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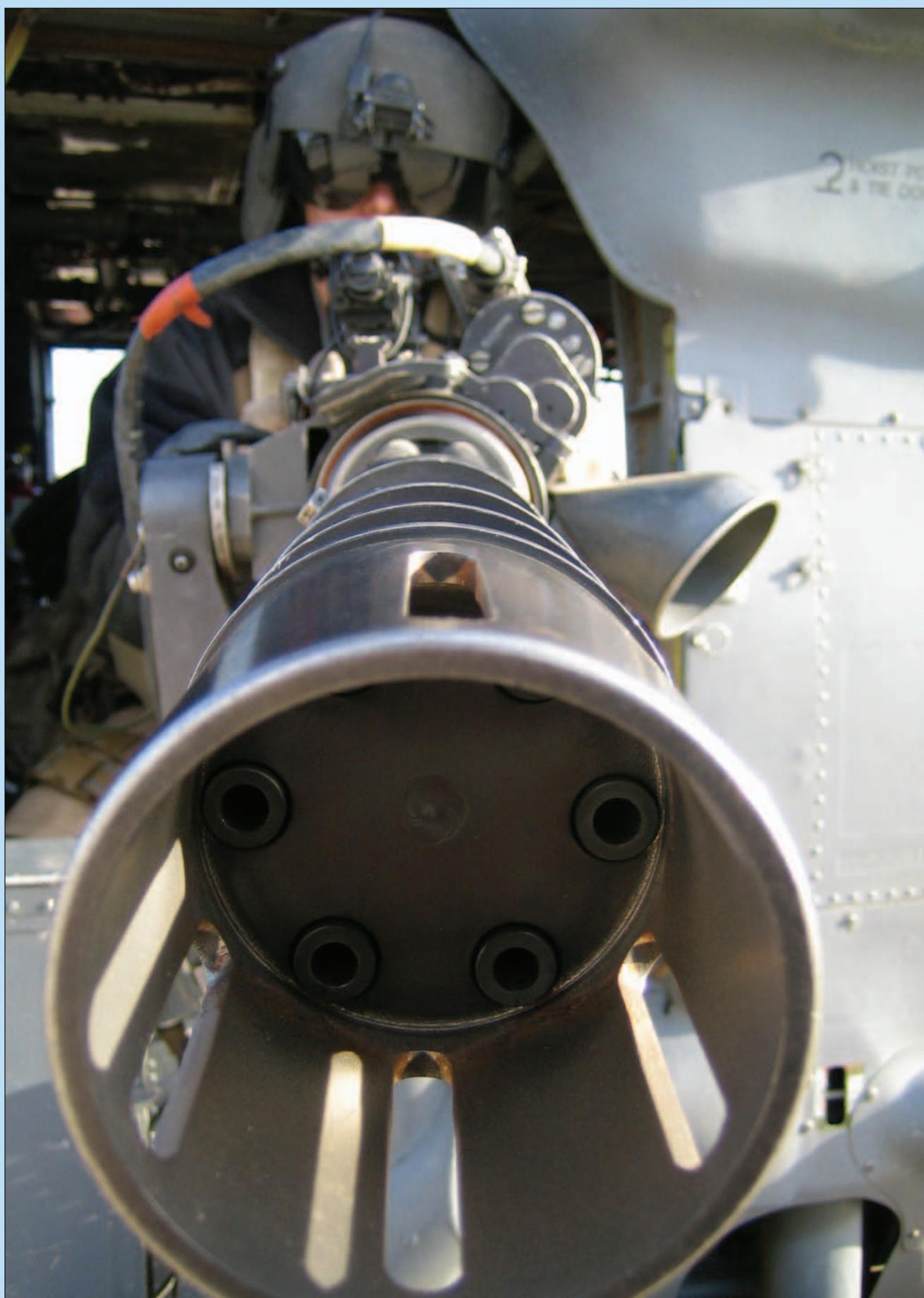
MNF-I's Cutting Edge



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Baghdad, Iraq

Jan. 13, 2006



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Andre Bell

The Business End: Staff Sgt. Brian Ornstein, 64th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron, stands ready behind a GAU-2B minigun while alert on a HH-60 Pave Hawk helicopter.

Mantle passed

4th ID takes over for Marne Division

Story by Master Sgt. Eric Lobsinger
Task Force Ironhorse

BAGHDAD – As Iraqi Army and coalition partners watched, the 3rd and 4th Infantry Divisions commemorated the completion of their transfer of authority during a ceremony at the Multi-National Division-Baghdad headquarters last week.

Maj. Gen. William Webster Jr., the commanding general of 3rd Inf. Div., along with Command Sgt. Maj. William Grant, officially cased the “Marne” Division’s colors, signifying the successful completion of the division’s mission as Multi-National Division-Baghdad from Feb. 28, 2005 through Jan. 7. The division colors will again be uncased during a ceremony after its redeployment to Fort Stewart, Ga.

Maj. Gen. J.D. Thurman, the commanding general of 4th Inf. Div., along with Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Riling, uncased the “Ironhorse” Division’s colors, signifying the division assuming the mantle of responsibility as Multi-National Division-Baghdad. The division cased its colors before deploying from Fort Hood, Texas, during a ceremony Oct. 28.

Lt. Gen. John Vines, the commanding general of Multi-National Corps-Iraq, served as the reviewing officer for the ceremony. Also attending were several senior Army leaders from throughout the theater as well as Gen. Babader Zebari, the chief of staff of Iraqi Armed Forces; Lt. Gen. Abadi, the deputy chief of staff, Iraqi joint staff; and Maj. Gen. Mobdir, commander of the 6th Iraqi Army Division.

“This ceremony symbolizes the transfer of authority. There’s another symbolism of course – the Soldiers who serve under those colors are conducting operations throughout Multi-National Division-Baghdad sector,” said Vines, commenting on the fact the 3rd and 4th Infantry Division Soldiers were continuing to conduct operations even as the ceremony progressed.

Baghdad is the most complex environment in the world, he said. Both divisions have served brilliantly in the Iraqi theater.

Army Secretary approves body armor reimbursement

Capt. John V. Rodriguez

Chief, Client Services, Multi-National Corps - Iraq

The Secretary of the Army OK'd the reimburing of Soldiers who purchased body armor and other protective equipment for use in Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom.

Soldiers can also be paid for these items if the items were purchased for them by someone else, such as members of their family. Soldiers on active duty, including those in the Army Reserve or National Guard, former Soldiers, and survivors of deceased Soldiers may now file claims and receive reimbursement for privately-purchased protective equipment if the Soldier was not issued equivalent equipment by the Army prior to deployment.

The Army will reimburse Soldiers for protective body armor, combat helmets, ballistic eye protection, hydration systems, summer-weight gloves and knee and elbow pads. A Soldier may be reimbursed for the purchase of a complete outer tactical vest, or for the separately-purchased components of an OTV, to include small arms protective insert plates. To qualify for reimbursement, the equipment must have been purchased after Sept. 10, 2001, and before Aug. 1, 2004, and all equipment for which reimbursement is sought must be turned into the Army at the time a claim for reimbursement is filed.

The amount of reimbursement for a given item depends upon whether the claimant produces proof of the actual purchase price. A claimant who provides proof of purchase will be reimbursed the full purchase price plus shipping costs for

each item, up to \$1,100 for any single item. If no proof of purchase is provided, the claimant will be reimbursed at a rate pre-established by the Army for each item. For example, the Army will pay \$551.60 for a complete outer tactical vest if no purchase receipt is submitted with the claim.

Active duty or active reserve component Soldiers who seek reimbursement should complete and file a DD Form 2902 with the first field-grade commander in the Soldier's chain of command. With the completed DD Form 2902, the Soldier must provide a copy of proof of deployment (such as deployment orders or a DD Form 214 noting deployment) and copies of all receipts or other proof of purchase for the items claimed. The Soldier must also turn in all reimbursable items to his or her unit at the time the claim is filed.

Although the claims process has been designed to ensure rapid settlement and payment of claims, potential claimants should not wait too long to file claims, as all claims must be filed by Oct. 3.

