



SCIMITAR

MNF-1's Cutting Edge



Vol. 4, No. 1

Baghdad, Iraq

Jan. 6, 2006



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. John R. Rozean

Caregivers: Iraqis wait to receive medical care and toothbrushes, toothpaste, toys and school supplies Dec. 22 during a medical civil affairs project in a rural farming community on the outskirts of western Baghdad. The project, which treated more than 150 patients, involved three U.S. physicians, one Iraqi physician, and several medics from 1/10th Mountain Division's 3rd Battalion, 6th Field Artillery and 10th Brigade Support Battalion.

Iraqi Police celebrate new station opening

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Donald Sparks
3rd U.S. Cavalry

TAL AFAR — With one quick snip of the scissors, Tal Afar Police Chief Gen. Fawaz Mahmoud Issa officially opened the new Al Salam Police Station during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Tal Afar.

The event marked a milestone for Tal Afar's police department as part of efforts to restore the city's quality of life and security.

Last year terrorists destroyed a police station in Tal Afar, but the opening of the new station represents a resurrection of the police force according to city officials.

"We're very thankful for the Coalition Forces for their support in building this police station," said Tal Afar Mayor's Assistant Gen. Sabah Hamidi Mohammed. "We also want to thank the military police for their training of our police officers and police force."

The new police station building features a holding cell, an arms room, investigation and intelligence cells, an interrogation room and an information desk. Currently 180 Iraqi Police officers will be assigned to the station, with an additional 60 officers scheduled to be added to the force.

Posters featuring the Iraqi Police Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics adorned the walls of the new station.

The opening of the station brings personal satisfaction

and accomplishment for Capt. Carlie Ortego, 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, who recruited and trained the Iraqi Police and served as the project manager of the station.

"When we [3rd ACR] first got here, we thought we might open three police stations in Tal Afar," said Ortego, from Lafayette, La. "But before we leave, we'll have three up and running, with six more scheduled to open shortly after our departure. It's just amazing."

Ortego said when the regiment arrived in April there were approximately 200 police in the city, but now there

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Station

from Page 1



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Donald Sparks

Iraqi policemen hang a poster featuring the Iraqi Police Code of Conduct in the new Al Salam Police Station prior to the grand opening ceremony.

are more than 600 on the ground and another 900 at police academies in Jordan and Mosul.

“We had some early obstacles related to security upon our arrival,” Ortego said. “But after the successful operations two months ago [Operation Restoring Rights], it allowed my job to flourish and for me to get the Iraqi Police all the resources they needed.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Donald Sparks

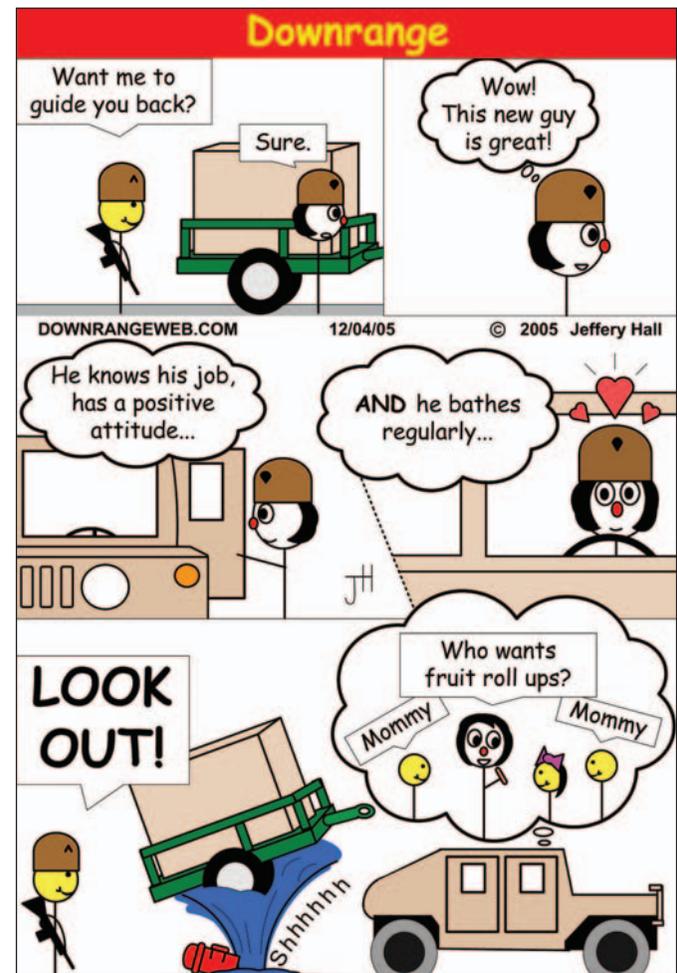
Tal Afar Police Chief Gen. Fawas Mahmoud Issa snips the ribbon to officially open the new Al Salam Police Station during grand opening ceremonies.

Explosion in the Night



Courtesy photo

An explosion lights up the horizon as explosive ordnance Soldiers detonate a mortar cache in Tissa Nissan. A local citizen in Tissa Nissan led a group of Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 64th Armor to a mortar cache with seven 60 mm mortar rounds. Nearby, Soldiers found another 19 60 mm mortar rounds.



To learn more about Iraqi and Coalition successes, log on to: www.mnf-iraq.com and click on the logo to download this week's issue.

PERSPECTIVES

Last night I met a hero

By Maj. Mark Rasnake
332nd Expeditionary Medical Group

I met a hero last night. I did not realize it at the time, but he is the closest thing to a hero that I likely will ever meet. This is a place where the word "hero" is tossed around day in and day out, so much so that you sometimes lose sight of its true meaning. His story reminded me of it.

He was commanding a Bradley fighting vehicle that was struck with a roadside bomb, and then caught fire. The loading ramp jammed, trapping eight inside. The crew was forced to escape through a much smaller hatch in the top of the vehicle. All but one made it out. The medic was left behind, apparently unable to get out. Without concern for his own life, my hero went back in to the burning vehicle to retrieve his friend.

Six of his buddies came to us with severe burns. He came to us with burns over most of his body, the most severely injured of the group.

The surgeons worked for hours on his wounds and we worked for hours in the intensive care unit to stabilize him for transport. In the end, damage to his lungs made him too sick to be safely transported by plane to our hospital in Germany and then to a burn center in San Antonio.

The ventilators we use for transport simply could not deliver the amount of oxygen he needed. If he stayed here in Iraq, he would have died of his wounds. We simply cannot care for such severe burns here. Only a handful of hospitals back in the U.S. can.

Knowing this, our air evacuation team loaded him into the plane for the six-hour flight to Germany. They had to deliver every breath to him during that flight by hand squeezing a small bag. I do not know yet if he made it to Germany alive.

Back home there is a bridge named for Sgt. Elbert Kinser. My grandfather told me the story about why the bridge was named for him. It came to my mind this morning. He was fighting alongside his buddies, when the enemy threw a grenade into their ranks. Rather than

attempt to run to escape the danger he threw himself on the grenade, saving the lives of his comrades. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his gallantry, and the town named a bridge after him.

This is the story as I remember it being told to me. The details may be wrong. There is a memorial at the end of the bridge that tells Sgt. Kinser's actual story. Honestly, I do not think I have ever stopped to read it.

How many people drive across that bridge every day without ever wondering why it has its name? How many ever stop at the large parking area in front of the memorial to read the story of this man's last minutes on earth? How many of his friends are still alive to remember the story? How many grew old and had grandchildren because of his sacrifice? Did they thank him every day of their lives? The next time I cross that bridge I will stop for just a few minutes of my life to read about a man who gave all of his.

People use the word "hero" too much. We have cheapened it. We use it to describe football players and politicians. We even use it derisively at times to describe people we think are being too eager or self-promoting. It is even thrown about too cheaply over here when people describe groups of us just doing our jobs as "American heroes."

Most of us will serve our time here without ever truly earning that title. The man I met last night deserves to be called hero. Years from now, will anyone remember what he did last night?

It is a privilege to be here taking care of these troops. Are they all heroes? They certainly are more so than any athlete at home will ever be. There is a higher standard though, even here. I was honored by seeing him in person last night.

