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## Governors conference highlights change

*Leaders tout improvements made despite increased insurgent violence*

By Teri Weaver

Staff writer, Stars and Stripes

BAQUBA, Iraq — In the midst of rebuilding a nation, local leaders here also want to rebuild their image with their citizens and their potential voters.

Much like U.S. military leaders and supporters of the Coalition Forces here, Iraqi governors want their residents to read about more than suicide car bombings and watch news coverage that includes more than insurgent terror.

They want them to know they are working to stem the violence while fixing leaking sewer systems, collecting trash and figuring out ways to get more electrical power into cities throughout north-central Iraq.

“We know that terrorism targets everybody,” the governor of Kirkuk province, Abdel Rahman Mostafa, said at a press conference in Baquba, in neighboring Diyala province. “It concerns a lot of people.”

The governors from Kirkuk, Diyala, Salah Ad Din and Sulimaniyah gathered Saturday for a bi-monthly meet-

ing with U.S. generals whose troops patrol the same provinces. The governors condemned the violence and said they are working together to come up with strategies to beat the insurgents. But they also said they are working hard to collaborate on improvement projects, such as sewage, utility and school renovations.

“The bad guy gets his message across by blowing people up,” said Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, the U.S. commander whose forces in the 42nd Infantry Division patrol in the four provinces. Taluto attends the bi-monthly meeting along with his brigade commanders.

“They want to get out positive mes-

See PRESS, Pg. 5



Photo by Sgt. Albert Eaddy

**Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto (top center), Commander of 42nd Infantry Division, Albany, NY, along with Ra'ad Rasheed Hameed (top left), Governor of the Diyala Province and Governors of Salah Ad Din, Kirkuk, and Sulimaniyah during a Conference which was held in Baquba on June 25, during Operation Iraqi Freedom III.**

# Scouts seek out hidden enemy

Story and photo by  
Sgt. Matthew Acosta  
22nd MPAD

FOB MACKENZIE, Iraq - Ocean-like deserts covering areas of Iraq can be easily overlooked when conducting reconnaissance missions. Due to the inhospitable nature of the area, communities can go unnoticed, creating a safe haven for enemy forces.

However, the scouts of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, Task Force Liberty, seek out the hard to reach locations to search for insurgents.

An aerial reconnaissance mission flown by Task Force 1-17th OH-58D Kiowa Warriors observed one un-named village in particular, five miles south of Al Ubayd.

"We're looking for what is believed to be an Anti-Iraqi (forces) training camp in that area," said Staff Sgt. Fritz Autenrieth, section leader, Section B. "Since no one has been to that village in a very long time, we figured we'd go in and check it out."

The scouts set out with four M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, several supporting armored gun trucks, and upwards of 40 Soldiers to raid the village and search for illegal weapons or signs of insurgency.

After several hours of travel along canals, over rough roads and desert sands, the Soldiers reached the objective.

With the close air support of the Kiowas, the

Soldiers started entering and clearing the houses room by room.

"First we try to round up all the males in the village then sweep back over it to do a more detailed search, looking for illegally owned weapons, bomb making materials or anything that can support the training of Anti-Iraqi forces," Autenrieth said.

"Once we have control of the males in the village, we can then downgrade the aggressiveness to show the people that we will respect them and their homes," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Cardinal, scout squad leader. "This will help us in the long run."

Although they did not find a significant number of weapons, they did detain four Iraqi men for questioning.

"We took a couple of unregistered AK-47s from the village and detained four men for questioning," said Capt. Harry A. Irving Jr., scout platoon leader. "If the weapons are properly registered then we'll leave them with the Iraqi families but if they aren't we'll confiscate them."

"Besides the rifles, we found two RPG (launcher) sites in two separate houses," he added. "Those men were taken for questioning."

The battalion has tasked the scouts to search unmapped villages in the past and must judge everything off aerial photos taken by air recon helicopters. There are no intelligence reports of previous units to work with. This

"not knowing" can lead to a tenser situation for the Soldiers conducting the raids.

"Knowing there hasn't been an American Soldier in the villages in a long time, or ever, makes it a bit more difficult because we have no way of telling what's going on there," said Cardinal.

One asset the Soldiers commonly rely on is the air support from 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry, stationed with the scouts at Forward Operating Base Mackenzie.

Autenrieth said they commonly work hand and hand with the OH-58D Kiowas from Task Force 1-17.