Payback for Soldiers

Some approved items:

- outer tactical vest \$500
- groin protector \$57
- throat protector \$13
- combat helmet \$342
- summer-weight gloves \$18
- knee pads \$20
- ballistic eye protection \$63
- hydration system \$24



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Charles W. Gill

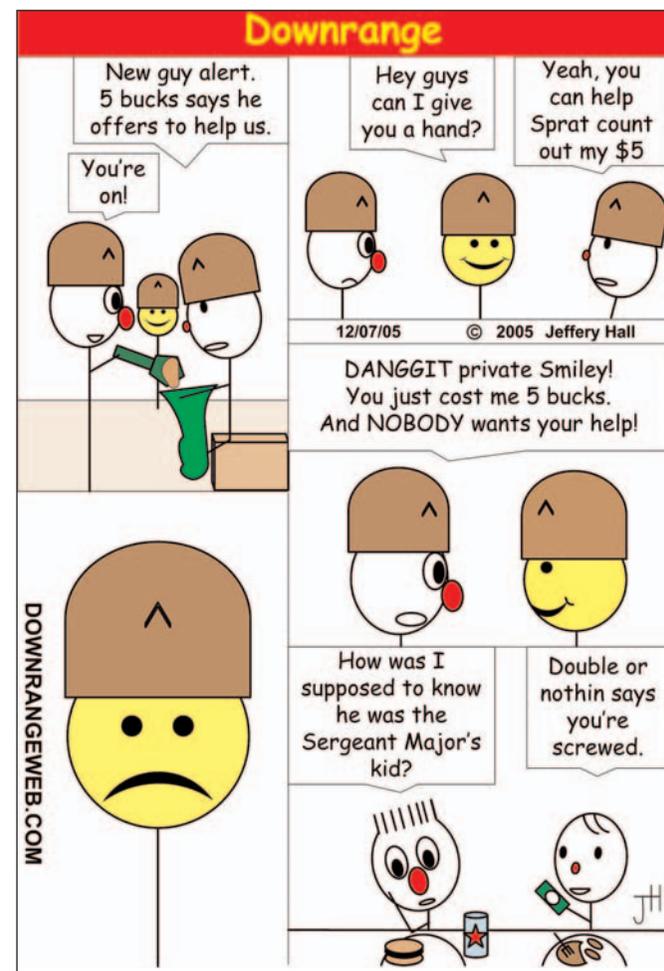
Sgt. Stephen Phillips of Company A, 490th Civil Affairs Battalion helps a local child with repairs to his book bag during a visit to the recently constructed schoolhouse in Husseinia.

Silence is Golden



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Chad Watkins

BALAD AIR BASE — Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Charles Baldwin, Air Force Chaplain Service chief, visits an Iraqi child who is being treated at the Air Force Theater Hospital for injuries from a terrorist mortar attack.



PERSPECTIVES

No longer a civilian, now a veteran

Soldier remembers his first tour in Iraq

Spc. Donald DeLoach
54th Signal Battalion

Someone once told me "You're not a civilian anymore DeLoach, you're a veteran." I never thought of that and the word veteran never crossed my mind in that way, I was moved.

Everyday I wake up with thoughts of where I've been, what I've done and what I have and will become. I look back to the days of war, I see myself asking "What have I become?"

I remember one night we were invading a town south of Baghdad, it was dark that night. The desert air was dry and cool with a warm breeze you could hear bullets fire for miles around. When the Iraqi Army heard of our mission they quickly sent out signals starting with tracer rounds in the sky. You could see the thousands of tracers go straight up to the heavens; flares flew and lit up our position. It was hell in the making.

Hundreds of Soldiers – young, old, low ranking and high ranking - made their way to the town not knowing what we were getting into. It was the first day of combat. Time stood still for us that night.

I was with the first wave heading in from the west. We entered the town only to see broken vehicles and small fires that lit up the road. The Soldier who was on point scanned the road ahead. We followed scanning the roofs and windows above. Creeping through the narrow alley, skirting the walls, bouncing from cover to cover.

When we got to the first door it started.

BANG! The Iraqi soldier flung the door open. BANG! BANG! I took him out, two to the chest, and I watched him fall. To me that is when the war began for me, the first kill.

As we entered the building, like roaches the enemy scattered from the light of our M-4s.

At the ready we fired our M-4's with a vengeance shooting through the couch they hid behind. We went from room to room like exterminators, looking for them in hiding. Stacked, barrels first, we charged the rooms over furniture, through debris. It was hell and our night was just beginning. Twelve Iraqis died in the first building, five of us entered, five of us exited. We met up with the Alpha element and left two guards to signal the rest of the force as we kept on moving.

Most people don't understand that fighting in an urban environment, you need momentum. It is the fire and the fuel

to keep things going. Once you stop momentum you die. Adrenaline is first thing to go, without that you get tired and move slower. Your body gets exhausted and slows down. When your adrenaline is high you run full force for a longer time.

I could go into the whole raid, tell every detail, but I won't. The raid lasted 72 hours. We had the shits, no clean uniforms, limited amounts of water and food and we were tired. This was the average day for us, for infantrymen. It's what we do, and what we did. We fought and killed together.

That was the first conflict we had during the war. All of us remember the first one - the day we all tested our fears, and we all succeeded.

With every victory some things may come out well, but we all have scars.

I still have nightmares from the first one; they haunt me to this day. Some nights I wake up screaming. We were wounded in some way, either mentally or physically. We all had a little something inside us die.

War is hell and I'm not talking of just being in a combat zone, I'm talking about actually engaging the enemy. People die in war; bullets fly with the intention of hitting their tar-

gets. Sweat gets washed away with blood. Forever you will remember war. I was 21 years old killing men twice my age for freedom and democracy. I've led men into harm's way, yet still got them out safely.

I can only ask God for forgiveness in the things I have done. I pray that no man has to deal with the things I've done; or remember the things I've seen for I know of many like me that wish to hide in the shadows of another life, only for a moment of internal peace. One night of peace is all we ask as Soldiers.

Some say they understand or "I know what you mean man,." But do they?

I walked into a bar one night after the war in Iraq started talking to a guy about the Army when another man interrupted our conversation with "President Bush sucks." As a Soldier I defended Bush.

The man got into my face like he wanted to fight. If only he could see the things I have, right that very moment, see the war through my eyes. What would he do? What if he knew that I killed for a living? Better yet, what if they all saw me through my own eyes?

At that moment, I felt the whole bar stare at me. I left. When I got to the car, I cried. I felt like a book that can't be read; then I thought, if it could who would want to. When the guy I was originally talking to stepped out, he saw the tears fall from my face, walked up to me and patted me on the shoulder. He said "Your not a civilian anymore DeLoach, you're a veteran" We talked for hours. He was a veteran from the Gulf War.

I learned something that night. The only person you can talk to when you get home is another Soldier, another veteran, for they are the only people who understand. When you stare at them you see yourself in their eyes. If you're a true veteran from combat there are never too many stories to tell and never will you leave a man behind.

That day changed my life forever.

Editors Note: Spc. Donald DeLoach served with 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division in Operation Iraqi Freedom I. He is now with the Delaware National Guard in the 280th Signal Company.

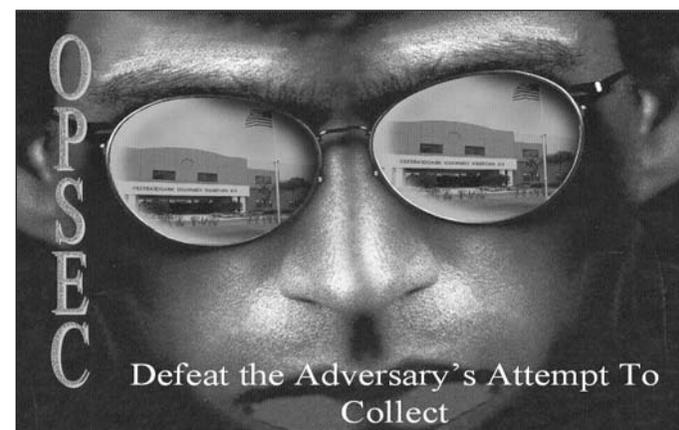


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Kingpin manages airpower over Iraq

Story and photo by Senior Airmen Bryan Franks
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

BALAD AIR BASE —When Soldiers and Marines call in an air strike on terrorists in Iraq, the 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron tracks airpower and allocates airspace for the mission.

Kingpin, as the 727th EACS is more commonly known, is a forward deployed radar control and identification agency responsible for identifying all assets that fly in the 270,000 square miles of airspace over Iraq and provide airpower to support the democratic efforts on the ground war.

The 727th EACS is deployed in three separate locations through the area of operations ensuring rapid identifications of all air traffic, tactical or civil, creating a real-time “air picture” that the Combined Air Operation Center uses to maintain control of tactical air assets, said Capt. Keven Coyle, 727th EACS deputy officer.

When a confrontation with anti-Iraqi forces occurs, Kingpin Airmen work directly with the Air Support Operations Center to send airborne fighter assets to support the troops on the ground. Kingpin also establishes mission airspace to all tactical aircraft including UAVs, and also tankers, fighters and electronic warfare assets, Coyle said. The unit

passes along tactical guidance to and from the CAOC and prioritizes airborne fuel and tankers when needed.

“Our number one priority is supporting the tactical mission. We are fighting a war here, but we must take into account the needs of all airspace users”

Capt. Kevin Coyle

“There are special considerations, such as, how much is too much airspace to take at any one time,” Coyle said. “Our number one priority is supporting the tactical mission. We are fighting a war here, but we must take into account the needs of all airspace users.”

More than 170 Airmen from various career fields keep Kingpin running.