Editor's note: Sgt. Elbert Kinser's Medal of Honor citation confirms that on May 4, 1945; while acting as a leader of a rifle platoon with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division, in action against Japanese forces on Okinawa Shima in the Ryukyu Chain, he protected several of his fellow Marines by jumping on a hand grenade and absorbing the shock of the grenade with his body. He gave his life for his fellow Marines.

Scimitar Pulse

Who's better, Elvis or the Beatles?

"The Beatles. They're both before my time. I didn't like Elvis as much as I liked the Beatles."



Maj. Whitney Miley
Multi-National Security Transition
Command - Iraq,
Twin falls, Id.



"I'd have to pick Elvis, because he had a greater influence on music today. I liked his hair."

Bryant Middleton
Multi-National Force - Iraq
Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

"I'm a Beatles man! I know quite a few more Beatles songs than Elvis', but I'll never forget when Elvis died."



Bruce McLennan,
PCO Water
Australia



"A Beatles man. I would say I've listened to more Beatles, probably because their British. But Elvis is good as well."

Ranger David Hewitt,
1 Royal Irish
Belfast, Ireland

"Neither. I never liked either one."

Sgt. 1st Class Steven Carter,
Headquarters and Headquarters
Company, 43rd Brigade Troops
Battalion,
Hampton Va.



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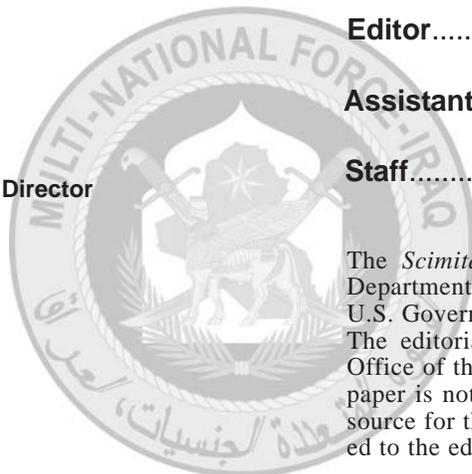
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Little Soldier does huge job

Story by 2nd Lt. Anthony D. Buchanan
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BRASSFIELD-MORA — People all over the world have heard stories about little people doing big things.

These stories inspired us all as children back then and motivate us to do big things as grown-ups today.

The 3rd ID's 3-69 Armor Battalion has its own story of a little guy doing big things.

Standing just over 5 feet, 2 inches, the 3-69 Armor personnel officer, 1st Lt. Jonathan Barreto, from Moca, Puerto Rico, is probably the biggest asset the battalion commander could have here at FOB Brassfield-Mora.

"He keeps us going and keeps the commander informed and on schedule," said Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick W. Muskevitch. "He's doing a captain's job and is one of the most effective S-1s I've ever had."

Although small in stature, Barreto is not the kid who had his lunch money stolen or beaten up after school. He boasts a 29-2 boxing record from his high school days with 15 of his victories coming by knockout.

So what all does this boxer from Puerto Rico do?

There is a long list. He takes care of Soldiers' promotions, pay, awards, transportation issues, housing and assisting the first sergeants in the battalion.

"I enjoy being around the troops and taking care of Soldiers," said Barreto.

"Although small in stature, Barreto is not the kid who had his lunch money stolen or beaten up after school."

A big part of taking care of Soldiers is submitting awards. Some of the awards Barreto has submitted are two Silver Stars, seven Bronze Stars and 80

Purple Hearts. Altogether, he has tracked and processed over 1,500 awards during the battalion's deployment. The paperwork for these awards might drive someone else crazy, but not Barreto.

"Paperwork is not the problem; the problem is when paperwork is submitted incorrectly," said Barreto. "Sometimes the paperwork doesn't have all the documentation and it has to be sent back to the companies."

In addition Barreto also coordinates rest and relaxation for the Soldiers and VIP visits to the battalion. He has coordinated more than 35 VIP visits during the battalion's deployment. The battalion information officer, 1st Lt. Doug Maritato, who refers to Barreto as "Johnny B" said, "He's one of the hardest workers I've ever seen."

So what big thing will Barreto do next? Well, he's coordinating transportation for members his battalion to fly home. He's doing what he does well and what he'll continue to do for the Soldiers of the 3-69 Armor.

Barreto said he enjoys the simple fact that he has just done his job taking care of Soldiers — something big, from someone small.

Aviation Brigade Soldiers bid farwell to fallen comrade

Story by
Spc. Jennifer D. Atkinson
Aviation Brigade

CAMP TAJI — Task Force Baghdad Soldiers gathered to say goodbye to a fallen warrior on Dec. 3.

Sgt. Grzegorz "Jak" Jakoniuk, Company B, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, died of a gunshot wound Nov. 30.

"We come together in grief, acknowledging our human loss," said Battalion Chaplain (Capt.) Chris Goza at the memorial service.

A native of Poland, Jakoniuk enlisted in the U.S. Army on Aug. 21, 2001, and became an American citizen in January 2005, before deploying in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"Jak was truly a special individual," said Capt. Jennifer Reynolds, Company B commander. With a trademark smile and a laid-back manner, Jakoniuk took most things in stride, including the constant difficulty with his name, she said.

Because his name was so hard to pronounce, when he became a citizen "the guys immediately told him his new name was 'Greg Jackson' because none of us could pronounce his name properly,"

Reynolds added.

An experienced crew chief, Jak not only managed to beat pilots to the aircraft most days, but took the time to ensure the crews had food for a long mission, Reynolds said.

During tense situations, Jakoniuk had a way of defusing a situation with a smile and a thumbs-up, she said.

More senior crew chiefs would attempt to find things wrong with an aircraft and usually came away from Jakoniuk's aircraft "frustrated because they didn't find anything, but also proud because he took care of it so well," Reynolds said.

"The guy was a unique person," said Staff Sgt. Mark Bilon, "Jak was always smiling, always wise-cracking ... he was a hard worker when he wanted to be and a clever talker when he didn't."

Jak was mellow, and was never wound up or high-strung.

"We've lost a friend," said Bilon, but "when you think of him, laugh and smile and take it easy."

Spc. James Berkenbush worked with Jakoniuk and was his roommate at Fort Campbell, Ky.; during their first rotation of OIF in Mosul; and here at Camp Taji.

"I was closer to Jak than I was to either of my two brothers," Berkenbush said.

Jakoniuk had an insatiable thirst for knowledge, he added. When Jak wanted to know more about how something worked, he would go out and buy books on the subject.

"He probably read more books in a year than I have in my entire life," Berkenbush said.

While at Fort Campbell, Jakoniuk taught himself to play the violin. After taking the violin out of the box, Jak couldn't get it to make any sound so he went out and bought several books on playing and taking care of a violin.

"When he was learning to play it in the room, it was the most God-awful thing I'd ever heard," said Berkenbush, but "I always admired him for his continual motivation to better himself."

Although Jak could come across as abrasive, to Berkenbush he always seemed confident and self-assured. No matter what, Berkenbush could always count on his roommate for a smile, a thumbs-up, and a generosity of spirit.

"Jak, we will all miss you, we will never, ever forget you," said Reynolds. "Rest in peace, my brother."

Jakoniuk is survived by his father, Cezary Jakoniuk of Poland, and his brother Dominik Jakoniuk of Chicago.

Band of Brothers takes charge



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anna-Marie Risner

MOSUL -- Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, commander, Task Force Freedom, and Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Ping, command sergeant major, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and Task Force Freedom, prepare the 11th ACR guidon for return to Fort Irwin, Calif. With the casing of the colors, command and control of Multi-National Force-North was turned over to Task Force Band of Brothers at Forward Operating Base Diamondback last week.

Soldiers honor fallen hero



U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. John R. Rozean

Capt. Timothy Bean, Headquarters Troop commander, 1st Squadron, 71st Cavalry, pays his respect to Sgt. 1st Class James S. Moudy, Dec. 17, during a memorial ceremony. "He did everything a leader could do to take care of his men and mitigate risks," said Bean. "I thank (Moudy) for that." Moudy was killed Dec. 11 when an improvised explosive device detonated beneath his Humvee during a patrol in western Baghdad.

Detachment unites Marines, civilians work as one

Story by Lance Cpl. Joel Abshier
2nd Marine Logistics Group

ALASAD — There are Marine units deployed in Iraq that work well together and then there is the Maintenance Detachment of Combat Logistics Battalion 2, 2nd Marine Logistics Group.