"Just knowing those guys are up there takes some of the pressure off," he said. "They help recon the targeted sites before we get there and let us know what's going on. They even

look for routes of travel for our vehicles and possible escape routes the enemy might take and they will destroy targets if needed."

These fast-paced raids can take its toll on Soldiers. The weight of the life-saving "survival gear" they carry, such as body armor and extra ammunition, combined with high temperatures, can leave Soldiers fatigued during the mission.

"Everything you do is training for the missions," said Spc. Curtis Winston, scout. "You get tired from moving fast, but the adrenaline keeps you going until the mission is over."

In many cases, the Soldiers must move fast from house to house in order to keep the element of surprise.

The Soldiers cleared the village faster than expected.

— See HARSH, Pg. 7



Staff Sgt. Logan Siebert (middle), sniper squad leader and Spc. Curtis Winston (foreground), scout, section B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, Task Force Liberty, move through a field on the way to a housing complex near Al Ubayd, Iraq, with the support of an M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

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# Soldiers tighten grip on Buhritz

By Mick Walsh

Staff Writer, Ledger-Enquirer

BUHRITZ, Iraq - The lead humvee stopped at a construction site near the Diyala River, just inside the outer perimeter of a three-tiered cordon that has pretty much smothered the town of Buhritz.

Col. Steve Salazar's mission was two-fold: to visit a \$25 million bridge and highway project, which will become a major link between the suburb of almost 60,000 people and the adjoining city of Baquba.

And the 3rd Brigade Combat Team commander wanted to check the effectiveness of the cordon, installed earlier this week after the death of two brigade soldiers.

"Things are going good," said Salazar via telephone from an Army checkpoint, manned by members of the 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery, on the outskirts of Buhritz. "We're making a lot of progress building up the Iraqi army and the local police. They're eager to learn, and I feel we're well on the way to achieving our goal of Iraqi self-control, which means fewer Coalition Forces will be needed."

Case in point: the cordon. "We're on the outside," he says. "It's the Iraqi army and police inside the town providing security and engaging with the townspeople." The American soldiers are content to man the outside ring around the town.

**Staff Sgt. Layla Elbel, translator for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Command Security Detachment, hands out "I love Iraq" stickers to local citizens of Buhritz, Iraq. Brigade Commander, Col. Steven Salazar payed a visit the city to check on the progress of a \$25 million bridge building project to provide a link between Buhritz and neighboring city, Baquba. Bridge workers and local citizens of the city slowly began to gather around the commander and his security detachment. Salazar spoke briefly with the crowd, issues concerning their city.**

Photo by Cpl. Natalie Loucks

Salazar, who took command of the 3rd Brigade from Col. Dan Allyn in July 2003, will be with the brigade as long as it is deployed in Iraq.

"You'll have to put up with me for a while longer," he said.

When Buhritz's leadership - its mayor, police chief and city council - was uncooperative with the coalition, and apparently sympathetic to the insurgency, the provincial governor stepped in.

"They arrested the mayor, fired the police chief and dissolved the council," Salazar said. "And next week the governor will announce a move toward open elections in Buhritz."

While the city fathers balked about turning in terrorists, tipsters certainly didn't. They helped the Iraqi army arrest 29 suspected insurgents and uncover enough bomb-making material to build 160 improvised explosive devices.

In addition, since the net was dropped over the city, the police have arrested seven men, including three Egyptians.

"We're seeing more foreigners in the insurgency," said Maj. Steve Warren, the brigade's public affairs officer.

Warren, photographer Cpl. Natalie Loucks, driver Spc. Tiffany Catron, gunner Spc. Ronald Pleasant and Staff Sgt. William Washington were in the third vehicle in the late afternoon convoy through Buhritz.

The group had just left a press

conference announcing this weekend's governors' conference in Baquba. The governors of Diyala, Sal Ad Din, Sul Ay Mania and Kirkuk will be at the confab. The United States will provide some security: a helicopter and a quick reaction force.

But, said Warren, all the ground security for the meeting will be provided by Iraqi troops.

As the Soldiers departed their humvees, a young boy approached Salazar. The colonel handed him an "I Love Iraq" sticker.

Translator Staff Sgt. Layla Elbel talked to the boy and his friends, all of whom seemed excited to be with American Soldiers. Loucks captured it all on film.

