house where Paul Smith grew up. His parents live nearby.

The family thinks of him every day, said Lisa DeVane, a sister of his who lives near Atlanta.

"We've waited so long for this," she said. "We're so proud, but it doesn't diminish the fact his loss is enormous in our personal lives." ☑

Running to Show Support

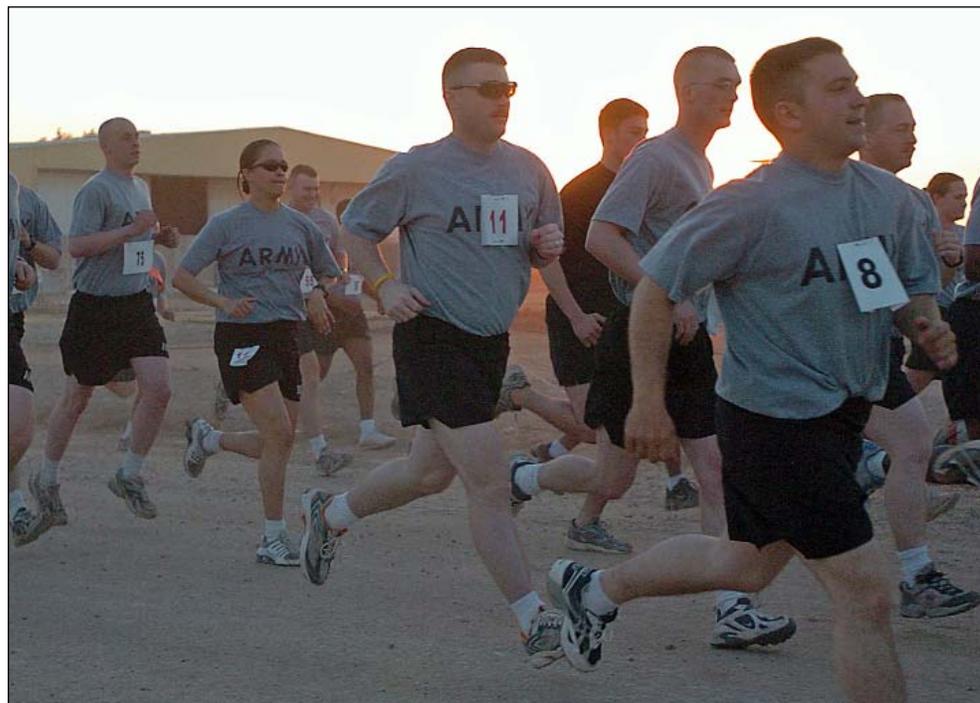


Photo by Spc. Natalie Loucks

Three hundred fifty Forward Operating Base Warhorse runners race in the Chattahoochee Harley-Davidson 5K run March 19 at Warhorse in Baquba, Iraq. The runners began their 3.1 mile run at 4 p.m. Simultaneously, back in Columbus, Ga., the Chattahoochee Harley-Davidson was kicking off their Chattahoochee Valley Ride for the Troops. "The Friends of the Sledgehammer Brigade," a non-profit organization out of Columbus, Ga., raised approximately \$30,000 to support the Soldiers. The Soldier run at Warhorse was open to all personnel of FOB Warhorse including all military units, Georgian army soldiers and workers of Kellogg, Brown & Root, and the Army, Air Force Exchange Service. The runners were divided into four groups depending on age.

The winners and their times for each group are:

17 - 26	1st Lt. Patrick Caukin	HHC Bde.	19:42
27 - 36	1st Lt. Jeremy Rogers	A co. BTB	19:01
37 - 46	Sgt. Maj. Mark Thornton	B co. BTB	20:30
47 and up	Maj. John Moore	HHC Bde.	21:37

Mackenzie medics train to save lives

Story and photo by Spc. Natalie Loucks
3rd BCT PAO

The gate of Forward Operating Base Mackenzie is as unassuming as any other FOB gate. Soldiers stand ready, ever watchful of the comings and going's. Upon entry to the FOB, flat, sandy land is visible as far as the eye can see. It is peppered with pyramid style bunkers marked by the colored guidons identifying them as companies of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment.