With more than 100 Marines and more than 60 contracted civilian workers, this detachment works together while managing and operating all their moving parts like clockwork.

"All of these Marines work hard," said Chief Warrant Officer Alan J. Clyne, commanding officer of the detachment.

"Although there are many sections to maintenance detachment, all the Marines and civilians do their jobs well."

Myriad military occupations make up the detachment, which include motor transportation mechanics, engineers, armorers, electricians, communication personnel, a provisional rifle squad and an administration section that pushes paper for each individual unit.

"A lot of people would think that the Marines and civilians wouldn't work together very well," said Staff Sgt. William E. Nowosielski, the intermediate maintenance chief with the motor transportation section. "That is hardly the case. They both have experience in different things that allows them to work off of each other."

When CLB-2 first arrived in Iraq from Camp

Lejeune, N.C., the number of vehicles in the maintenance bay rivaled the number of Marines who could work on them.

Another valuable asset of the detachment is the engineers. They reconfigured one of the tools in their inventory in order to make hydraulic hoses on site versus waiting for ordered replacements or specialty sizes.

"A lot of our equipment is run on hydraulics," said Cpl. John P. Rucker, an engineer within CLB-2.

"Plus, by having our own hose-making tool, we save ourselves time from ordering it as well as paperwork."

Up the road from the engineers sits the units own armory, where they not only deal with firearms, but also optics, which includes fixing and maintaining night vision goggles.

"The Marines in the armory issue weapons, fix problems, provide support to [our] transportation support and they also have

Marines who go outside the wire on missions with the security detachment," said Cpl. Scott E. Lancaster, the armory noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

"There is never a dull moment in the shop," Lancaster said. "Being in Iraq is not so bad as long as you have something to do. My job keeps me busy enough not to go crazy."

"Iraq is what you make of it," Lancaster said with a wry smile. "Right now I am at the beach, but I just can't seem to find the water."

Teacher, student serve together

Story by Staff Sgt. Julie Nicolov
Multi-National Corps – Iraq

At this time last year, Staff Sgt. Robert McDonald, a tanker with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 103rd Armor Regiment, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, was teaching 7th and 8th grade students at Tri-Valley High School about ancient civilizations in the Middle East.

This year, he's experiencing those cultures firsthand during his deployment to Camp Corregidor in Ramadi.

"I'm learning a lot about the ancient culture here which we cover in my class," said McDonald, who lives in Millersburg, Pa.

He's also sharing this education with one of his former students.

"I still call him 'Mr. McDonald,'" said Spc. Jen Renninger, medic, Company C, 228 Forward Support Battalion, 28th Division Support Command, Pennsylvania Army National Guard. "I tell him, 'you're Mr. McDonald, even though you're Staff Sgt. McDonald now.'"

Seeing her former teacher as a Soldier is not a stretch for Renninger, as she remembers how he ran his classroom.

"He was a disciplinarian," said Renninger, who lives in Higgins, Pa.

Renninger's 7th grade history class was the first of McDonald's teaching career. Before that, he was an infantryman with 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division for two years.

After serving on active duty, McDonald graduated college and joined the Pennsylvania Army National Guard.

"I figured I'd have a tough time getting a teaching job, so I went into the Guard," he said. "As soon as I joined the Guard, I got a job at Tri-Valley."

McDonald joined the faculty in 1993 after the school year was already in session. Renninger's class proved to be a trial-by-fire for the new teacher.

"We were a horrible class to him," Renninger said. "We used to tease him about his balding hair, so all the girls in my grade cut parts of their hair off and gave it to him."

Even with their pranks, McDonald appreciates the *joie de vivre* of students in that age group.

"They're just so full of life and fun," McDonald said. "Everything is fun to them."

The lessons McDonald taught in his history class sheds light on what Renninger sees in Iraq.

"He dealt a lot with the Muslim religion and the Middle East," Renninger said. "

McDonald's former service with the 101st Airborne Division also influenced his students as they made plans for their futures.

"Kids always ask me about the military as an option after high school," McDonald said. "I don't know if it's because of me that they're here."

Renninger joined the military because someone in her family served in every American war since the Revolution. She re-enlisted last year to be with her company in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"I really would have felt bad knowing that my company was coming over here and I had just gotten out," Renninger said.

Renninger is deployed to Camp Ramadi, which is on the other side of the city from Camp Corregidor.

She recently spent two weeks at Camp Corregidor as part of the Lioness Team, a group of female Soldiers tasked with searching Iraqi women at Coalition checkpoints set up throughout the city.

Seeing her former teacher as a Soldier was not odd, but she admits that hanging out with him as an adult was a strange experience.

"The first night I was at Camp Corregidor, I went over to the company area. Everyone was sitting around smoking cigarettes and telling war stories, and I thought, 'This is odd,'" Renninger said.

The strangeness wore off, and now teacher, student and the rest of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers in Ramadi have banded together to make the place more like home.

"It makes a difference who you're here with," Renninger said. "We're really close-knit; like one big family."

GULF REGION DIVISION, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



Jabar Ibrahim Farhan Deab, with some of his grandchildren, shows the official paperwork naming him a security guard at the Al Tahadi Water Treatment Facility.

Night watchman sees bright future

Story and photo by
Norris Jones

FALLUJAH – A lifetime resident of Fallujah is optimistic about his hometown's future.

Jabar Ibrahim Farhan Deab was born here 54 years ago and is the night watchman at the \$958,000 Al Tahadi Water Treatment Facility.

Construction on that plant is nearly complete and, once finished, will produce 400 cubic meters per hour, thereby

increasing Fallujah's potable drinking water capacity about 15 percent. Both Ibrahim and his son's family, including eight grandchildren, reside there.

"Last year Fallujah looked like a demolition zone," Ibrahim said. "This year there's a lot of construction going on and I can see improvements everywhere. We now have clean running water and they're getting the electricity restored."

Both Ibrahim and his son

who also is a guard at Al Tahadi, said when they were forced out of the city last year and then returned, their home was totally destroyed ... "There was nothing left."

Both are looking to better times.

Ibrahim talked about his hopes now that there's a free Iraq.

"I pray for peace, stability (where we don't have to worry about threats), and a better life for my grandchildren."

Water network progressing

Story by Polli Barnes Keller

MOSUL — Workers have completed the water network in Tal 'Afar. The SAAD State Company completed construction of the Tal 'Afar water network in mid-December. This \$85,000 thousand project improved the water supply of 115 homes.

This U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awarded this contract and oversaw the quality assurance of the work provided on the site.

When asked what was most significant about this project, Bill Hood, senior construction manager, USACE Gulf Region North said, "This project is unique because the work was awarded to a state-owned contractor. It was an opportunity to promote good-

will between the director of water and the USACE by using a local contractor. The final outcome is we received a quality product at lower-than-normal prices."

Dilapidated water main lines were replaced by installing 2,105 yards of 4 inch water main, 115 house connections, valves and valve boxes, and 1,258 yards of half inch house connection pipe.

The U.S. government has allocated approximately \$2.7 billion to the Iraq Reconstruction and Relief Fund for water and sewage infrastructure repairs, maintenance programs, and capacity development activities in Iraq. To date, roughly 348 water and sewage projects, worth \$1.85 billion are completed or in progress.

Roads to somewhere

Corps of Engineers improves Iraqi roads

Story by Claude D. McKinney

MOSUL — A dirt road is a dirt road, is a dirt road.

That is, unless it is the main road to your town or is the main street of your town. Then a dirt road becomes critical infrastructure. Dirt roads are giving way to progress.

In northern Iraq, there are a number of communities which are only serviced by unimproved roads. One might think it is not a problem since Iraq is in a desert. However, there is a wet season in this desert, and when it rains those dirt roads become impassable slick muck.

That is changing.

Within the last several months, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division reworked more than 50 miles of road. In the next several weeks, an additional 75 miles of hard surface roads will be added. The Tameen road segment, one of 17 road projects, has improved mobility for 30,000 people in three villages and the surrounding area.

These improvements generally include roadbed preparation and the paving of existing dirt roads. The finished work leaves behind graded shoulders, culvert installation, and general drainage improvements. These improvements will also provide paved roads for not only the residents, but also decrease emergency vehicle response times. These efforts provide benefit to the residents in the area and help to reduce vehicle maintenance.