It's far from a kids' game on the streets of Buhritz. "You probably heard one of the guys give the order to lock and load," Warren said. And no one was taking off their protective gear. "It's hot today, and we're expecting a sand storm later on, but, believe me, all this gear is necessary."

After checking on the cordon and bridge-builders, a term in Iraq which has both literal and figurative meanings, it was back to Forward Operating Base Warhorse, about 10 kilometers away.

"None of the guys like being away from their families," Salazar said. "But we're excited about the mission we're on and can definitely see the payoff for what we're doing." 



## 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'

# Find and share your joy

By Chaplain (Capt.) Christopher Offen  
1-15 Infantry Regiment

In our time in Iraq I have become amazed at the ways in which Soldiers keep track of time. Some keep track of it by counting pay days, some monitor trips to the laundry or.... Ok I admit I myself have in my work area a dry erase board and everyday my first order of business is to change the day count I have written there. We are at day 148 if you are wondering.

Such tracking of time can be a healthy distraction. Yet what we should realize is that our deployment to Iraq should not be just about keeping track of time and waiting for it to end.

The year or so that we spend here should not just be about time and the tracking of it but the making of the most of it. There should be in each soldier's life a bit of Joy. I mean a joy that comes from life at the moment.

What an awful year this will be if the only joy we are focused on is the joy of going home. Look around I bet there are plenty of joys that do or can fill your daily life.

Sure a regular phone call home can bring joy, so can a trip to the gym. We all know the joy of the DFAC

and the newest DVD. I have discovered, however, that the greatest joy comes from lessening the suffering of others.

The Christian scriptures tell the story of how Jesus despite his personal suffering saw joy in the opportunity to help, comfort and encourage others. He saw the opportunity to bring joy to others. Sure we are talking about heavy duty things here. Jesus laid down his life for the salva-

**“Who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scoring its shame.”**

--Hebrews 12:21

tion of the world. In the example of Jesus, however, we can be inspired to touch others in smaller ways in order to reduce suffering and increase joy for our neighbors and ourselves.

Look around is there someone in need or in pain. Are they lonely or homesick or afraid or just plain tired? Is that person your roommate, your workmate or maybe even you? Find those people, talk to them, share with them your hopes and dreams. Ask them about theirs. Remind that person of his immense value as a human being and as a soldier. Find the joy today and everyday. Joy destroys suffering and Joy makes time go faster. ☑

## Memorial honors 3 fallen comrades

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

FOB GABE, Iraq - Members of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Liberty gathered at Forward Operating Base Gabe, Iraq June 24 to honor three of their fallen comrades.

1st Lt. Noah Harris, Cpl. William Long and interpreter Nail Andraws Moraki were killed June 17, during a combat patrol in the city of Buhritz, Iraq.

Harris was assigned to Company B, 2nd

Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd BCT where he served as the platoon leader of 3rd Platoon.

He graduated from the University of Georgia through the ROTC Scholarship Program with a degree in Business Administration.

Following graduation, Harris reported to Fort Benning to attend the Infantry Officer Basic Course, Basic Airborne School and the Mechanized Leaders Course.

His awards and decorations include the

Purple Heart, the Bronze Star Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Parachutist Badge and the Combat Infantry Badge.

Harris is survived by his father Rick and mother Lucy of Eljay, Ga. and his sister Kim Munier of Dacula, Ga.

Cpl. William Long was assigned to Company B, 2-69 Armor where he served as a

— See Iraqi, Pg. 11

## Press conference stresses Iraqi independence

Continued from Pg. 1

sages," Taluto said of the Iraqi governors. "They're committed to doing a better job getting their stories out."

Taluto's division helps deliver some of those improvements.

In Diyala alone, \$207 million has been earmarked for 260 improvement projects ranging from building a hydroelectric dam to buying medical equipment for hospitals to repaving roads, according to Capt. Myers Smith, a project coordinator for the 3rd BCT, which is working with the New York guard in Iraq.

A map in Smith's office shows the hundreds of ongoing projects. Right now, the process of prioritizing, writing specifications, bidding and approving projects is a joint effort by the Americans and the Iraqis, Smith said.

"Eventually, in 12 to 18 months, we'd like this map to be all in Arabic," said Maj. Chris Barron, who oversees the project office for Diyala province. "The money will eventually transfer to the Iraqis, too. At some point we'll be gone. And the money will be gone."

On Saturday, the governors used the 25-minute press conference to stress their independence from the Americans.