The inside of a bunker marked with a red cross is decorated white and blue. Down the hall to the right, the medics of Headquarters, Headquarters Company 1-15, are preparing their supplies and equipment, constantly aware of their role in Iraq; to be ready when an emergency occurs.

These medics see injuries and health issues ranging anywhere from aches and pains due to physical training sessions, to puncture wounds and lacerations resulting from combat.

Typical combat injuries are burns and shrapnel wounds associated with vehicle borne improvised explosive devices and roadside IED's said Spc. Kendue Riley, a HHC, 1-15 Infantry Regiment physician's

assistant who works in the Mackenzie Troop Medical Clinic.

Private 1st Class Jeffery Snowden, of HHC, 1-15 Infantry, is a combat medic and said the most memorable wound he had ever seen was from an Iraqi national who had a gunshot wound that went in through one side of his left ankle and came out the other.

"It was the first time I had seen a gunshot wound from actual combat," the 22-year-old Phoenix native said.

The medical facility at FOB Mackenzie is a level one facility which means they treat any minor injury or health issue. In more serious cases where the facility is not able to deal with the emergency, they will stabilize the patient, and then move them to a higher level facility, according to 2nd Lt. Steven Jones, platoon leader for the medics.

Problems that level one facilities are not able to facilitate are extensive injuries, optometry or dental injuries, or conditions requiring x-rays, said Staff Sgt. James Elmer, Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the aid station.

"We treat immediate trauma and stabilize the casualties, then evacuate them to more definitive or long-term care," Elmer said.

"Typically we move our patients to

Logistical Support Area Anaconda," Jones said.

The medical clinic is open 24-hours for serious injuries and health issues; however, the medics of 1-15 Infantry also conduct sick-call twice a day.

The typical health issues that bring Soldiers to the TMC during sick-call hours are upper respiratory illness, Jones said.

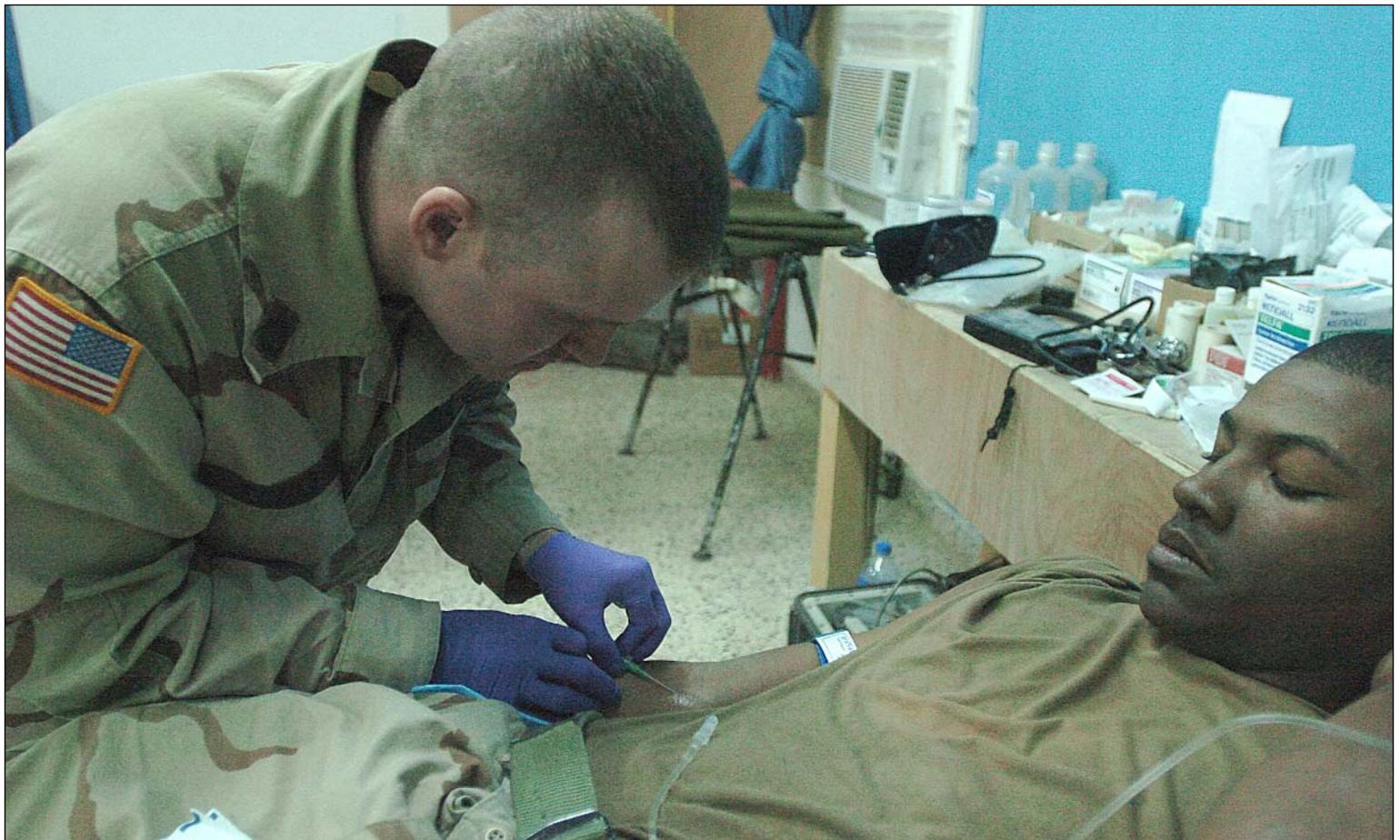
"Usually, colds and upper respiratory problems are caused by the stresses of a new environment," said the 23-year-old Starkville, Miss. native.