Students walk out of a renovated high school in Dahuk, one of 324 projects done through the Iraqi Relief and Reconstruction Fund.

Relief fund rebuilds schools

Story and photo by
Claude D. McKinney

It has been said that the key to ensure a country's future is to educate the children. The truth of that will be tested in Iraq over the next generation.

A major effort is underway to renovate Iraq's aging schools in the seven northern provinces.

Under the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund, 324 schools will be refurbished or rebuilt.

"More than 58,000 children have been affected," said Pradip Patel, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers program manager. "Students will be able to study in clean, painted classrooms, use new toi-

let facilities and new water fountains, and play in newly constructed playgrounds surrounded by perimeter walls.

These renovated facilities will definitely motivate students and teachers to focus on classroom activities."

Workers added new rooms to many of the existing buildings and improved electrical service.

"The children are happy," said Patel. "These renovated schools will help the students ... become good citizens and in the future lead the country down a path of peace and prosperity."

Six new schools are being built from the ground up in communities that had not seen a school expansion for decades.

"This Week in Iraq"

a weekly review of how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is rebuilding Iraq, and improving the quality of life for the next generation.

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@ 8:45 a.m., 1:45 p.m., 5:45 p.m. and 9:45 p.m.

Freedom Radio 107.7 FM





Spc. Kwesi Hector and Pfc. Raul Gonzalez, with Company B, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, load a 107 mm mortar round in to a vehicle.

Large cache destroyed near Bayji

Story and photos by Spc. Matt Wrzesinski
3rd Brigade Combat Team,
101st Airborne Division

TIKRIT — Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team thought they had discovered a single cache of weapons near Bayji after a tip from a local resident. It turned out to be a lot more.

A couple of days later Soldiers finished unearthing the last of the weapons from the eleventh cache at the site.

"This place is basically an ammo supply point for the enemy," said Capt. Matt Bartlett, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment. "Any attack they wanted to do, whether an IED or small-arms, they could get what they needed here."

The Soldiers slammed the door to the supply point with three detonations conducted by an explosive ordnance disposal team.

More than 1,600 rockets and missiles, 283 large artillery shells, 27 anti-tank mines and 80 assault weapons were pulled from the ground along with nearly a ton of bulk explosives.

It was unclear if the cache was in use by terrorists prior to its excavation. Fresh tire tracks and the lack of wear on some of the weapons and packaging indicated that the deposits were new.

In other caches, the weapons were corroded and had documentation with entries ending in 1984, dating them back to before the first Gulf War.

The resident who tipped off the Soldiers about the cache not only ensured the safety of the local residents from attacks, but also collected a reward of \$2,500 for the tip.

The U.S. and its allies offer rewards for any information that leads to the capture of certain high profile terrorists and the tools used in their trade.

Baby departs Baghdad

Spina bifida patient heads to Atlanta

Story and photos by
Master Sgt. Randy L. Mitchell
447th Air Expeditionary Group

BAGHDAD — An Iraqi infant girl born with spina bifida has a new chance at life thanks to the Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry, an Army National Guard unit from Gainesville, Ga.

Baby Noor, as the 3-month-old has become known, was found by American soldiers during a search of a Baghdad home in early December. Now she is

heading to Atlanta for possible life-saving surgery.

Accompanied by her father, grandmother, Soldiers and media, the young infant arrived here awaiting transportation. She quickly won the hearts and assistance of Airmen who got her family to the United States for surgery.

"We were approached by the Army the week of Christmas to see how they could get the baby and her family flown to the United States," said Capt. Robert Farkas, 447th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron Aerial Port Flight commander. "My guys provided the documentation needed and, thanks to the tenacity of the Soldiers involved, they were able to make it happen."

Senior Airman Stephen Boynton, who helped with the process, checked the

family in once they arrived and ensured all their documentation was in order.

According to published reports, Iraqi doctors had only given the baby 45 days to live when she was born, so when the Soldiers arrived young Noor's grandmother showed them the sick baby.

Because the Soldiers took action to help, many of whom are parents themselves, Baby Noor is now bound for Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, where the surgery will be performed at no cost to the family by Dr. Roger Hudgins, their chief of neurosurgery.

The grandmother, speaking through an interpreter, said she and the father were nervous about the flight to the United States, but were extremely grateful to the United States military for the opportunity this provides for her granddaughter.



Baby Noor's grandmother comforts her prior to the flight aboard a C-130 Hercules.



Capt. Robert Farkas trims an earplug to fit Baby Noor's ears prior to boarding her flight.



Iraqi Soldiers fire their weapons on a new range built by Multi-National Division Central South Soldiers. The range in the Babil province will help the 8th Iraqi Army Division train in marksmanship. It has two lanes, one 50 meters long and the other 600 meters long, and 30 firing positions. The range, opened on Dec. 11, will support small arms as well as heavy machine guns.

Iraqis assume control

2nd Division now responsible for

Story and photos by
Sgt. Rachel Brune
101st Sustainment Brigade

MAKHMUR — Against the backdrop of the second-largest granary in Iraq, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division Iraqi Army assumed command and control of Iraqi battle space from Coalition Forces in a transfer of authority ceremony Dec. 27 here.

Under the command of Lt. Col. Hogar Salahaddin Abdul, the battalion is now responsible for the stability and security of a large swathe of the Tigris River Valley.

During the months leading to the transfer, 3rd Battalion conducted combined operations with Iraqi Police and units from Task Force Thunder, such as Battery C, 4th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment.

"This is truly a superb Iraqi Army battalion," said Lt. Col. Scott Wuestner, 4th Battalion commander. He added: "[Hogar] truly wants to serve his country."

Lt. Col. Jemiel Dildar Dosky, 3rd Battalion executive officer, served as master of ceremonies for the event. After welcoming the distinguished guests, who included Duraid Kashmoula, governor of Nineveh Province, Maj. Gen. Jamal, 2nd Division commander, and Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez, Task Force Freedom commander, he paused for a moment of silence "for fallen comrades."

Imam Ibrahim Muslim, a local religious leader, read a selection from the Koran. His voice echoed across the vast parade field as the intonation rose and fell in a singing chant.

A Kurdish military brass band trumpeted Iraq's national anthem, then provided a marching cadence as Wuestner, Rodriguez and Hogar inspected the troops.

To symbolize the passing of authority from Coalition to Iraqi Forces, Wuestner solemnly passed the battalion colors to Hogar as a horde of Iraqi media commemorated the occasion.

"With professional leaders and a common goal [3rd Battalion] quickly formed a team ready for any mission," said Rodriguez in his speech. He spoke of the training and combined operations the battalion performed with Battery C and



Mattan, an Iraqi soldier's son, waits to present his bouquet to Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, Task Force Freedom commander, during the transfer of authority.

Military Transition Team-33.

"Before you stands today a cohesive unit ready to take over the battle space," said Rodriguez.

Although the battalion consists predominantly of Kurdish soldiers, the unit is able to work well with the local Arab leaders in the area of operations, according to Sgt. 1st Class James Ray, logistics trainer with the transition team.

The team is stationed at the Makhmur Iraqi army base, Forward Operation Base Crazy Horse, and has worked with the battalion to train the soldiers and provide guidance.

"These guys were pretty squared away when we came on board," said Ray. The team tried to push the point that in a counterinsurgency fight, the army must work closely with Iraqi Police and local leaders.

"They came together and work pretty well," said Ray.

"They're the ones developing and executing the plans," said Capt. Ronny A. Vargas, the transition team's operations officer.



Iraqi media capture the moment as Lt. Col. Scott Wuestner, Task Force Thunder commander, passes the battalion colors to Lt. Col. Hogar Salahaddin Abdul during the transfer of authority.

He said in the local community the Arab leaders respect Hogar and understand he represents Iraq.

The battalion's logistics capabilities have greatly improved, and the unit's operation capabilities have expanded to include coordinating missions with Coalition Forces, Iraqi Police and American Special Forces, said Vargas. In the future, he hopes to see 3rd Battalion take on missions requiring the unit to deploy out of its area of operations.

The battalion is taking ownership of an area about 1,544 square miles, as well as FOB Crazy Horse, according to 1st Lt. Phil Kerber, Battery C executive officer, from Tahoe City, Calif. Battery C previously had command and control of the battle space where 3rd Battalion will now be responsible.