The Diyala governor, Ra'ad Rasheed Hameed, said the Iraqi government was elected by the people of Iraq.

As a sovereign nation, Iraq has invited the U.S. and other coalition forces to stay to help secure and stabilize the country.

"We have a sovereign government," Ra'ad said. "We've asked them to stay here."

On the way out of the press conference, one Arabic reporter asked an Army spokesman why the Americans attended the meeting if the Iraqis are working independently.

"We're here to help," the American said. ☑

## 'Buffalo' aids Trailblazers in explosives search

By Mick Walsh

Staff writer, Ledger-Enquirer

BAQUBA, Iraq - They call it "the Buffalo."

It could just as easily be known as "the Rhino," "the Turtle" or "the Hippo," based on its size, protective covering and, uh, lack of zero-to-60 speed.

Some Soldiers have compared what's officially known as a mine protective clearance vehicle to "an SUV on steroids."

Riding in one of these heavily-armored, 26-ton vehicles, while dressed in protective battle gear on a day when the temperature reaches 115, probably isn't the most enjoyable way to spend a summer afternoon in Iraq.

But it's probably the safest.

"I'd like to take one home to drive on the interstate," said Private 1st Class Samantha Spurlock, a broadcast journalist with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, stationed at Forward Operating Base Warhorse near Baquba.

She recently accompanied the crew of Team Trailblazer, an Army Reserve unit from Millington, Tenn., which operates the Buffalo as it makes its daily rounds through the streets of Baquba.

"It's an all-day trip," said Spurlock via telephone. "We crawl all the way, at a snail's pace."

But the crew - which can run from two to five soldiers - isn't trying to set speed records. In fact, anything over 5 mph and they might miss what they're looking for, namely improvised explosive devices alongside the roadways.

IEDs, or roadside bombs, are the cause of 70 percent of all U.S. combat deaths.

And they're not just sitting on the side of the road, with BOMB in huge

letters written on them.

"They can be anywhere," said Capt. Rick Barnes, a 3rd Brigade engineering officer from Chelsea, Mich. "We've found bombs strapped to trees. Recently we found one on top of a bus station."

"There's a 30-foot hydraulic arm that is operated from inside the Buffalo," Barnes explained.

The robotic arm enables the crew to check out a potential IED without leaving the safety of the vehicle.

Maj. Steve Warren, the brigade's public affairs officer, says insurgents

aren't particular where they plant their bombs. "They'll put 'em in anything. Our guys found one in a dead cow a while back."

**"I'd like to take one home to drive on the interstate.."**

**--Private 1st Class Samantha Spurlock  
3rd BCT, PAO**

Since the Buffalo driver sits almost 15 feet above the road, his view is much better than, say, the driver of a humvee.

"And it's a lot safer the higher up you are if there is an explosion," said Barnes.

Want proof? Despite eight attacks on the brigade's Buffalo since January, there have been no injuries.

Spurlock said the Buffalo crew travels the same route day after day, the same one the majority of U.S. military vehicles use. "They get to know the roads like the back of their hands," she said. "If something new shows up on the road, they stop to investigate it."

Barnes said the vehicle averages about 300 miles a day and, since January, has uncovered 21 of the roadside bombs.

"We've been able to reduce the number of IED incidents roughly in half since we arrived here," said Warren. "This time a year ago they were averaging eight to 10 incidents a day; now we're down to four to five. And part of the credit goes to the Buffalo." The Buffalo has been in

See UPARMORED, Pg. 10

# Dear Friends, wish you were here...

Story and photos by  
Cpl. Natalie Loucks

3rd BCT PAO

Based on accounts by  
Spc. Richard Lavender  
445th Civil Affairs Battalion

I know I just got here about month ago but already I have had some crazy things happen to me. My most recent wartime experience happened June 26.

First, I must tell you that I am a gunner for my unit here, Company C, 445th Civil Affairs Battalion out of Mountainview, Ca.

Well, we had a mission to link up with one of the other CA teams out of a Forward Operating Base called Normandy. That's about an hour or so drives in a three vehicle convoy.

About 35 minutes into the ride we are stopped by an Iraqi Army soldier. He was screaming something in Arabic and all I could get out of the yelling and exaggerated arm gestures was, "blah, blah, blah, BOOM, blah, blah."

I now know that the universal word for "there is an improvised explosive device up ahead" is "BOOM."

We had to move out quickly.