When they are not aiding the ailments of Soldiers, the medics of the 15th Infantry maintain their work environment and medical practices including vehicle maintenance, replenishment of medical supplies and equipment, and conducting classes in combat casualty care, Snowden said.

Part of the up keep and inventory of the medical supplies includes runs called "log-packs" to LSA Anaconda.

According to Jones, normal training includes sutures, intravenous procedures and reacting to hypothetical scenarios.

These day-to-day tasks help ensure the medics are ever ready to perform those life saving steps in any emergency. 



Staff Sgt. James Elmer, a medic from Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, sticks Spc. Jawon Stevens, a 1-15 Infantry Combat Medic, with an IV. Medics will often perform procedures on each other for practice.

2-69 medics train Iraqi combat life savers

Story and photo by 2nd Lt. Adam Head

2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment

FOB SCUNION, Iraq -- The medics of the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment along with medics of the 204th Iraqi army conducted a five-day course on combat life saving procedures. Forty Iraqi army medics participated in the training with 2-69, including 204th's Battalion Surgeon, Maj. Basim.

The class began with Sgt. Richard Williams, 2-69's head Combat Lifesaver instructor, teaching a class on casualty evaluation. Spc. Dustin Akins was his assistant trainer. Maj. Basim followed him with a segment on human anatomy familiarization.

The highlight of the course was day three, the hands-on portion. During this exercise, the medics of the 204th got a chance to test their skills on each other by breaking up into small groups. Each Iraqi army medic got a chance to practice applying tourniquets, dressing open wounds, applying splints to fractures, and initiating intravenous therapy. 2-69 instructors included: Spc. Kenneth Jordan, Spc. Michael Lafors, Spc. Leo Finklea, Private 1st Class Timothy Wells, and Private Anthony Ward.

By the end of day five, all 40 Iraqi army medics received a Combat Life Saver certification. Both medic platoons plan to continue joint training in the weeks and months to come. ☑

(Editor's note: 2nd Lt. Adam Head is the Medical Officer for 2-69 Armor.)