"My brothers of the 3rd Brigade, be unified," said Jamal, through an interpreter, in his speech during the ceremony. "Stick with the arms of



The Iraqi color bearers wait as a Iraqi battle space to 3rd Battalion, Dec. 27.

the Iraqi Army to protect and defend Iraq from the north to the south."

Jamal urged his soldiers to avoid ethnic discrimination, because "all

Control of battle space

Large portion of Tigris River valley



crowd gathers before the transfer of authority of 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Iraqi army in Makhmur

Soldiers are one people.

"We should work day and night to maintain stability and security for the Iraqi people," said Jamal.

In his speech, Wuestner congrat-



An Iraqi color guard Soldier watches as the audience gathers before the transfer of authority.



An Iraqi military band plays the Iraqi national anthem during the transfer of authority ceremony from Coalition Forces to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division Iraqi Army Dec. 27 in Makhmur.

ulated Hogar on his work developing 3rd Battalion from its origin as a company in the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps in 2003. The 101st Airborne Division originally contracted the company to provide security in the Makhmur region.

"[Hogar] truly represents what is right about Iraq and the Iraqi people," said Wuestner. If one spoke to

local leaders about Hogar, they would agree he is fair, honest, trustworthy and treats everyone with respect.

"On behalf of my staff, I promise to continue providing security in the area of operations," said Hogar in his short speech.

The transfer should send a strong message to the American people that the Coalition Forces do not want to stay in occupation, but instead "just want to help build a strong Iraqi Army," said Hogar.

"This is the first battalion in the north of Iraq to carry on its shoulders the responsibility for stability and security in the area of operations," said Hogar. The fruitful efforts of the people, Soldiers and Coalition Forces should send a "strong message to terrorists."

Hogar graduated from military



An Iraqi Soldier walks across the deserted parade field outside a granary after the transfer of authority ceremony from coalition forces to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division Iraqi Army.

college in 1990, joining the Iraqi Army as an infantry lieutenant. He joined the Kurdish peshmerga as a training instructor in 1993, then joined the Zawita Division in 2000 as battalion commander.



2nd Lt. Ernest P. Abelson gives orders to Cpl. Chris W. Adair and other squad members after Iraqi Security Forces reported a possible IED on the side of a road.

Making things happen

Marine squad leader gets job done

Story and photo by Master Sgt. Gideon Rogers
2nd Marine Division

FALLUJAH — A maxim exists in Marine Corps infantry platoons and loosely paraphrased, says if a squad leader falters, freezes or fails, all paper-smart strategic plans conceived are worthless.

Cpl. Chris W. Adair, a 20-year-old native of Custer County, Colo., knows about this adage from experience.

Adair is one of many squad leaders with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines Regiment, who are on their second deployment to Iraq. Last year, Task Force 2/7 was part of Regimental Combat Team-7. This time around with Regimental Combat Team-8, the “War Dogs” operate in and around Fallujah. This is the third Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment for the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, Calif.

“Not often do you find 20-year-olds tasked with critical life-or-death decisions on a daily basis in the civilian world; but in the Marine Corps, they become men who are depended on and expected to come through in different kinds of military operations on the streets of Fallujah and the communities that surround it,” said Gunnery Sgt. Scott J. Baker, Company E.

Adair, who has the look and demeanor of Tom Berenger’s character, Staff Sgt. Bob Barnes in the 1986 movie “Platoon,” knows a thing or two about being a squad leader. He entered the Corps in 2003 after graduating from Custer County High School in Westcliffe, Colo. He completed

recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and Marine Combat Training at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., before arriving for 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines. He became a squad leader for 1st Platoon in February 2004 when he was still a lance corporal and was promoted to corporal a month later.

“A squad leader is responsible for the accomplishment of squad missions, but he’s also responsible for the lives of a dozen other Marines,” said Adair. “That’s the basic concept that you learn from day one at boot camp and it’s reinforced in (Marine Combat Training) and when you get to your unit.”

That basic concept of leadership might be instilled from day one, but it is quickly tested here in real-life operations.

“There’s a lot of preparation that goes into just going on a simple mounted or foot patrol,” Adair explained. “Everything must be preset, ready to go – any special equipment for the task, weapons or ammo, vehicles, individual task assignments and rehearsals if necessary. But most of all, you’ve got to make sure your Marines are ready,” explained Adair.

Squad leaders must know how to both give and take orders, and how to deal with immediate situations but not lose sight of the overall mission. All of this is done during military operations in the complex and dynamic environment of Iraq’s Al Anbar province.

Patrols are daily and each one is unique. They may be distinguished by time, location, and method of movement — as day or night, urban or rural, foot or mounted. “

Each type of patrol brings with it differences in the way you prepare for it,” explained Adair. But according to Adair,

the most important thing to prepare for is the unexpected — and the young Marines here have learned to expect it.

“A grenade thrown from a three-story building into the back of an up-armored vehicle, a suicide bomb attack on a convoy, a buried IED detonated on a patrol route — these are some of the situations we’ve faced,” Adair said.

“Our job is to guide and direct our Marines, make tactical decisions for the squad and enforce the rules,” said Adair. Squad leaders for the battalion ensure their Marines receive serviceable gear, good living conditions, physical conditioning, proper training and supervision, according to Adair. In Iraq, squad leaders are responsible for the lives of their Marines, directing them through the phases of daily operations.

“Their lives depend on your decisions and how well you handle yourself under pressure,” Adair explained.

The Marines chosen for this burden are well prepared for the challenges they face.

During their time as riflemen, Marines are observed for a special blend of infantry skills, experience, toughness, intelligence, selflessness and communication skills, according to Baker.

“Experience is the teacher,” added Baker. “Sometimes young squad leaders are baptized by fire, but you can trust that the experiences here prepare them for just about anything imaginable.”

“The more you’re in the position, the easier it becomes,” said Adair. “Confidence is the key. You’ve got to know that you can make things happen.”

HEALTH & FITNESS

Hypothermia Prevention: Keeping warm when it's cold

Maj. Clarence D. Thomas
MNF-I Surgeon's Office

Hypothermia has been a military problem ever since Hannibal lost nearly half of his troops while crossing the Pyrenees Alps in 218 B.C. It continued to plague military campaigns through both world wars and the Korean War.

In Iraq, temperature extremes can increase the potential for heat and cold weather injuries, including hypothermia, trench foot, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. In winter months (November through April), temperatures can reach a daily high of 109 and an extreme evening low of 25. Lower temperatures occur in the northeastern highlands.

Cold injuries can occur in Iraq, most often in the coastal and mountainous areas. The effects of cold weather are more severe in high mountainous areas because of reduced oxygen and lower air pressure. Personnel deployed to the mountainous areas in Iraq, check with your unit on the requirement for packing the extended cold weather clothing system.

What causes hypothermia

Normal body temperature is the reflection of a delicate balance between heat production and heat loss. The human brain has a number of ways to maintain vital temperature. When these mechanisms are over-

whelmed, heat loss happens faster than heat production resulting in hypothermia.

The body also has a variety of methods to increase heat production. But at a certain low level, the body cannot continue heat production, and core body temperature drops quickly.

In general, in cold, dry environments, hypothermia occurs over a period of hours.

In cold water, core temperature can drop to dangerous levels in only minutes.

What are the symptoms

A somewhat constant sequence of events occurs as core body temperatures continue to decline.

At temperatures below 95, shivering is seen. Heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure increase.

As the temperature drops further, pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure all decrease. You may experience some clumsiness, apathy, confusion, and slurred speech.

As core temperature drops lower than 89.9, shivering stops and oxygen consumption begins to drop. The victim may be in a stupor. The heart rhythm may become irregular.

At temperatures below 82.4, reflexes are lost and cardiac output continues to fall. The risk of dangerously irregular heart rhythms increases, and brain activity is seriously slowed. The pupils are dilated, and the victim appears comatose or dead.

When to seek medical care

Any person who is at risk for hypothermia and is suspected to have sustained a cold exposure should be brought to a medical treatment facility. Seek medical attention about the following hypothermia danger signs:

Intense shivering, stiffness, and numbness in the arms and legs, stumbling and clumsiness, sleepiness, confusion, and amnesia.

The adage that "a person is not dead until warm and dead" means that victims may appear dead because of cold exposure, but many of these people have made complete recoveries when re-warmed. All such victims in this situation need rapid transport to a hospital so that resuscitation attempts may be made.