“We are a self-sustaining organization that deploys with everything we need to operate and survive,” said Tech. Sgt. John Palmer, 727th EACS. “Our maintenance function keeps our \$60 million complexes running like a finely tuned machine.”

The Airmen cover the entire scope of maintenance functions: power generation and maintenance, heating ventilation and air conditioning, vehicle maintenance, supply, radar maintenance, satellite communications, network operations, radio maintenance, technical control, digital systems maintenance and a variety of maintenance support functions to accomplish the mission, Palmer said.



Airman 1st Class Sam Hauptly cleans an antenna connection as Senior Airman Gil Stephens holds it in place. Both Airmen are deployed with the 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron as ground radio technicians.



Senior Airman Neal Eastwood, 46th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, uses a heating tool to secure a yaw string, used to determine wind direction, on a Predator.

Predators keep skies safe

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Tammie Moore
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

BALAD AIR BASE — Airmen from the 46th Aircraft Maintenance Unit take great pride in ensuring Predator pilots at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., and Balad are able to continuously maintain an eagle’s eyes view of the ground in Iraq.

The U.S. and Royal Air Force Airmen assigned to the 46th AMU work to guarantee their MQ-1 Predators are able to provide interdiction, surveillance, target acquisition and conduct armed reconnaissance against critical and perishable targets.

The aircraft’s ability to loiter over an area for a long period of time, strike targets and provide real time-video keeps the technicians busy around the clock, said Maj. Joseph Giuliani, 46th AMU officer-in-charge.

The information is sent to Soldiers on the front lines, operational commanders or any where in the world via satellite links, said Giuliani.

The Airmen who come from a wide variety of specialties work in unison to reach one key objective — to make certain their Predators are prepared to function at 100 percent during aerial patrols, which frequently last more than 20 hours.

The 46th AMU is staffed with aircraft avionics, tactical aircraft maintenance, weapons, ground communication, aerospace ground equipment and support Airmen, Giuliani said. “These Airmen are responsible for the safe and effective launch and recovery, inspection, servicing and repair of our assigned remotely piloted aircraft.”

All Airmen working at the 46th AMU deployed here from Creech Air Force Base, Nev. Some of the Airmen have been here before and others are serving at Balad for the first time.

This unit does not fall under the normal air and space expeditionary force rotation cycle, Giuliani said. There are only a few Predators, and they are in high demand. Creech is the only base sending Airmen to fill this role.

Some of the Airmen deploy twice during a 15 month cycle.

Being deployed brought a new perspective to Airman 1st Class Rachael Hillman, 46th AMU avionics technician.

“I have learned a lot already about my job and what the plane does,” Hillman said. “I had to adjust to the atmosphere and the amount of maintenance that goes on here, compared to back home.”

Predators require more maintenance in theater, because the missions keep them flying for longer periods of time.

Scheduling aircraft maintenance to ensure a Predator is available to fly when needed is the most challenging part of this job, Giuliani said.

Because lives depend on the presence of a Predator, it is important every aircraft flies its scheduled missions.

“We are very connected with what is happening on the ground outside of the base, and the impact we have on that,” Giuliani said. “If we can’t get an aircraft in the air, it can directly impact other forces on the ground who are counting on us.”

Despite the long maintenance hours, the 46th AMU Airmen are satisfied.

“I enjoy seeing the role of the Predator in a wartime environment and what it can do,” said Senior Airman Chris Thompson, 46th AMU avionics technician, deployed to Balad for the third time. “It feels good knowing that my job is directly linked to keeping the base safe and taking

out the ‘bad guys!’”

“Watching a Predator you just worked on fly off to conduct a mission that could save someone’s life is a very rewarding feeling,” Hillman said.

The pride felt by those in the 46th AMU has had an impact on the unit’s leadership.

“Seeing the satisfaction our troops get from their job and knowing that their efforts are helping to bring democracy to Iraq has meant a lot to me,” Giuliani said.

“We are very connected with what is happening on the ground outside of the base, and the impact we have on that. If we can’t get an aircraft in the air, it can directly impact other forces on the ground who are counting on us.”

Maj. Joseph Giuliani

Holding the line ...

148th Support Battalion Soldiers maintain continuity

Story and photo by

Sgt. David Bill

48th Brigade Combat Team

The holidays in war-torn Iraq can be a stressful time for anyone, but for 48th Brigade Combat Team Soldiers who serve at the radio relay points, separation is even more significant because of the austere environment they find themselves.

The small group of Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and Company C, 148th Support Battalion at RRP 11 realize they are here to do a job even though it feels like they are out in the middle of nowhere.

An RRP is a small island of land surrounded by sand-filled barriers. The amenities are few, but these Soldiers have all the comforts of home. They have showers and toilet facilities, internet access, satellite TV, some weights for exercise and trailers in which to live. They may not have everything other Soldiers have like a PX, but they do have something that many of their fellow Soldiers wish they had, solitude.

"Its OK out here," says Staff Sgt. Willie Lackey of Covington, Ga. As the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the site, he is responsible for the daily operations of the relay point, which includes maintaining the radio link between the RRP's in close proximity. He also conducts security patrols around the site.

Daily activities might include responding to a broken down truck, or even a local Iraq citizen



Sgt. Charles Canter of Tignall, Ga. guards radio relay point 11 in southern Iraq. He is a mechanic for the 148th Support Battalion, 48th Brigade Combat Team.

requesting assistance. It happened once when the local Iraqi Police brought a man requesting medical assistance for a contaminated gunshot wound to his cheek.

"The wound looked like it was a couple months old, and it was infected so I provided some antibi-

otics for the infection and we sent him on his way," said Sgt. Jerry Pollock.

Soldiers rotate standing guard around the small facility. The non-commissioned officers monitor the radio for six hours at a time.

"I'd rather be here than at

Tallil," said Sgt. Charles Canter, of Tignall, Ga. The majority of their unit is located at Tallil and Camp Adder.

The Christmas weekend, at RRP 11, was a cold and rainy time. But the Soldiers maintained their watch in the guard tower and monitored radio traffic from the various stations, sending any message forward that needed to be passed along.

"My children didn't want to celebrate Christmas, but I told them just because I wasn't there you still need to have Christmas," said Canter.

Canter, a full-time maintenance technician for the Georgia National Guard, said when he returns from deployment he will become a small business owner. "I plan to open a small engine repair shop," Canter said. His plan is to use some of the money he is saving to get his shop started.

"Its something that I've been thinking about for a while" Canter said. "People are always coming to me to fix their equipment." He has already talked to various equipment manufacturers about being an authorized dealer for them.

Spc. Walter Marion, the food service specialist at the RRP, has a different routine than the others. As the resident chef, he is responsible for preparing the meals.

"I've learned what they all like to eat, so I cook what they want," said Marion, a police officer from Dublin, Ga. "I learned to cook from my mother. I even considered going to culinary school."

Marion keeps himself busy either preparing meals or cleaning up after one.

Every Sunday, Marion and a

couple of the other Soldiers meet for religious services presided over by Spc. Jerriod Allen of Conyers, Ga. who is an ordained minister and the resident barber. Soldiers took time to express their blessings on this holiday.

"I am thankful for friendship," said Pollock, an occupational therapist from Savannah, Ga.

"God is present and God is everywhere and God saw fit for us to be here," said Lackey, who works in materials distribution in Covington, Ga.

Remembered

In the vast nothingness of the desert, a radio relay point does not keep Soldiers from the tragic side of war. On Dec. 2nd, Sgt. Phillip L. Travis of Snellville, Ga. Spc. Marcus S. Futrell of Macon, Ga. and Spc. Phillip Dodson of Forsyth, Ga. were traveling along the main supply route and were killed in a vehicle accident.

They were assigned to RRP 11. These brothers and friends of those stationed at RRP 11 are not forgotten. Their memory is forever in their hearts and the hearts of everyone affiliated with the 48th Brigade Combat Team.

"They were great friends," said Sgt. Willie Lackey.

The Soldiers who remain continue to do their duty and carry on with the mission.

Their determination will remain as RRP 11 continues to hold the line. That is the greatest legacy 48th Brigade Comabat Team Soldiers can uphold for their fallen comrades.

Sewing command sergeant major keeps them in stitches

Story by 2nd Lt. Anthony D. Buchanan

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BRASSFIELD-MORA — When most Soldiers think of a command sergeant major, they think of someone who is a standard bearer for all enlisted personnel. They think of a hard-charging, motivating role model.

The 3rd Infantry Division's 3-69th Armor Battalion's command sergeant major is just this type of individual, but with more to offer.

Command Sgt. Maj. Patrick W. Muskevitsch, a native of New London, Wisc., is the pinnacle of what a non-commissioned officer should strive to be, but he also does sewing and alternations for his Soldiers on a daily basis here at FOB Brassfield-Mora.

Soldiers of the battalion are still wearing Desert Combat Uniforms and haven't been issued Army Combat Uniforms. During his current deployment, he has man-

aged to make alterations on about 800 Soldiers uniforms.