At that point, I reacted as a gunner should and turned my turret in the direction which would be most effective for security.

When we were at a safe distance from the bomb, I got settled into position, watched, waited, and waited, and waited and waited some more.

We waited for hours for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team to get there to blow up the IED safely.

During that time, a crowd started to form around our vehicles. It

was just like the U.S. when there is an accident in the road blocking traffic and everyone gets out of there cars to see what is going on.

Crowd control was challenging, that is, until an

M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle pulled up to the scene. I was pret-

ty impressed.

After we waited two, three four hundred hours it seemed like, the EOD team showed up.

First, they sent out a little remote control car looking thing called a "bomb bot." The bomb bot brought a charge with that would later be used to blow up the IED.

It sniffed around the site for a bit checking to see if there were any other explosives out there. The bomb that was initially spotted was planted inside a piece of concrete.

The bomb bot placed the charge on the concrete block. Then the little guy made its way back to home base with the team.

I was told to get down in the vehicle and make sure I had my ear plugs in because we were so close.

We waited some more then almost without warning this incredible blast filled the area.

The feeling of the shock wave was amazing. The smoke filled the air and I couldn't really see much. I could, however, feel and hear the debris raining down around me.



blown up properly.

The area was clear and we continued on our mission. I must say though, that was one heck of a way to start my deployment.

I'm not too worried about my year and half or so here. I know my job and I'm careful. I think I'm going to have fun here. Don't worry about me. ☑



When the smoke and debris settled, this guy that looked like he was wearing a space suit walked...yes, I said walked out to the site.

This astronaut guy was actually an EOD technician in a bomb

suit. He was walking out to the site to make sure everything was



# 1-15 Dragons face loss of leader

By Cpl. Natalie Loucks

3rd BCT PAO

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Liberty, lost one of their brothers June 8 during a reconnaissance mission in the city of Ad Dawr, Iraq.

An emotional memorial service was held in honor of 1st Lt. Michael Fasnacht, June 12 at Forward Operating Base Wilson, Iraq.

Fasnacht graduated from Mankato State University in 2003 with a degree in Biology Science.

Before graduating, the 25-year-old Minnesota native completed both the Army's Air Assault and Airborne courses as a cadet.

He was named Distinguished Military Graduate in the Army ROTC program.

As an infantry officer, Fasnacht continued his military schooling. He successfully completed the Infantry Officer

Basic Course, Ranger School, the Bradley Leader's Course and the Mortar Leader's Course.

After completing schooling, Fasnacht was assigned to 1-15th Infantry at Fort Benning, Ga. where he worked as the assistant S-1 while waiting to become a platoon leader.

Fasnacht deployed to Iraq January 8 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III continuing to assist as a battalion staff officer for the battalion.

While in Iraq, he joined Company B, 1-15th Infantry where he served as a platoon leader for 2nd Platoon.

During his time as a platoon leader, Fasnacht earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

His awards include the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart, Army Achievement Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon and the National Defense Service Medal.

Fasnacht is survived by his wife, Tresa Fasnacht and his parents of Janesville, Minnesota. ☑

## Harsh conditions drive scout platoon harder

Continued from Pg. 2

The whole operation took just over two hours from the first step into the village to gearing up for departure.

"You never know what you are going to stumble upon out there," said Irving. "The insurgents are on the move every couple of days because we are pursuing them."

Although the Soldiers may be in constant danger every time they set foot outside the gate of the FOB, they seem to enjoy their work and don't mind the long, hot, dusty hours of travel to reach an objective.

"We really enjoy our work. Besides doing the actual raids, the long drive out there across the desert is kind of fun," said Cardinal. "It can have its effects on the vehicles; you just need keep up the speed to stop from bogging down in the deep sand until you get home."

Like driving in the desert, the scout Soldiers keep their speed up during raids to keep from bogging down until the mission is over.