How to avoid hypothermia

Military cold-weather clothing is designed to protect against hypothermia by reducing heat loss to the environment. Insulation is determined by how much air is effectively trapped by clothing. However, dressing for cold weather is more complicated than simply wearing thicker clothing. Soldiers require clothing that can accommodate a range of ambient temperatures and physical activity levels and that can protect against wind and rain. This is accomplished by following two important concepts when dressing for activities in the cold: layering and staying dry.

Multiple layers of clothing allow air to be

trapped and serve as insulation, allowing the individual to adjust clothing layers according to the environmental conditions and activity level. Layers can be removed as the ambient temperature or physical activity levels increase, thereby reducing sweating and moisture buildup within clothing.

To assist in removing moisture caused by sweating, the innermost layer of a cold-weather clothing system in contact with the skin must have wicking properties that allow water vapor to be transmitted to the outer layers for evaporation. When clothing becomes wet, the insulation provided is degraded, and conductive heat losses increase substantially.

Additional Information:

— See GTA 08-05-062 for appropriate countermeasures at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/deployment/GTA%2008-05-062.pdf>

— Hypothermia Prevention and Management Kit visit <http://www.narescue.com/ccrk-hypo-specs.html>

— Technical Bulletin, Medical 508 Prevention and Management of Cold-Weather Injuries <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/coldinjury/>

— For more information about cold weather clothing visit <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/coldinjury/>

Corporals graduate

Story by Lance Cpl. Wayne C. Edmiston
2nd Marine Logistics Group

CAMP FALLUJAH — More than 30 Marines from Combat Logistics Battalion 8, 2nd Marine Logistics Group graduated Corporal's Course class 01-06 here Dec. 10.

This two-week course consisted of extensive training to better prepare Marines as noncommissioned officers and future leaders of the Corps.

The course consisted of marching drill, physical fitness tests, leadership classes, tactical scenarios and more, said Lance Cpl. Edgar Villafane, an administrative clerk and course graduate.

"Corporals are our first leadership rank and the backbone of our Corps."

Gunnery Sgt. Pamela J. Talluto

"Corporals are our first leadership rank and the backbone of our Corps," said Gunnery Sgt. Pamela J. Talluto, Headquarters Company first sergeant and staff academy staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge.

"With that it is imperative that we make the time to educate and train them so they can continue to keep our Corps strong, provide sound leadership and positively carry on our traditions."

"I couldn't be happier with the results," said Talluto. "They all seemed to be even more motivated about the Corps."

Filling in for the Army



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Tammie Moore

BALAD AIR BASE — Airman Dwayne Solis and Senior Airman Derrick Meadors clean their weapons. Both Airmen are assigned to the 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, which provides security escorts for convoy missions leaving from Balad. The 732nd is acting as "in-lieu-of" forces assisting the Army's 181st Transportation Battalion in running the missions. "Everyone came here trained in their job. However we now have vehicle operators who are also qualified as gunners and security forces Airmen qualified as operators. Everyone is doing what they can to help out," said Chief Master Sgt. Shawn Keller, a 732nd ELRS chief enlisted manager.

CHAPLAIN'S TALK

What if I gave all I could?

By Chaplain (Maj.)
Robert Whitlock
3rd Infantry Division



Chaplain Whitlock

One of the gifts I received for Christmas one year was a CD by Ray Boltz. The eighth song on the CD is entitled "What If I Give All?" The song tells the story of a young boy who heard a preacher say, "A dime would feed a hungry child." The little boy pulled out a dollar and asked his mother how many that would feed. She smiled and replied that a dollar would feed 10. Without any hesitation the little boy reached back in his pocket and pulled out three dollars, the sum total of all his money. He then asked, "What if I give all? What would that gift do?" His mother answered, "My child a gift like that would change the world, it would feed the multitudes."

The song goes on to tell of another little boy who gave all he had to the Lord. He provided some fish and bread and Jesus fed a multitude.

The final verse of the song pictures God the Father and His Son, Jesus, looking down on humankind. They are experiencing pain because of the mess we've made of our lives and the gift of His creation. Then Jesus looks at the Father and asks the question: "What if I give all? What would that gift do?" The Father answers, "My Son a gift like that will change the world, it will free the multitudes."

This is a powerful song. It draws a beautiful picture of God's love for all people. In addition, it shows how we are to love each other. Like the little boy, we should reach back in our pocket and give all we have.

Don't miss understand me. This has nothing to do with money. The value of the child's gift was

not the three dollars he was willing to give. The value was the love and compassion that motivated his gift.

It seems obvious to me that some things are so precious that the decision to give all seems to come natural. Some things are worth all we have. For the little boy in the song it was feeding hungry children. What's worth your all? Or even closer to home, what's worth my all?

This question is very important, and not as easy to answer as you may think. There are influences all around us willing, even anxious, to educate us about what is really worth our all. The clothes we wear, the car we drive, the shape of our bodies, whom we hang out with, where we live, how much money we make, the speed of our computer, our level of education, the school we attended, the rank on our collar, and the list goes on and on.

Some people would have us believe these are the important things in life. They encourage us to give our all to ensure we get these things which are worth so much. Are they right? Should we give our all for the things listed above, the things our society elevates above all else? I don't think so.

The important stuff, the stuff we should give "our all" for, are the things that most of us take for granted. Things like:

- Placing God on the throne of our lives. We are much more content when we step down and let Him take His rightful place.

- Convincing our spouses we really do love them above all else. Making them top priority in our lives. It's amazing how people respond to being in the number one position.

- Taking time to be with our children and to convince them they are a precious gift from the Lord. We must invest in their lives. It takes time, energy and a willingness to give all.

- Loving our families. Being willing to spend less time looking good at work and more time being good to those we love.

- Being a friend to those around us. Treating all people like we want to be treated. Living like the Golden Rule is not a long forgotten notion that modern people can't understand.

- Dedicating time and energy to become men and women of God. Stop being who the world thinks we should be and start being the people God calls us to be.

- Stop being so focused on the world's definition of success. Money, power, prestige, and beauty are temporary. These things have no power to bring joy or fulfillment. They are not the equivalent of success.

It's so easy to get confused. Or even worse, to be deceived. We all want to be good at what we do. We want to excel, to be considered the best or at least a success. If you're like me, you steal from the important things in life to give to the things that are not important at all. Will you pray with me?

Lord help us! Open our eyes and help us distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, treasure and trash. Help us prioritize our lives to honor You and all the important things You have placed in our lives. Teach us to cherish our families and friends. To understand the value of invested time in someone else's life. Give us compassionate hearts, strong minds, willing bodies, and wills that are submissive to You. Lord, forgive our stubbornness and stupidity. And make us willing to give our all for You.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Would be bombers busted by 3rd BCT

TIKRIT— Task Force Band of Brothers Soldiers disrupted two terrorist bombing operations Dec. 27 in Baqubah, about 20 miles north of Baghdad.

Two terrorists were detained and another was killed during the incidents at a newly emplaced checkpoint.

Just before noon, Soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Combat Team stopped a suspicious car and detained the driver after discovering the vehicle was being prepared as a vehicle-borne IED.

No explosives were found, but the car was laced with wiring used to detonate explosives. The car was confiscated and taken to a nearby military base.

Several hours later, a second vehicle tried to run through the checkpoint and was fired at by the Soldiers. The driver was killed in the initial burst of fire and the vehicle came to a quick stop. Two men with AK-47 assault rifles climbed out and were engaged as they attempted to flee.

One of the gunmen successfully evaded capture, but the other was wounded and quickly surrounded. As the Soldiers approached the wounded man, they noticed he was wearing what appeared to be an explosive laden suicide belt.

Soldiers guarded the man until an EOD team arrived and removed the belt, which contained more than three pounds of plastic explosives. — *Courtesy of Task Force Baghdad public affairs*

Air strike catches potential bombers in act

KIRKUK— Two F-16 fighter jets flying routine patrols over the Kirkuk Province identified, tracked and killed 10 terrorists Tuesday evening after observing the men burying an IED along a major road southwest of Hawijah.

The pilots saw three men digging holes near the road emplacing an IED. The men fled the area in a vehicle when they heard the aircraft flying overhead and were soon joined by second vehicle.