"All they do is put their uniforms on a hanger and hang them on my door," said Muskevitsch. "When I'm not on a mission, I just pull out the old sewing machine and sew."

Muskevitsch doesn't charge his Soldiers anything. He just wants his Soldiers to look squared away.

"People talk about Soldiers looking unprofessional and not staying in uniform, you have to help them," said Muskevitsch. "These kids get their uniforms shredded, torn-up and shot-up; they bring them to me, and I fix them."

The closest place Soldiers can get alternations done is at FOB Speicher, about 35 miles away, and, even then, not all of the Soldiers can get there.

"Send a kid on the road just to get his patches sewn on? I don't think so," said Muskevitsch.

Some of the Soldiers know how to hand sew their

patches, but they only stay on for so long before they start to fall off again. Muskevitsch knows this because he is on his fourth deployment.

"About half way through the mission, Soldier's patches start to fall off because they're washed so many times," said Muskevitsch. "I want my boys to look good when they get home."

"Muskevitsch's hobbies are building monster trucks, hunting and fishing. He is truly a "jack of all trades."

"If you don't find me in the tactical operations center I'm in the shop welding, or I'm out doing mission with my infantry guys," said Muskevitsch.

He said he liked working with Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers because they brought so many different skills to the table.

"When you're in an environment like this, you need to find people who have special skills like carpenters and electricians," said Muskevitsch.

A family affair

Walker brothers cross paths

Story by

Pfc. Jason W. Dangel

4th Brigade Combat Team,
4th Infantry Division

BAGHDAD — For many Soldiers, family is the driving force, a channel of support during hard times.

Going home to be with family, as most Soldiers would attest, is the ultimate reward after a long deployment in a combat zone.

As the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, assumes control from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, one Soldier, Spc. Taries Walker, discovered he doesn't have to redeploy to have that support. He said he wants to stay another year, and his reason is ... family.

"I thought about staying here for another year when I found out he was coming here — and especially when I found out he was going to be on this FOB," said Taries of Las Vegas.

After completing a year-long deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 20-year old medic assigned to the 3rd Inf. Div.'s 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team made the decision after hearing his older brother's unit would relieve his battalion, operating out of Forward Operating Base Union in the International Zone.

If Taries' stays, it could prove to be a test for his new family. Taries and his wife, Shantell, were married before he left for Iraq in Jan. 2004. He also has a 2-year-old daughter, Saniya.

"When we were growing up, it was just basically us brothers, and we didn't see much of our cousins or anything," he said. "If I were able to stay and change over to his unit, our kids would be growing up right around each other."

Spc. Marquis Walker, a radio and communications specialist assigned to the 704th Forward Support Battalion, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., arrived at FOB Union three days before Christmas, where he was greeted by members of his brother's unit.

"It was funny, because when I got here people were telling me, 'Hey, your brother is here. He's looking for you,'" said the 23-year-old Marquis. "It was

"I was a lot more ready to go before he got here. I mean, I want to go home to my family, but I kind of feel like if I left I would be abandoning him."

Spc. Taries Walker

really weird to see him."

Marquis, a native of Thomaston, Ga., sent e-mails to his brother virtually everyday from Fort Hood, Texas until his departure for Kuwait.

He didn't realize within the coming weeks he would reunite with Taries in Baghdad.

"I kept looking on the vehicles for the numbers, and I noticed the '1-76 (Field Artillery)," Marquis said, looking up at his brother and laughing. "I remembered that it was his unit, but I really didn't think I'd end up seeing him here."

A former Marine, Marquis knew the importance of staying in touch with his younger brother, who deployed with the 3rd Infantry Division in Jan. 2004.

"I had a ton of questions before I got here," Marquis said, "and some of the information that he gave me I went ahead and passed it on to my battle buddies."

With a year of work in the combat zone already under his belt, Taries took every opportunity to help his brother out with any questions he had about his deployment.

"I wanted to pass my knowledge onto him," he said. "I spent a whole year out here, and I figured I could tell him everything I know before he got here."

The Walker brothers have been best friends for as long as they can remember. Their close bond stems back to childhood.

Their father served 15 years in the Army and their mother four. Like many military families, the Walkers moved as their families changed duty stations, constantly redefining what the brothers called "home."

When Marquis graduated high school and left home for the Marine Corps in 2000, the brothers didn't drift apart, but

became closer than ever.

After three years of splitting time between college, the Marine Corps and his wife, Marquis joined the Army and followed in his younger brother's footsteps.

"I figured it was the best thing to do at the time," said Marquis, who attended the University of Mexico. "I was kind of burnt out and wanted my life to get started."

While Taries had already completed his basic combat training and advanced individual training, his brother Marquis just started his tenure in the Army.

The former Marine attended his AIT at Fort Gordon, Ga., and coincidentally, his younger brother was stationed just four hours away at Fort Stewart, Ga.

"I didn't know that I would end up at Fort Gordon for my AIT," Marquis explained. "We ended up hooking up almost every weekend at my dad's house. It was pretty nice."

Two years later, the Walkers once again find themselves together in a military setting, but this time under entirely different conditions.

As if one year deployed in a combat zone wasn't enough, Taries wants to stay in Iraq with his brother and is pushing hard to put the "Ivy" Patch on his left shoulder.

"I was a lot more ready to go before he got here," Taries said. "I mean, I want to go home to my family, but I kind of feel like if I left I would be abandoning him."

As much as Marquis wants Taries to stay, he believes his brother deserves to go home and be with his family.

"He's been over here a year, and no matter how much I feel like I'm the big brother, he has the experience," Marquis said. "Whatever he says can help me, and it holds some weight."

"Obviously, he was doing something right because he's safe and sound, but truthfully, I want him to go home and spend time with his wife and daughter," Marquis explained.

As Taries awaits word on whether his request will be approved, both brothers agree upon one thing.

They are family, they are Soldiers, and they have a job to do.



Soldiers of Company C, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor, 3rd Infantry Division perform maintenance on their M-1 tank.

Tankers become family

Story and photo by

2nd Lt. Anthony D. Buchanan

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BRASSFIELD-MORA — They have just a few more weeks to go.

Soon, they will have their own cars, they will eat wherever and whenever they want. They will spend their free time with their family and friends in the comfort of their homes.

These are a few of the pleasures in life a tank crew from the Company C, 3rd Battalion, 69 Armor Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division will be able to enjoy within the coming weeks when they return home.

"Being away from the family and kids is the worst thing about being deployed," said Spc. Mike Rauch, the tank crew's gunner from Mariposa, Calif. "We've put our lives on hold for the past year, and the world keeps spinning, even though our lives are on hold."

The entire crew agreed with Rauch about the bad things while deployed, but they also spoke about the good things.

"We fight over here, and it's not in America," said Rauch. "People that are home, like my family, don't have to see what I've seen. That's the best part about being over here."

"You build a better bond with your Soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Benjamin

Ormand, the crew's tank commander from Somerville, N.J.

"We're not a tank crew, we're a family," said Pfc. Andrew Queen, the loader from Ocala, Fla.

A year of constant attacks on the tank crew's home, the M-1 tank, has only strengthened this family and pulled them closer together.

"We've been through just about everything the enemy could throw at us," said Ormand.

Rauch and Queen concurred.

The crew has been hit by 4 IEDs, 2 RPGs, 1 land mine, and small arms fire numerous times. They consider themselves lucky and strive to keep their tank ready.

Company C has had no deaths.

"We have had no loss of life due to good training and watching each other's back," said Ormand.

"Every platoon in our company understands that if you slack off, if you let these guys get an inch, not only does it hurt you, it hurts the platoon you're relieving and the platoon that's going to be relieving you," said Rauch.

Soon, the tank crew will return home and everything will be normal again, but don't think for a second that these guys are going to let their guard down. They'll fight until they're told not to — for their country, their loved ones, and for their crewmembers, their family.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Matthew Clifton

Iraqi Policemen and 108th Military Police Company, 16th MP Brigade, Soldiers and hand out supplies to local Iraqi school children. "The IPs performed professionally and helped establish a necessary connection with the local children," said Sgt. John Olsen, an MP with the unit. Every time they successfully complete a mission their confidence increases, he said.



Two AH-64 Apaches from 3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment taxi down the runway at LSA Anaconda. The Apaches are an vital part of the LSAs security.

EAGLE ATTACK BRINGS FIREPOWER TO ANACONDA

Story and photos by Sgt. Susan Redwine
159th Combat Aviation Brigade

LSA ANACONDA — Nobody argues that Soldiers on the ground have the toughest job in the Army. However, Soldiers in the air do what they can to offer support to the ground guys, especially the Apache pilots of 3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment.

“The mission is to support the ground guys,” said Capt. Ryan Kelly, the battalion’s operations officer. “The ground guys are the ones knocking on doors.”

The unit is responsible for force protection and providing deterrence against enemy forces that would hinder ground units from doing their mission, Kelly said. In addition to their primary mission, the unit also provides security for the LSA and escorts VIPs flying on the brigade’s other lift helicopters.