2-69 medics look on as Iraqi army medics administer an IV during a Combat Life Saver course at FOB Scunion.

Differences like night, day for OIF I vets

Story and photo by
Spc. Natalie Loucks

3rd BCT PAO

FOB WARHORSE, Iraq -- Soldiers returning to Iraq for a second, or even third time were prepared to have it rough. But much to their surprise, all their preparations for "roughing it" were not necessary.

The differences between Operations Iraqi Freedom I and III are like night and day. From the mission of the Soldiers, to their quality of life, the Soldiers and veterans of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Task Force Liberty, are living the not-too-bad, could-be-worse life.

According to Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, the command sergeant major of the 3rd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., the mission of the unit, during OIF I, was to topple Saddam Hussein's regime.

"As we moved forward into Iraq, we left pieces (of our unit) everywhere we went," said Andrews who, at the time of OIF I, was the command sergeant major for the 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment.

But, the return to Iraq brought on an entirely new mission for the

3rd BCT.

According to Andrews, now the goal of the unit is to conduct stability and support operations to help establish democracy in Iraq.

"What we are doing here now is aiding the people to be more self-reliant," Andrews said. "We are staying as hands-off as we can."

On raid operations, Andrews explained that Soldiers will act as an over watch to the Iraqi army.

"We are doing two things while we are here," Andrews explained. "We are helping the Iraqi people to be confident in their army and police forces, and we are helping the Iraqi forces to be confident in themselves."

Not only is the mission different for the Soldiers, their duties and the overall quality of life is different as well.

Sgt. Raul Salazar has been assigned as a mechanic with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 3rd Bde. during both OIF I and III.

"The first time I was here my job consisted of recovering vehicles that broke down when 3rd Brigade pushed their way across the Iraqi border," he said.

Now Salazar said his job entails maintaining humvees and

other vehicles mostly used on the base.

During his first rotation, his unit was staged in Baghdad at the Iraqi Petroleum Institute.

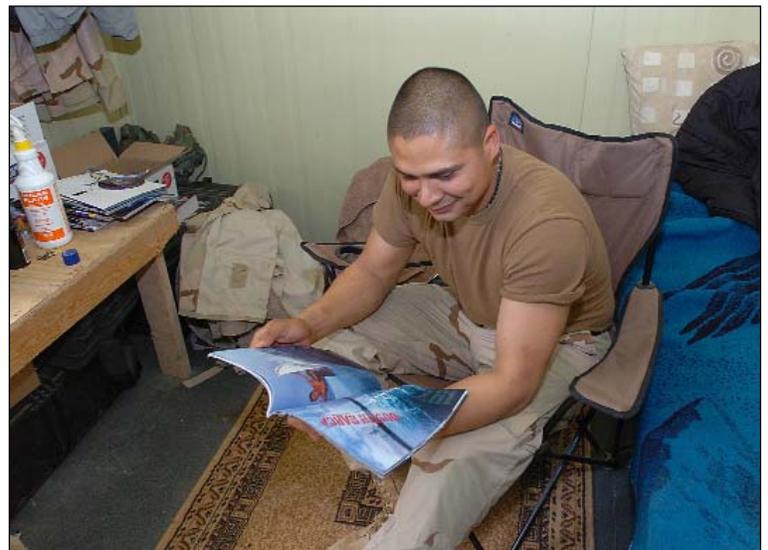
"We lived in 16 man tents," Salazar explained. "There was no privacy, electricity or plumbing. We washed our clothes in buckets."

Sgt. Ronald Heard, another mechanic in HHC Bde. who

served with the unit during OIF I, said the Soldiers lived off of prepackaged meals, water and Gatorade for the duration.

With living conditions the Soldiers have here, both Salazar and Heard said it's like a vacation compared to OIF I.

"There was no dining facility or gym or movies or internet," Heard said. "There was nothing." ☑



Sgt. Raul Salazar, a mechanic in Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 3rd Bde., relaxes in the Containerized Housing Unit he shares with two other Soldiers, while reading a magazine during his time off from work.