"So far we've come up empty-handed, but we'll get them (insurgents)," Irving said. ☑

## Salie Fitness Center Opens

*Sgt. 1st Class John Finch of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment cuts the ribbon to the brand new David Salie Fitness Center June 24, at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq. Finch was a very good friend of Salie and was given the privilege of cutting the ribbon. The Gym was dedicated in honor of Salie who was the first casualty of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom III. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, a basketball game was held on the new court and residents of Warhorse took a tour of the new gym. The establishment provides not only a new indoor basketball court but also two outdoor basketball courts, punching bags, cardio fitness machines and new weight training equipment.*

Photo by Cpl. Natalie Loucks



# Battle Boars drop it like it's hot

Photos by Cpl. Natalie Loucks  
3rd BCT PAO

*Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment pull security as four, 500 pound bombs were dropped approximately 1.5 kilometers northeast of the town of Al Ali, June 12, on an abandoned house suspected of holding equipment used in mortar and rocket attacks targeted at FOB Normandy, Iraq. (right)*

*Sgt. 1st Class Reginald Holmes, TF 1-30 Fire Support non-commissioned officer radios to Sgt. James Thompson. "30 seconds until release." (below)*



*Lt. Col. Roger Cloutier, TF 1-30 Battalion Commander lays in an altered prone unsupported fighting position awaiting the first two bombs to reach their target. (below)*



The bomb was released



*Soldiers from FOB Normandy, 2.5 kilometers away, could feel the tremors. A second pass dropped two more bombs of the same size moments later. (above)*



*Cloutier and Sgt. Aaron Baeza survey the damage done by the four 500 lb bombs. Getting out of the crater was a challenge. It was a hard climb and the rocks kept sliding back into the hole. (left)*

# Columbus and Iraq only a satellite away

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

On any Tuesday, a military wife sits at her dining room table. Drinking her coffee and getting the kids ready for school, she watches the local news.

"Is there anyone you want to say hi to back home," a husky voice from the television asks.

"Yes I'd like to say hi to my wife back home in Columbus."

That was her husband's voice. He's serving proudly in Iraq with the 3rd Brigade Combat team of the 3rd Infantry Division, Task Force Liberty.

Reunions like this are brought to Soldiers and their families through a very special crew at the WTVM Channel 9 news station.

Every Tuesday, Chuck Leonard and Cheryl Renee who are morning anchors for WTVM, interview someone different from the 3rd BCT stationed in Baquba, Iraq

"We bring people together," said Renee. "We make a difference in peoples lives."

Renee said her job is enjoyable and rewarding.

"We not only tell the story," she said, "we are in the midst of every-

thing that is going on there."

The project "Talk Back Live with the 3rd BCT" started at a meeting between Rick Moll, Channel 9 news director, and Maj. Steve Warren, 3rd BCT Public Affairs Officer,

when Warren described to Moll the equipment and transmitting capabilities the Public Affairs section was taking with them to Iraq.

"WTVM has gone above and beyond the call of duty in thier efforts to keep Columbus informed about the Soldiers of 3rd Brigade," said Warren. "With the interviews posted on the website, families across the nation can stay up to date. The feedback has been overwhelming."

"It was a great opportunity to work together and to keep Columbus up to date with the Soldiers," Moll said.

Moll recalled a live broadcast Channel 9 and the 3rd BCT PAO did when Deede Salie, who's husband David was killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

Deede Salie along with friends and family of her husband were brought into the WTVM studio to watch the 3rd BCT dedicate the new fitness facility in her husbands honor.

"It was touching," Moll said.



MOLL  
WTVM



LEONARD  
WTVM

"We see Soldiers go overseas to fight for our freedom and our country and this makes us a family," Renee said. "We are all a big family in Columbus."

The Channel 9 team has gotten feedback not only from families of Soldiers but from around the country.

"Talking to the families makes me think of what it would be like if I or one of my loved ones were over there," Leonard said.

He said the relationship and communication with 3rd BCT helps to ensure families that their Soldiers are as safe as they can be.

There are stories on the news about the war that are serious in nature. Moll said the "Talk Back Live" interviews take a look at the lighter side of the war.

"Along with the serious stories, we try to look at things like how the Soldiers are living, how they are eating, good things like that," Moll said.

There is a long road ahead, Moll said, but the relationship is still continuing to grow between Columbus and the Soldiers in Iraq.

"3rd Brigade has been open to new ideas and has embraced us," he said. ▣



RENEE  
WTVM



Spc. Jason Eichmann, winner of the "Flipping Quarters" drawing, discusses his new living room during a live interview with Channel 9 News. Eichmann and his wife won a living room makeover through a drawing put on by the family readiness group of the 3rd BCT.

# Russell's Bar and Grill opens on Wilson

Story and photo by Capt. Stephen Miller

1-15 Infantry Regiment

FOB WILSON, Iraq - Father's Day brought a little bit of home to Forward Operating Base Wilson, Iraq in the opening of Russell's Bar and Grill.