“Our whole job in life is to support the guys on the ground,” said Chief Warrant Officer Dale W. Miller, instructor pilot for Company A. “That’s our favorite mission. If they need us, we’ll be there.”

The unit is comprised of 24 attack helicopters armed with 30 mm guns, 2.75- inch rockets and Hellfire missiles, Kelly said. One company of Apaches is stationed on the LSA, with another company supporting units in the north and another in the south.

The flight schedule is based around intelligence reports and requests from ground units, he said. The helicopters are used to support ground maneuver units in the counter mortar and IED fight, as well as with other deliberate operations aimed at insurgent forces.

“We make ourselves known,” Miller said. “It’s a real show of force. If you mess with them [troops on the ground], you mess with us. You can tell in the ground guys’ voices, they’re glad we’re there.

“Those are the guys taking all the fire,” Miller went on. “Those are the guys we have the most respect for.”

Capt. Ryan Eisenhauer, Company A platoon leader, said the Apaches are mostly a deterrent for LSA force-protection missions and their presence has lessened the amount of mortar attacks on the LSA.

“The mission is pretty much ideal for what we have around here,” Eisenhauer said. “The addition of the cavalry assets will make us more effective and lessen the load,” he added referring to 2nd Battalion, 17 Cavalry, a unit of OH-58 Kiowa Warrior scouts attached to the battalion.

The Apache pilots have optical capabilities allowing them to look at suspicious objects on the ground in order to help determine if the object is a threat that should be fired upon. But what makes their airpower most effective is communication with the ground units, F-16 pilots and unmanned aerial vehicle controllers.

“It integrates everything for better coverage,” Eisenhauer said. “Force protection as far as the FOB is concerned has worked very well.”

The battalion arrived in Balad in September, a month ahead of the rest of the 159th Combat Aviation Brigade.

Kelly said he thinks the mission is going well so far. There have been a few key days when terrorist activity was expected to be high, so the unit planned ahead with missions.

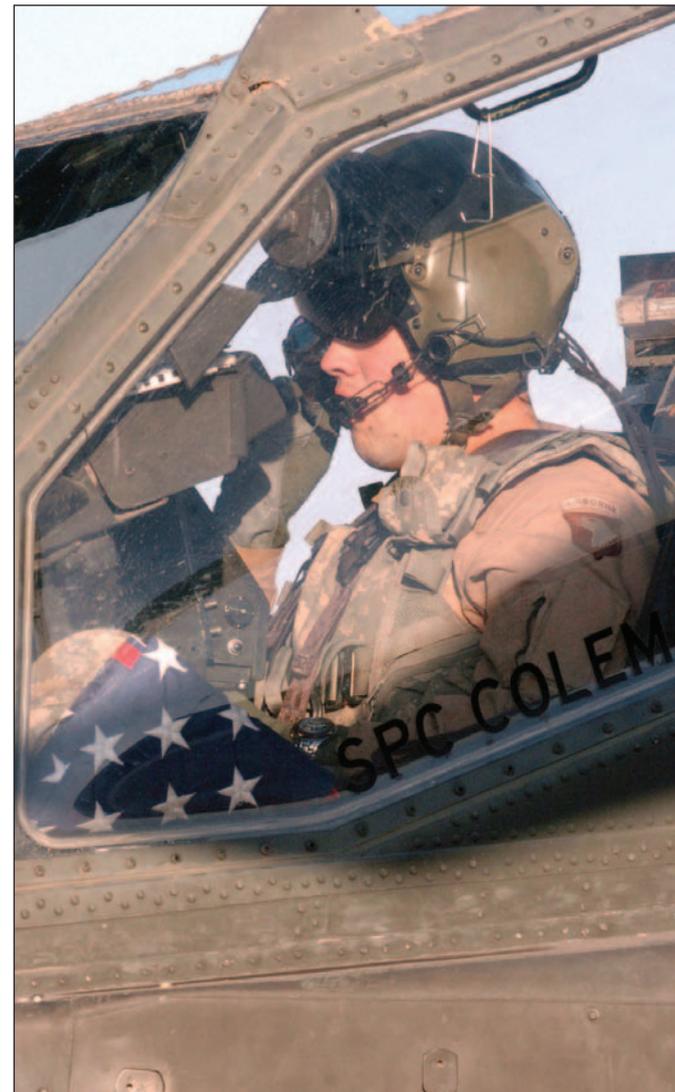
Very little happened on those days, such as the day of the referendum vote because of prior planning and the presence of the helicopters, Kelly said.

The battalion is often deployed and has been involved in operations in Bosnia, Afghanistan, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Kelly said 3rd Battalion “just always knows it’s going to be deployed.”

Most of the Soldiers are very experienced.

“Working under another brigade is really a fluid process for us by now,” Eisenhauer said. “We have no problem working with whoever needs us at the time.”

“We’ll do it and we’ll exceed the standard,” Kelly said.



A pilot from 3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, prepares for take off in his AH-64 Apache with the American Flag by his side.

IRAQI ARMY CELEBRATES

Dignitaries, Soldiers from 10 divisions

Story by Spc. Rick Rzepka
Scimitar Assistant Editor

BAGHDAD — Soldiers representing Iraq's 10 Army Divisions stood proudly along with high-ranking officers and dignitaries Jan. 6 to commemorate Iraqi Army day at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the International Zone here.

The event, organized by the Ministry of Defense, was the largest affair orchestrated here since the inception of the war, marking a milestone in the progress of Iraq's security forces and symbolizing the unity of Iraq's Army.

As Iraq's Minister of Defense Saadun al-Dulaimi stood somberly before a battalion of sharply dressed Iraqi Soldiers, a wreath was placed at the centerpiece of the tomb marking 85 years since the beginning of the Iraqi Army.

Iraqi Army Soldiers are carrying on a proud tradition of military service and take pride in knowing they now serve the people instead of a tyrannical despot.

The tomb also holds special meaning for the Soldiers.

"Today's festival has a special meaning and it is not like the previous ones," said Dulaimi. "Today we serve the nation and not the leader," he said, speaking of Saddam Hussein.

"It's the face of our country," said Ali, a Soldier with the special police force. "I am happy to be serving my country. If we do not protect our country, then who will protect it," he asked.

As dark clouds spanned the sky, Ali and hundreds of other Soldiers from various units sounded off with the Iraqi Armed Forces oath; a new mantra for the Army.

"I swear in the name of God and on my honor to protect the land of Iraq and its people from all aggression and to be loyal to the principles of the Constitution," they roared in unison.

The cohesion of the Iraqi Army, whose presence now is greater than ever, is apparent as they are taking on a larger role in keeping the citizenry safe from terrorists and fighting under one flag.

"There are Sunni, Shi'ite and Kurdish Soldiers here," said an Iraqi Soldier. "It makes no difference, we are one Army."

The Soldier said the strength and unity of the Army is better now



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka

Iraqi Minister of Defense Saadun al-Dulaimi and Iraqi Armed Forces' Chief Babkir Bederkhan Al Zibari return to their respective positions after inspecting troops during Iraq's Army Day, Jan. 6. Al Dulaimi said, "Today's festival has a special meaning and it is not like the previous ones."

than before and they have volunteered to protect all of the Iraqi people from terrorists.

"Nobody has forced us to be in the Army like before," he said. "We are like one hand, all of us are brothers."

"Today's festival has a special meaning and it is not like the previous ones. Today we serve the nation and not the leader."

Saadun al-Dulaimi,
Iraq's Minister of Defense



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka

Iraqi Soldiers on flag detail march to the sounds of the Army's band. The Soldiers then sounded off with the Iraqi Armed Forces Oath in which they swore to protect the land of Iraq and its people.