After attempting to evade the coalition aircraft, the men tried to hide by parking between two buildings in a small village southwest of Hawijah.

The coalition pilots engaged the terrorists with two 500-pound, laser-guided bombs. They were able to destroy the vehicles while causing only minimal damage to surrounding structures by using precision munitions.

Coalition ground forces from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division later confirmed and destroyed an IED at the initial site. The unit moved to the village and seized several assault rifles, a machine gun, IED-making materials and ammunition from inside the buildings surrounding the site of the air strike. — *Courtesy of Task Force Band of Brothers, public affairs*

ISF rescues kidnapping victim, arrests three

TIKRIT — Iraqi Police and Army units successfully rescued the brother of a Salah Ad Din Provincial Council member and arrested three suspects after a failed kidnapping attempt in Tikrit Dec. 29.

Police chased the kidnapers from Tikrit to the village of al Alam, about 10 miles east of the city, before the suspects abandoned their vehicle and dragged their victim into a nearby house. As the officers approached the building, the kidnapers opened fire on them.

The police secured the area around the house and called for support from a 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division unit stationed nearby.

The Iraqi troopers, augmented by U.S. Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, entered the house and quickly subdued the suspects.

No one was injured during the incident and the suspects were taken into custody by the police who are investigating the incident. — *Courtesy of Task Force Baghdad public affairs*

Teamwork clearing Ramadi streets

CAMP BLUE DIAMOND, AR RAMADI — Iraqi Army soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 7th Division working alongside of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 28th Infantry Division are clearing the streets of known insurgents in western Ramadi.

1-1-7 IA forces have detained five targeted insurgents, to include Jassim Mohammed Fayadh, a high value insurgent leader, allegedly responsible for financing terrorism in the Tammim neighborhood.

"Our battalion has been working in western Ramadi with the Coalition Forces for the last eight months. During that time, we have fought and captured many insurgents. Yesterday was a big step to bringing safety and security to this area for our local citizens and their families. We will continue to work with our coalition partners to bring security to western Ramadi," said Lt. Col. Mustafa, Commanding Officer, 1-1-7 IA. — *Courtesy of Task Force Baghdad public affairs*

Hoaxes are a real threat.

Always treat them as real.



Scimitar Slapstick

Shhhh!



Operational Security..
OPSEC

Keep cell phone and email comms free of sensitive information.

You don't know who's listening.

[Counter Radio-controlled IED Electronic Warfare]

CREW

Treat Us Right
We'll Help Save Your Life

Downrange

What'd you buy?

"American Graffiti". Wanna watch?

What is it?

A movie by George Lucas. It's kinda like "Happy Days".

DOWNRANGEWEB.COM 1/04/06 © 2006 Jeffery Hall

No thanks. If it's a George Lucas movie he prolly screwed it up by redoing it.

Digitally remastered with 27% more Chachi?

You sure? If you like "Happy Days" you'll like this.

I think not.



BUSTER'S Baghdad

Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree



A BUZZ CAN KILL

Downrange

Oh wise provider AAFES, thank you for bestowing this Lard Burger upon your faithful servant Jitsu.

Hey, we're getting a Lard Burger here on post.

No Way!

DOWNRANGEWEB.COM 1/08/06 © 2006 Jeffery Hall

Hey didn't you say just this morning that AAFES was the spawn of the devil?

Never underestimate the power of a Lard Burger.

Fightin' Words

1	2	3		4	5	6	
7				8			
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15	16				17		
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Across

Down

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Has an animal talk show on Saturday Night Live | 1. Plastic recreational disk |
| 7. Blind pianist, Oscar winning movie | 2. Often pierced organ |
| 8. Capital of Peru | 3. France's second largest city |
| 9. Appliance that flattens fabric | 4. Group of guys protecting the QB |
| 11. Coalition of old world countries | 5. Phenom female golfer |
| 12. The worst word a drunk guy could hear from a girl. | 6. Blue midgets |
| 13. Law and order in a dormitory | 10. To be or ___ to be |
| 15. Better than all others | 14. U.N. Secretary General |
| 17. Military media | 16. Making money |
| 18. Makers of Madden | 19. Shaq's almi mater |
| 20. An American's unique digits | 22. Patriots play for this region |
| 21. Given name of Old man and the sea author | 23. Former lover |
| 25. A connected group, cell phone company | 24. Poet Elliot |

Fightin' Words solution from Dec. 30, 2005

D	A	M	O	N	A	C
A	P	E	O	T	T	O
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Soldier saves life, earns Bronze Star

Story by Sgt. Dennis Gravelle
138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL -- On the morning of Dec. 15, he was just a medic with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Regiment. By the end of the day, he was one boy's hero.

Spc. Lucas Crowe was out on patrol during the Iraqi elections when he saw an Iraqi man holding the lifeless body of his baby boy. The child had just been pulled out of the water in the flooded basement of their home and was not breathing.

Crowe noticed the child had a blue tone to his body and instinctively began first aid on the 2-year-old boy. His father knelt beside him, watching Crowe with his lifeless son. Within moments, the child became responsive and coughed up water. The crowd that had gathered to watch cheered when they heard the child cry.

"I just happened to be there," Crowe said, "I am glad that I was there to help save the boy, but it was in God's hands."

"We're very proud of Crowe," said Staff Sgt. Clinton Johnson, HHC 172nd SBCT, "and are even happier that the boy is breathing again."

Johnson was not the only one impressed with Crowe's actions.

While visiting Soldiers Christmas Eve, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld awarded Crowe the Bronze Star for performing a heroic act in a combat zone.

Crowe visited the child and his family two days after the incident.

"I am very happy that the boy is doing well," Crowe said. "It was great to see him and I wish him well."

Job center opens in Baghdad

Story by
Master Sgt. David Abrams
2nd Brigade Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

BAGHDAD -- Although many people in Mashtal, a small suburb in east Baghdad, have had to battle unemployment, a new job center is poised to alleviate at least some of the problem.

The facility, the brainchild of the Tissa Nissan District Council and Mashtal Neighborhood Council, boasts an Internet café, computer instruction center, an instructional sewing shop, a small store and a cafeteria. The center hopes to add an instructional rug-making shop in the near future.

The employment center is expected to encourage other small businesses to spring to life in the area.

Dr. Kareem Alambar, a member of the Tissa Nissan District Council, said the new facility should be a great help to his community. "The use of the facility is free for all residents. People can come here and learn about computers and use the Internet; and the women can learn tailoring skills, too."

The facility has more than a dozen computers available for public use and training.

Alambar believes the facility could help up to 1,000 people a month.

The employment center is a rehabili-

tated bomb shelter that supposedly had been built by a Swedish contractor during the former regime. It is a huge complex with plenty of room for expansion.

The rehabilitation of the bomb shelter into an employment center cost about \$62,000 and more than 20 Iraqi workers were involved in the project which took about 30 days to complete.

The business center manager, Gusun Nagi, a software engineer who graduated from El Rafidian College, said anyone who wants to learn about the Internet and computers should come in.

"We will be glad to teach anyone," she said.

She wants to highlight the center and encourage foreign investors by showing the potential of the Iraqi people.

One of the computer/Internet instructors, Wamid Saad, said it's good to expose the Iraqi people to cyberspace.

"First of all, the Iraqi people do not know much about computers so we need to let them know what computers can do," Saad said. "Then they might be able to work in a job where the skills they learned here will benefit themselves and a company, too."

Saad, who has a bachelor's degree in computers, expects the Internet café will be very popular with all members in the community.

Nader Abdul Hammeed, a physics teacher, from a nearby boys' school went

to the center to learn about computers.

"The teachers here are very good," Hammeed said. "In the beginning, it was very hard to learn, but it is getting easier. Yes, this place will help people to get jobs."

"I want to learn some things about physics in the world," he added. "Now I can be in contact with physics instructors in other countries."

The facility has more than a dozen modern sewing machines. Tailoring classes — where students receive instruction on how to sew traditional clothing — are popular with the women in the community, but they will also provide an outlet to generate additional funding for the facility.

Buthaina Sadiq of Mashtal, said the facility will be able to sell its wares on the open market. "First of all, this thing (Deshdesha, the black dress most women wear in Iraq) will be very inexpensive and we will make and sell a lot of them — probably more than 100 dozen of them each month," Sadiq said.