Task Force 1-15 inherited an Iraqi Café as part of its Moral, Welfare and Recreation facility when the unit RIP'd with Troop C, 1st Battalion, 4th Cavalry.

The FOB decided to keep it open on a provisional status and was open mid-day about three days a week offering local-style food Soldiers could purchase

Since FOB Wilson is a small FOB its dining facility is considered a mobile kitchen trailer site and therefore does not receive many of the same supplements and variety that the larger FOBs are accustomed to. Fried chicken and "chunks-o-beef" are regular menu items. The Iraqi-run Café provided a small morale boost for the FOBs occupants.

Recently the Iraqi Café was closed due to security concerns. When Staff Sgt. Russell Slouffman, the dining facility manager for FOB Wilson was informed the Café was closing he jumped at the opportunity.

Always looking for ways to do something special, Slouffman has stood out with his Saturday surf and turf, Easter buffet, Memorial Day buffet, and dining facility buffet & movie nights.

Slouffman went to work on the space vacated by the Iraqi Café, cleaning, re-arranging, adding some fresh paint and adjusting his plans for the lunch meal in which he long ago refused to hand out MRE's when he could instead offer sandwiches and roast beef in the dining facility.

Now, he could still layout the regular lunches in the dining facility and also offer up hamburgers, cheeseburgers, hot-dogs, and French fries at Russell's Bar and Grill.

Opening day of Russell's was a great success and business was steady from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Soldiers taking a break from daily duties for lunch lined up for their

made-to-order burgers and fresh hot fries. Some lingered at the tables relaxing, socializing, and listening to the R&B and light Jazz that Slouffman has playing in the background.

The atmosphere is similar to a sidewalk café back home. Spc. Matthew Jemison said, "It tastes good, and it's convenient."

Sgt. James Browning added, "Guys can just walk over for lunch from the motor-pool bays."

Slouffman only has a crew of seven cooks and a few kitchen police but his ability to operate Russell's shouldn't be in jeopardy.

"It's going to be popular, he's going to need some help. I'd volunteer to help out, this is great," said Sgt. Kelvin Guity.

When Staff Sgt. Slouffman was asked what his motivation was he said, "Soldiers like it, that's what it's all about. You've got to have a passion for what you do. It can be food service, Infantry, whatever. If you love what you do, it shows, and I love taking care of Soldiers." ☑



Soldiers residing at Forward Operating Base Wilson relax during their off time off on the grand opening of Russell's Bar and Grill.

## Uparmored vehicle provides safety for Soldiers

Continued from Pg. 5

active operations in Iraq for more than a year and is part of the Pentagon's hunter-killer team concept that protects convoys against the threat of mines, IEDs and other explosive threats.

To date, the 37 Buffalo vehicles in country have been used to clear nearly 36,000 kilometers of roads and have found more than 220 IEDs.

Much of that has been in the Baghdad area where Col. Jim Brooks, commander of Fort Benning's 36th Engineer Group, runs the 3rd Infantry Division's Maneuver-Enhancement Brigade.

Brooks recently briefed visiting Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on the Buffalo.

Brooks said Soldiers are "extremely confident" in the protection the Buffalo

provides. "The bottom line is... they want to ride in this," he said. "And they want to find the IEDs and protect their fellow Soldiers."

IEDs being handled by the long arm of the Buffalo explode about 10 percent of the time. But because of its bulk, the vehicle has provided strong protection from such blasts, even at close range.

Army 2nd Lt. David Swisher, a platoon leader with the Ohio-based 612th Engineer Battalion, which is assigned to Brooks' unit, said:

"These vehicles have been hit several times - small-arms fire, grenades, artillery shells, you name it. Windows have been shattered but not compromised. Tires have all

been deflated, gouges in the armor, exhaust system replaced. And no one inside the Buffalo has ever been hurt."

The Buffalo is manufactured by Force Protection Inc. in Ladson, S.C. The design was modified from a South African mine-clearing vehicle. ☑



# Iraqi brother honored at US memorial service

Continued from Pg. 4

rifleman and a team leader.

The Boston native raised his right hand and pledged himself to the Army October 17, 2001 as an infantryman.

After successfully completing One Station Unit Training at Fort Benning, Ga., Long was assigned to the esteemed 1st Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment's Old Guard at Fort Meyer, Va. and served with the unit until June 20, 2004 when he was assigned to 3rd BCT.