Iraqi Soldiers stand at attention at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Baghdad Jan. 6. Al Dulaimi attended the ceremony along with

IRAQI ARMY CELEBRATES 85TH YEAR

troops converge on Tomb of Unknown Soldier



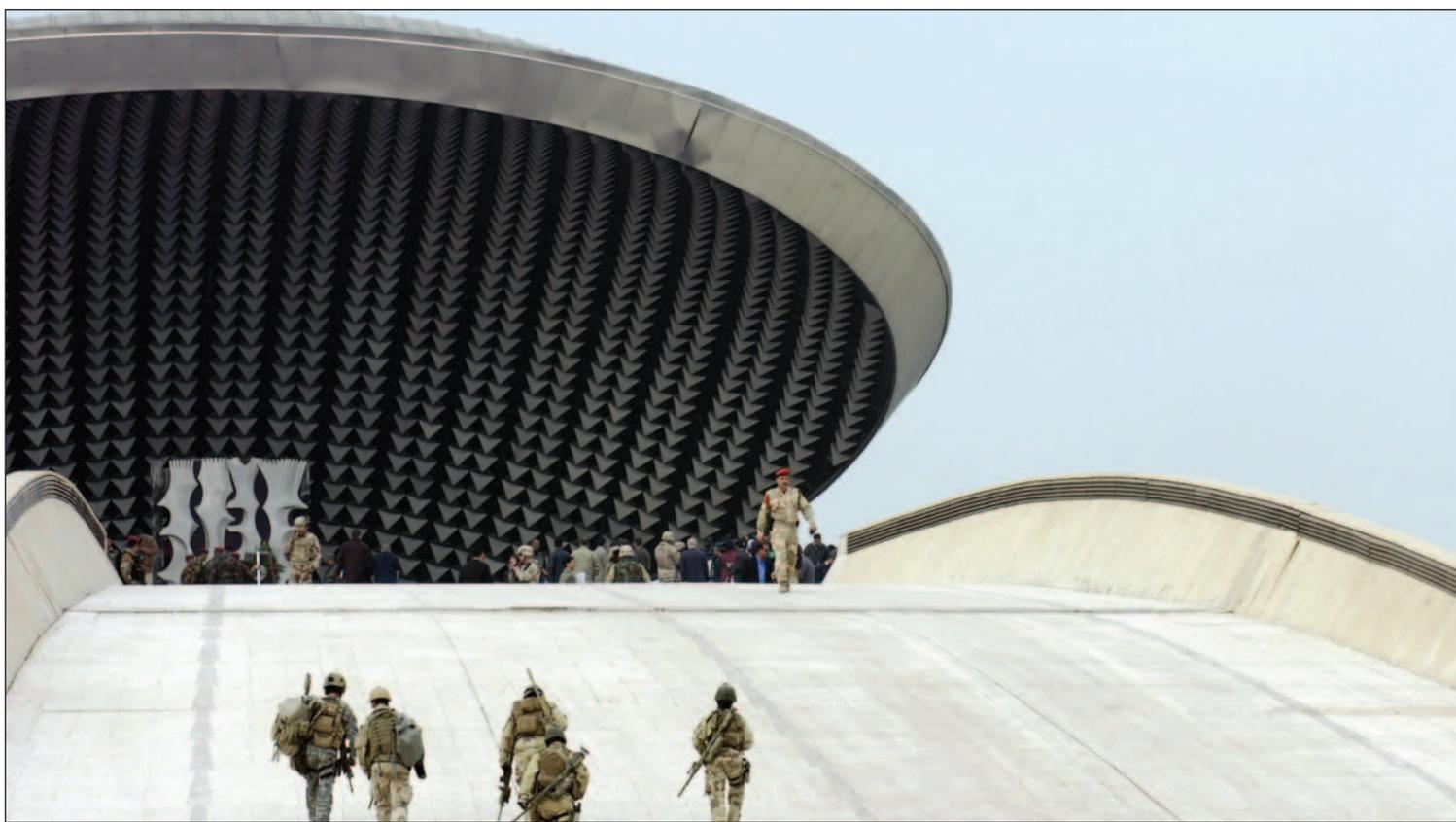
U.S. Army photo by Spc. Orlando Claffey

... while a wreath is placed at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Jan. 6. Dignitaries from several different countries gathered in Baghdad for the ceremony. The event was widely covered by Iraqi and western media.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Orlando Claffey

An Iraqi colonel presents arms while facing Iraq's Minister of Defense and Armed Forces Chief during Army Day Jan. 6. More than 800 Iraqi Army Soldiers participated in the event.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Orlando Claffey

U.S. military personnel ascend to the crest of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Baghdad Jan. 6 as preparations were being made to begin the ceremony. Al Jundi al Majhool was built in 1982 and was designed by the famous Iraqi artist Khalid Alrahaal. In addition to the Tomb, the site contains a museum which features various weapons used by the Iraqi Army since the Babylonian and Ashurian eras along with more modern weapons. The first unknown Soldier tomb was built in Alfidros square during the presidency of Abdul Kareem Kasim in 1959.



Spc. Michael Leinweber, a native of Willoughby, Ohio, removes the panel from a generator so he can work on the interior. Leinweber is a Medical Equipment Repairer and has been deployed to Iraq since September.

Handyman doesn't overlook little things

Story and photo by
Pfc. Cassandra Groce
133rd Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

TIKRIT — It's often the little things that get overlooked by people in a fast-moving environment, but little things can lead to big results in Iraq.

Spc. Michael Leinweber, from Willoughby, Ohio, has a mission in Iraq that revolves around small gadgets. Leinweber is a medical maintenance technician in the 626th Brigade Support Battalion, supporting the Rakkasans of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. He deployed to Iraq in September and spends his days working on the delicate wires, circuits and gadgets in machinery.

Recently, as the sole medical systems maintenance technician for the brigade, he flew to nearby FOB Summerall to support a surgical team that was in need of his services. The surgical team's generators had a power surge that damaged electrical systems on critical medical equipment.

"This makes it sound a lot simpler than it is, but in this case ... a fuse popped," said Leinweber. "You just replace the fuse, and sometimes you have to replace a circuit board."

Leinweber worked 36 hours straight to ensure the vital medical equipment was up and running. Before he quit, the surgical team asked him to look at their X-ray machine, which was taking poor images.

A few hours after Leinweber fixed the machine, a patient was rushed to the team. The team took a chest X-ray of the patient revealing a collapsed lung. Initially the medical team did not think his lung had collapsed. It was only after using the recently repaired X-ray machine that they were able to see the collapsed lung.

The team later informed Leinweber and his first sergeant that, thanks to his continuous dedication to complete the repairs, he had helped save the Soldier's life.

"It feels good knowing the stuff I fix impacts somebody's life," said Leinweber. "You take more pride in your work."

Wrench turners twist bolt heads

Story and photos by
Sgt. Patricia Tso
101st Sustainment Brigade

Monday is the typical day for Soldiers in garrison to conduct weekly primary maintenance checks and services, also known as PMCS, to ensure their vehicles and equipment are functioning properly.

For mechanics of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Sustainment Brigade, their mission and daily routine gives them a challenge while deployed at Q-West Base Complex.

"We have over 200 vehicles and [pieces of] equipment to include vehicles, forklifts, generators, air conditioning units and trailers," said Staff Sgt. Ronald Malone, motor pool supervisor, from Russellville, Ala.

Malone is in charge of more than 30 Soldiers, who are spread out to accommodate the workload the mechanics face everyday. Some mechanics are responsible for maintenance at the motor pool and some ensure that the generators are operating to provide the power needed.

A selected few are on the convoy support team. The support team provides security for the brigade commander and the 101st Brigade Troops Battalion commander when ground missions are scheduled.

"We are always tasked out and not many people can do my job," said Spc. Alvaro Nino, an experienced mechanic from Miami.

Nino is training on the electronic technical manual, a program designed to find parts that need to be ordered when a vehicle is found to have a deficiency.

"I'm always learning something," said Nino as his fingers hit the keyboard.

Motor pool Soldiers are often seen with their uniforms covered in dirt or drenched in grease.

"This week I gather oil, I dump the old oil and supply new oil," said Pfc. Sean Donnelly, who is from Buffalo,

N.Y. "Next week I will be ordering parts."

Donnelly separated fluids into four barrels as they sat side by side ready to be filled.

Other mechanics such as Spc. Cody Stafford, from Baton Rouge, La., and Pfc. Paul Molan from Chardon, Ohio, are utilities equipment repairers.

"I've been deployed before and this is the first time I get to do my job," said Stafford. "I get to fix air conditioning units."

Stafford and Molan are responsible for ensuring the heating and air conditioning units in the brigade and battalion buildings are functional.

For generator mechanics at the motor pool, the primary job is to ensure the generators provide power for all communications within the 101st Brigade Troops Battalion. Pfc. Axel Arriaga, a generator mechanic from Los Angeles, is eager to become more efficient in his

skills.

"You have to know the equipment," said Arriaga.

Pfc. Jeffrey Seymour, a Missouri native, assisted Arriaga in changing the thermostat on a 5-kilowatt generator behind the motor pool.

"I'm the recovery team," said Seymour, who is among the few mechanics who assist with the convoy support team. "My job is to hook up the tow bar within 10 minutes when a vehicle breaks down."

"Our sole purpose is to provide security, and if I have to do another tour, I want to have experience," said Sgt. Cynthia Taylor, from Oak Grove, Ky.

"I'm not in it for the glory," said Taylor, "I just want to make sure our people are safe."

"The mechanics do an outstanding job," said Malone, as he gave all the credit to his Soldiers for their daily accomplishments.



Pfc. Felix Cedano, HHC mechanic, from New York operates a forklift at the motor pool

HEALTH & FITNESS

Caffeine: Staying alert, but staying alive?

Story by Capt. Reva Rogers, RD
101st Airborne Division Dietician

Today's Soldiers must operate intricate computer-controlled systems; quickly identify threats in a complex environment; and be ready to react on a moments notice. As the number of requirements placed upon us increases, typically the amount of sleep we get decreases. Although sleep is the most effective way to ensure we continue functioning at a high level, in reality getting eight hours of sleep a night is often a luxury only dreamt about.