Samera Kalef Al-Ka'by, a member of the Tissa Nissan DAC, did a lot of work on getting this project completed and believes the sewing classes will help people get jobs.

"There are many jobs for tailors in the community, and the goal here is to get jobs for people and make them work," Al-Ka'by said.

Ambassador plays Santa, Marines play Elves



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka

U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Kalilzad and Marine Sgt. Jimmy Song, Marine Security Detachment - Baghdad, hand stuffed animals to Iraqi school children Dec. 28 as part of the Marine Corps annual Toys for Tots campaign.



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Soldiers, Airmen touch hearts of Iraqis

447th expeditionary Group, 48th BCT provide quality care

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Randy L. Mitchell
447th Air Expeditionary Wing

BAGHDAD - The 447th Air Expeditionary Group has teamed with members of the 48th Brigade Combat Team and Charlie Company, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, to provide medical care near the Radwaniya Civil Military Operations Center.

Soldiers constructed the clinic by refurbishing an existing building. The clinic addresses an urgent need of the people living to the south and west of Baghdad for medical care.

"The area is poor, rural, and the Iraqi government currently lacks the resources to supply desperately needed medical services," said Maj. Mark Cuttle, Company C, 490th CA commander. "In the face of this need the clinic has stepped forward and is filling the void."

The clinic had been staffed with medical personnel from the 48th BCT and the 5th Special Forces Group. But operational needs

caused the Army to step back and offer the Air Force an opportunity to assist.

Sather Air Base personnel here were eager to help and jumped at the opportunity right away.

"I see this as a great opportunity to show the humanity of the American military," said Dr. (Col.) Salvatore Lombardi, 447th Expeditionary Medical Squadron commander.

Since opening, the clinic has averaged roughly 25 to 30 patients a day, except during Ramadan, a major Muslim religious holiday.

The clinic is open three days a week for three hours, and operates on a walk-in basis providing medical services to all Iraqis, regardless of tribe affiliation or religious preference.

Providing quality medical care is what we do for all our patients," said Lombardi, "but I also see this as an excellent opportunity to touch the hearts and minds of our Iraqi neighbors outside the wire."

That sentiment was echoed by one of the flight surgeons who vol-



Master Sgt. Scott Bonnar, 447th Air Expeditionary Group first sergeant, discusses soccer with an Iraqi boy prior to giving him the ball.

unteered to work at the clinic.

"The clinic provides an opportunity to build a sense of trust between some Iraqis and Americans," said Dr. (Lt. Col.) Randy J. Guliuzza, chief of aerospace medicine. "It also provides the possibility to influence a future generation of Iraqis. By touching one life at a time, the hope is to prevent future anger and violence, particularly toward Americans."

Providing quality medical help to people who have essentially no access to any type of medical care is another reason Guliuzza chose to volunteer.

"In a few hours, I am able to help people find relief from problems that have hurt them for a long time," said Guliuzza. "For example, many Americans have been able to get relief from chronic reflux disease, or heartburn, with some education and use of the newer medications."

"With treatment, more serious diseases can also be prevented," the doctor said. "I am able to help these people, most of whom are very poor, see that same improvement in their quality of life."

Patients suffer from a variety of illnesses and injuries, according to Cuttle. "The most common conditions are chronic respiratory conditions, orthopedic injuries and ear problems in children," he said.

The 447th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron saw a need where not only they, but base volunteers could become involved as well.

"Captain Morin (447th EMEDS) brought to my attention some minor projects including some drainage work for the parking lots, minor heating/air conditioning work, plumbing repairs and some small carpentry projects that would really improve quality of life for the clinic patrons," said 2nd Lt. Jeffrey England, 447th ECES. "One specific project we are taking on, and I think will be a big hit, is the construction of some playground equipment for the Iraqi children."

According to England, some of the work for the playground won't require expert craftsmen so they are hoping to get a lot of volunteers from across the base to help out.

"Where we really need volunteers is in spreading pea gravel around the playground and landscaping," said England. "Volunteers will also be needed for painting,



An Iraqi girl receives a check up from Dr. Randy Guliuzza, chief of aerospace medicine for the 447th Expeditionary Medical Squadron.

resurfacing the floor and other small projects."

There are real needs being met here that have to be told, according to Cuttle. He summed it up in the words of the poet Pindar, "Unsung, the noblest deed will die."



A young Iraqi girl receives free school supplies and toys prior to leaving the medical clinic.

Soldiers take on Santa's mission

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechoski
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT - The Soldiers of 3rd Infantry Division's Company A, 3rd Platoon, 2nd battalion, 7th Infantry were given a slightly different mission than they are typically accustomed.

The usual mission of Company A, also known as "Rage," is to sweep the streets hunting for insurgents and conducting patrols to make the area safe for the people of Tikrit.

Today, however, much needed school supplies, toys and games were delivered to the children of Abua Jeel School. The excited children between the ages of 6 to 12 smiled from ear to ear as they stood in formation waiting for their gifts from the Soldiers. The supplies were donated by a Girl Scout troop from West Chester, Pa., earlier in the summer months, a letter was sent back to the states requesting these essential supplies for schools in this area.

"The children of Iraq have gone through a lot, and for us to be able to do a little bit for them means a lot to us," said Capt. Scott Mras, commander of Forward Support Company 2/7 Inf. and coordinator of the Girl Scout donations.

The children eagerly filed past the Soldiers and received a toy, a pack of markers and a notebook. When the final box of notebooks was handed to one of the teachers, the Rage Soldiers loaded up and traveled back through the busy streets of Tikrit to Forward Operating Base Remagen.

Gaining the confidence of the Iraqi people with good will missions such as these and transitioning the Iraqi Police and Army to fend for themselves is critical in the withdrawal of Coalition Forces. It also builds closer ties between the two groups.

"When we go out and hand out presents and supplies to kids and families, we get a chance to intermingle," said Staff Sgt. Howard Googe, the convoy commander of the mission, and Metter, Ga., native. "They learn a little about us, and we learn a little about them."



Capt. Scott Mras commander of Forward Support Company 2nd battalion, 7th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division gives school supplies to the children of Abua-Jeel School in Tikrit..

29th BCT Soldiers say Aloha to Iraq

Hawaiians leave imparting their culture to others

Story and photo by Pfc. Mark B. Matthews
Mult-National Corps Iraq

CAMP VICTORY - Of all the nationalities and cultures that make up the U.S. military, few are as colorful and vibrant as the Hawaiians, and a few Soldiers found a way to bring a little of that culture to everyone.

Soldiers with the 29th Brigade Combat Team put on a hula halau show at the Al-Faw Palace Ballroom on Camp Victory Dec. 26.

The show was put on as a farewell to the 29th BCT, and being that these Soldiers will soon be re-deploying; the morale among the unit was already high. However, being able to perform seemed to lift both the performers and the audience's spirits a little higher.

The group has been performing and practicing together since April and have put on many performances since then. Both the band and the dancers volunteered their free time to practice, and it seemed to pay off in the end.

"It's great to see these Soldiers perform and bring

our culture to other people in the military," said Spc. Vincent Gonzales, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 29th Brigade Combat Team.

"In Hawaii we have what we call the spirit of aloha. Aloha meaning love, and these Soldiers performing gave them a chance to share that spirit with others."

The Hawaiian Soldiers performed for a full house and the ballroom was standing room only. Although the members in the group may have been a bit nervous, it seemed as if having the chance to perform one last time for servicemembers in Iraq was worth it.

"It's awesome to be part of a group like this," said Sgt. Lorinda Ballesteros, a medic with the 29th BCT.

"It's our culture, and it's great to be able to have the opportunity to share that with other people one last time while we are here."

At the end of the show the dancers and band were met with an uproar of applause and praise, but as much as everyone liked the show, the Soldiers from the 29th BCT who showed up to watch and support their co-workers felt like they were at home already.

"It brings up the morale, especially for Soldiers from Hawaii," said Ballesteros. "When we sing these songs it brings them back home and keeps them happy."

The 29th BCT is scheduled to redeploy this month. As they return home they can leave with thought that their culture has spread beyond the island of Hawaii and into the hearts and minds of everyone who has had a chance to see them perform during the past year.



A Hawaiian Soldier does his thing on the dance floor in the Al-Faw palace ballroom Dec. 26. A hula show was held to mark the departure of the 29th Brigade Combat Team.