Long's awards and decorations include the Purple Heart, the Bronze

Star Medal, the Army Achievement Medal with 2 oak leaf clusters, Army Good Conduct Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Parachutist Badge, Combat Infantry Badge and the Expert Infantry Badge.

He is survived by his father John Long, his mother Susan and stepfather Lee Cordner.

Nail Andraws Moraki was a translator and interpreter assigned to 1st Battalion 10th Field Artillery, 3rd BCT.

The 36-year-old Telkaif, Iraq native graduated from the University of Mosul with a Master's degree in Linguistics in

1994.

December 1996, Moraki moved to the United States where he later attended Wayne State University in Detroit.

From 2001 to 2004 he worked as a teacher in the Michigan school districts of Warren, Madison and Southfield after which he started work for the Titan Corporation as an interpreter on FOB Gabe.

Moraki's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal and the Secretary of Defense Medal for the Defense of Freedom.

He is survived by his mother, Froniay of Warren Michigan. ☑



**1ST LT. NOAH HARRIS**  
Company B, 2-69 Armor



**CPL. WILLIAM LONG**  
Company B, 2-69 Armor

## Ever watchful eyes guarding FOB Gabe

From the Rock News

TF 1-10

While most Soldiers recover from a long day peacefully, there is always a dedicated force watching out for their safety.

The Soldiers of the Headquarters Battery 1st Battalion, 10th Field Artillery, Guard Force have one of the most under-appreciated, but critical missions in the Task Force. Broken into three Squads, these "Guardian Angles" work an arduous 4 hours on, 8 hours off shift cycle 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The forward operating base has several towers that are manned by either one or two Soldiers depending on the position of the tower, and the local threat reporting. The Guard Force is also responsible for the Task Force 1-10 Field Artillery Entry Control Point, one of two providing access to the FOB. Affectionately known as "Headhunter Gate" for the Soldiers that man it, it is a critical piece of the lifeline between supply stocks and the FOB.

Soldiers departing and returning from missions pass through this Entry Control Point 24 hours a day, and it is definitely a welcome sight after a long mission, or even short ones.

Not only do these Soldiers stand vigilant, but they also monitor some of the most interesting terrain in the Task Force 1-10 Field Artillery Area of Responsibility.

Routinely they observe local shepherds taking their flocks of sheep to field, or scavengers digging for bricks and other building materials for their homes.

They have memorized their sectors of responsibility so well that many can point out heat sources at night through their thermal night sights, and can tell you when a certain piece of trash has been left by a passing local.

We all owe them a debt of gratitude for their professionalism and vigilance over the time that we have been deployed to FOB Gabe.

The quality of life on FOB Gabe is a direct reflection of the professionalism and dedication to duty that these Soldiers demonstrate on a daily basis.

Maintenance, administration, and supply operations continue here as they do at home, safe and secure because of the Soldiers pictured below.

Next time you see one of these Soldiers, thank them for their steadfastness and dedication.

While you sleep, maintain, play video games, or workout in the gym, these guys always have your back. ☑

# DRUM MAJORS

Each battalion submits a daily good-news story called a "Drumbeat" to the Brigade. Weekly, a distinguished panel of judges evaluates the "Drumbeat" and selects the best one, which is crowned the "Drum Major." *Hammer Times* proudly presents the "Drum Majors" for the last two weeks. ☑



**Line of Operation:** CMB

**Who:** Local Contractor

**What:** Tahrir Water Filtration System

**When:** 01 July

**Where:** Tahrir

**Why/Significance:** In another sign of the improving state of the infrastructure, the Tahrir water filtration station is nearing completion. The station is only waiting for the electrical wiring to be connected and then it will be operational. This is a \$270,000 project that was requested by the Qada'a Council to help improve the quality of life for the citizens of Tahrir. When the station comes on-line, the people of Tahrir will have a reliable source of drinkable water. This project is just another example of how the Qada'a Council is working to improve the lives of the citizens of Tahrir.

**Bulletized:** Tahrir water filtration station nears completion.



**WHY/SIGNIFICANCE:** The children's soccer team in Nahrwan recently received uniforms from an NGO. The TF 2-34 AR Civil Affairs Team donated a large number of brand new soccer balls to these children. This action gains camaraderie between Coalition Forces and the citizens of Nahrwan. It also provides a positive opportunity for recreation for the children.