People's need for sleep varies greatly, some Soldiers function fine on as little as 5.5 hours of sleep, while others may require as many as 9.5 hours for optimal performance. If you continually operate on seven or less hours of sleep a night your performance, both physical and mental, may suffer.

Sleep is the best way to restore a decrease in mental and physical performance caused by sleep deprivation. Several studies have found napping for as little as 15 minutes can result in a marked improvement in mental functioning. However, if you are unable to get enough sleep at night or take naps, caffeine may help improve both your physical and mental performance.

Before deciding to consume caffeine as a performance enhancer you should first consider the potential side effects. If you have elevated blood pressure, or are taking medication to reduce your blood pressure, using caffeine is not a wise choice. Additionally, if

you have a family history of high blood pressure you may want to avoid large doses of caffeine especially during times of stress, as this combination increases the likelihood of your blood pressure becoming elevated.

Combining caffeine with ephedrine or synephrine and yohimbine also can result in elevated blood pressure, even in people who usually have normal blood pressure levels. This combination can also elevate your resting heart rate and significantly increase your heart rate during exercise.

Another factor to consider before taking large doses of caffeine is your ability to maintain adequate hydration levels. Because caffeine increases your urine output, it increases your risk for becoming dehydrated. If operating in a hot environment and using caffeine you should implement a sound hydration strategy and closely monitor your hydration status.

When consuming caffeine you should also monitor your calcium intake. Although the majority of studies have not found a relationship between caffeine and osteoporosis, caffeine can, at least temporarily, increase calcium excretion. This becomes a problem if your calcium intake is low.

If you usually consume at least three servings of dairy products each day you are probably meeting your calcium needs. If you consume little to no dairy products you should start consuming more dairy products or consider taking a calcium supplement.

So now that you have considered the side effects and decided to try using caffeine as a

performance enhancer how much should you take? If sleep deprived, doses of 100-600 mg may improve cognitive function. The Committee on Military Nutrition Research recommended in its book, *Caffeine for the Sustainment of Mental Task Performance: Formulations for Military Operations* (2001), limiting caffeine consumption to no more than 600 mg. Doses of caffeine more than 600 mg can degrade your cognitive function; negatively effect mood, and can make sleeping difficult when you finally get to rest.

Caffeine can be consumed in a variety of ways. The committee recommends using a food bar or chewing gum as the mechanism to intake caffeine. Consuming caffeine-containing bars or chewing gum as your caffeine source enables you to more accurately determine exactly how much caffeine you are consuming as compared with consuming caffeine-containing beverages. Using gum can be particularly advantageous as the saliva you generate while chewing gum helps speed caffeine absorption.

Most of us have heard of, or experienced the headaches, drowsiness, and irritability associated with caffeine withdrawal. Obviously these symptoms can negatively impact your ability to function at a high level and should be avoided during critical operations. It is best not to go "cold turkey" when stopping caffeine intake if you want to avoid caffeine withdrawal. Slowly reducing the amount you consume or consuming low doses (25 - 50 mg) of caffeine should prevent the occurrence of withdrawal symptoms.

Final thoughts: As with any new procedure it is best that you test it out before employing the technique during a mission. Some people may be hypersensitive to caffeine while others may be less sensitive. Testing your response to various doses of caffeine prior to using it on a mission should make sure you are able to perform at peak levels while avoiding any unwanted side effects.

Dosing for Caffeine Gum

— Mental performance when adequately rested: Start with 1 stick and use as needed.

— Mental performance when sleep deprived: start with 1 stick and use as needed not to exceed 2 sticks per hour for up to 6 hours.

— Physical performance: chew 2 sticks for 5 minutes followed by 2 more sticks at the start of activity. Re-dose every 6 hours.

— Combined physical and mental performance: follow guideline for physical performance re-dosing with 1 stick as needed.

From: Canadian Military Journal, Winter 2003-2004

Caffeine Content

Energy Drinks, 8 oz	100-116 mg
Coffee, 6 oz, brewed drip	100 mg
Tea, 6 oz, 3 minute steep	36 mg
Cola, 12 oz	35-50 mg
Caffeine gum	100 mg
Pills, per tablet	100-200 mg

From: Krause's Food Nutrition and Diet Therapy, and www.erowid.org

Soldiers save face with new shield

Story and photo by
Spc. Derek Del Rosario
100th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD – Citizens of Baghdad have recently seen a new face to the Soldiers driving through their city.

Gunners in convoys have been peering through a thick plastic glass mounted on their helmets. This face shield was designed to give added protection to Soldiers "outside the wire," specifically gunners, whose faces are exposed to many potential threats.

The face shield has received mixed reviews from Soldiers in Task Force Baghdad, prompting the question, "is the face shield worth it?"

The command group of the 3rd Infantry Division said the answer to this question is a definite yes, citing that the face shield provides Soldiers with face protection from a wide range of threats.

The 3.5-pound face shield is made of acrylic and bullet-resistant polycarbonate materials, and was designed to provide Soldiers with



Spc. Jeremy Cringle, B Battery 1st Battalion, 39th Field Artillery Regiment, wears the kevlar-mounted face shield.

added protection from small arms fire and shrapnel from explosions.

Lt. Col. Virginia Yates, 3rd Inf. Div. Surgeon, said the face shield's lifesaving potential makes it of the utmost importance to wear.

"The idea to use face shields was first suggested by the 86th Combat Support Hospital ophthalmologist who saw potential to save

the rest of the face not covered by the ballistic eyewear," Yates said. "In the division, we track the incidents of battle injuries in several ways. One of these ways we track battle injuries is by location of wound on the body. We elected to purchase face shields for the division based on trends in facial injuries that might have been prevented with face shield coverage, especially coverage for our gunners."

Some of these wound trends surrounded fatal facial injuries sustained during explosions, she added.

Preventing injuries from airborne debris is exactly the reason why the face shield is absolutely necessary according to Capt. Jason Caboot, Battalion Surgeon, 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry. Rocks or bricks thrown at Soldiers are a big threat, Caboot said.

"The easiest way to measure the success of the face shield is to look at the number of Soldiers we have treated at the aid station with facial injuries," Caboot said. "We have treated seven Soldiers this year with

significant enough facial injury that they were evacuated to the aid station."

Caboot said the injuries were significant enough that one Soldier, a tank commander, had a fractured nose and cheek bone from an air born rock; and another Soldier was evacuated back to the U.S. with a wired jaw caused by a thrown brick.

While some Soldiers have reservations about wearing the face shield, Maj. Benjamin Ervin, 3rd Inf. Div. medical operations officer, said their safety is far too important to overlook.

"Soldiers have discomfort wearing a lot of things, like (mission oriented protective posture) suits or protective masks, but these things are issued to help Soldiers," Ervin said. "(The face shield) is kind of the same concept. The idea is to protect Soldiers so they can get home in one piece. It's just one way of how leadership is looking out for Soldiers in order to minimize injury."

Ervin is also optimistic that the face shield will continue to evolve, and that a more comfortable design

could be made while still maintaining its protective capability.

"There are always improvements that can be made, just like the improvements to the kevlar helmet, or the switch from flak vests to vests with SAPI plates," Ervin said. "Like computers, (military technology) continues to evolve, and we can only hope the face shield can evolve as well. Perhaps a thinner glass can be designed so that it doesn't weigh so much, but this is what we have in the meantime, and I think it's important for Soldiers' safety."

No matter what a Soldier's feelings are on the face shield, Ervin says the ultimate intention is clear: to get the Soldiers home in one piece.

"Like all of our leaders in the 3rd (Infantry Division), we want our Soldiers to get home injury free, so we try our best to get the Soldiers what they need to protect themselves," he said. "We don't like to read the casualty reports; if there is something we can do about it, we will, and the face shield is just one of those ways."

U.S. Soldiers become citizens

Story by
Spc. Jennifer D. Atkinson
100th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY — “One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

With their right hands over their hearts, approximately 80 of America’s newest citizens completed the Pledge of Allegiance during a naturalization ceremony at the 3rd Infantry Division chapel Dec. 17.

For many of the Soldiers the ceremony marked the realization of their dreams to become citizens of the country they already serve.

President Theodore Roosevelt once said “Anyone who is good enough to shed their blood for the country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards.”

Each of the Soldiers participating in the Dec. 17 naturalization ceremony earned that “square deal,” said Brig. Gen. Mark O’Neill, assistant division commander-support, 3rd Inf. Div.

Praising the Soldiers’ commitment to their new nation, O’Neill told the Soldiers they each brought a unique energy to America and that they had “already shouldered a heavy burden on behalf of your fellow Americans” by serving in the military.

O’Neill reminded the soon-to-be-citizens that “citizenship bears rights, but also responsibilities.” Although each Soldier is already part of history, and participating in American democracy by joining the military before becoming a citizen, O’Neill said the responsibility of citizenship would always be there.

Spc. Sakpraneth Khim, Company

C, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, said serving in the Army wasn’t shouldering a burden, but a way to “repay a debt of gratitude to a good country.”

Originally from Cambodia, Khim was a child when his family came to the United States as refugees 18 years ago. “I’ve always wanted to be a citizen,” said Khim, “but it’s a long process.”

Soldiers who are deployed can take advantage of a “streamlined” process, said Khim, and that helps.

After applicants fill out the paperwork it becomes a waiting game, said Khim. Originally, Khim’s interview was scheduled for May of next year, “but this is better,” he said.

Pfc. Habiba Chowdhury, of Company A, 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, is the first in her family to become a U.S. citizen. In 1992 her parents brought their two children to the United States from Bangladesh for a better education.

“I wanted to become a citizen of the country I serve. I’m fighting for it and I took an oath,” Chowdhury said. She, like Khim, was pursuing her citizenship back in the States, but was lucky enough to be interviewed in Iraq.

Chowdhury also had a pragmatic reason for wanting to be naturalized. “If anything happens here (in Iraq),” she said, “I want my mother to be able to say ‘My daughter was a United States citizen and she was serving her country.’” Chowdhury said her family is excited about her citizenship, and so is she.

“I’m very proud that I’m not the only one who wanted this,” she said as she looked at fellow Soldiers waiting to take their oath. “I’m having a great day!”

Teaching Iraqis bomb hunting

Story by
Spc. Anna-Marie Risner
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK — Improvised explosive devices are one of terrorists’ deadliest methods of attack in Iraq.

One group of Iraqi Army combat engineers has been working with Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, to combat this problem.

Soldiers with Company A, 326th Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Infantry Division, spent three weeks training select members of Bomb Company, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, on the finer points of IED hunting. Iraqi troops were taught how to recognize placed explosive devices as well as the materials used to make

the bombs.

Those chosen to receive the training were hand-selected for the mission by Lt. Col. Fuad Jihad Reda, Bomb Co. commander, and Capt. Jay Cook, commander, Company A, 326th STB. Many of those selected for the unit had personal experiences with IEDs and were motivated to work with coalition forces, Cook said.

“One [Iraqi] Soldier was on his day off and saw someone planting an IED,” Cook said. “He took his own weapon, chased down the individuals ... disabled their vehicle ... and ended up apprehending the [terrorists].”

Iraqi Soldiers were trained on basic IED awareness and driving several vehicles, which will aid in counter-IED missions. Troops also practiced mounted and dismounted patrols with U.S. forces.

CHAPLAIN’S TALK

Realizing where you are

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.)
David H. Jones
Civil Affairs



Chaplain Jones

I have the opportunity as the Chaplain for the Civil Affairs forces to travel throughout much of Iraq visiting CA Soldiers. Traveling allows me see many of the historical and biblical sites here in this ancient land. Let me share a few examples of some of these sites.

In my first tour in Iraq during OIF 1, I was able to visit Babylon which is near the present day city of Hilla. The archeological and biblical significance of this site is beyond measure. Being a chaplain, the biblical significance probably had the greatest effect upon me. Imagine almost 2,600 years ago, somewhere around 600 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar ruled from those very ruins.

He is talked about at length in the Biblical book of Daniel. Daniel, a Jew, became one of the most powerful administrators under Nebuchadnezzar to the point where the Bible says he was the second most powerful person in Babylonia. To see these ruins and walk where Daniel may have walked confirmed my faith in God and in his Word, the Bible.

I had the opportunity to travel to Dahuk to visit some of our CA troops who work in the city.

Dahuk is in northern Iraq, a part of the Kurdish area, not far from the border with Turkey. I met several Assyrian Christians who were being used as interpreters and they shared with

me how the Assyrians came to know the God of the Bible.

They related to me the story of Jonah, who was given a job by God. “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness had come up before me.” (Jonah 1:2). Nineveh was the ancient capital of the Assyrian empire. But Jonah hated the Assyrians because they were a cruel people and enslaved the 10 northern tribes of Israel in 722 B.C. So Jonah ran from the job God had given him.

Through a series of incidents which you can read about in the book of Jonah, he eventually came to Nineveh and preached repentance to them. The whole city repented in sack cloth and ashes, asking God to forgive them for their wickedness.

Present day Nineveh is a series of archeological excavations and ruins. It’s about 20 miles southeast of present day Mosul. Most modern Assyrian Christians point back to the time of Jonah as the time when their ancestors came to know

the God of the Bible. It is hard for me to imagine that some of these Assyrian Christians trace their lineage back more than 2,000 years to the time of Jonah. This sense of history is not seen in America, where few of us can trace our heritage back more than 200 years.

Several of the Assyrian Christians asked if I would like to see one of their historical sites. So we traveled outside Dahuk to a mountain where we began to climb, and climbed, and climbed, until about three-quarters of the way up the mountain we stopped at an outcropping of rock where carvings were visible.

The bas-reliefs were chiseled into the limestone of the mountain. Eighteen pictographs were carved into the rock. The Assyrian said these carvings dated about 2,000 B.C. and were put there by their early Assyrian ancestors. As you can see from the picture, the carvings look very much like early Egyptian carvings. I wonder who came up with this kind of pictograph, the early Assyrians or the early Egyptians.

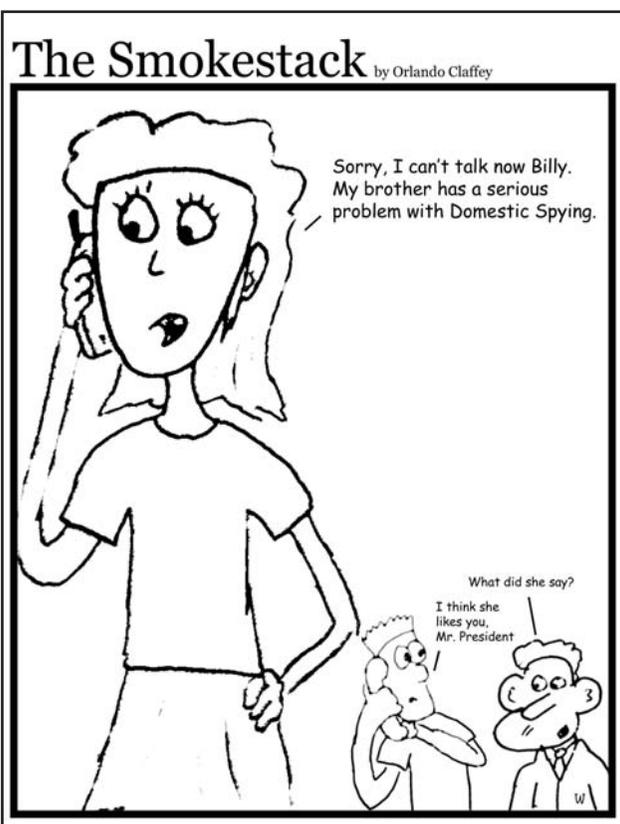
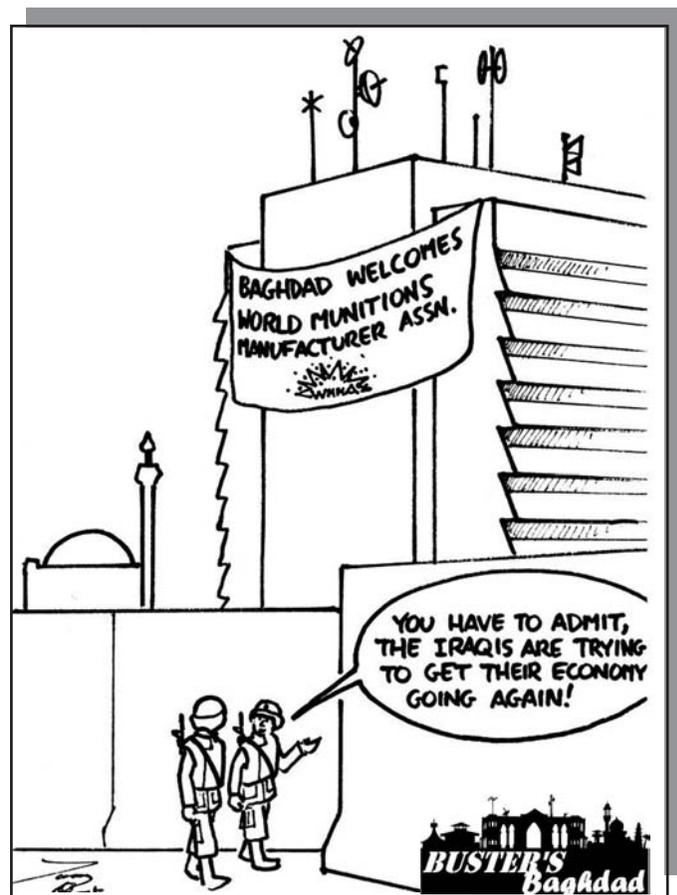
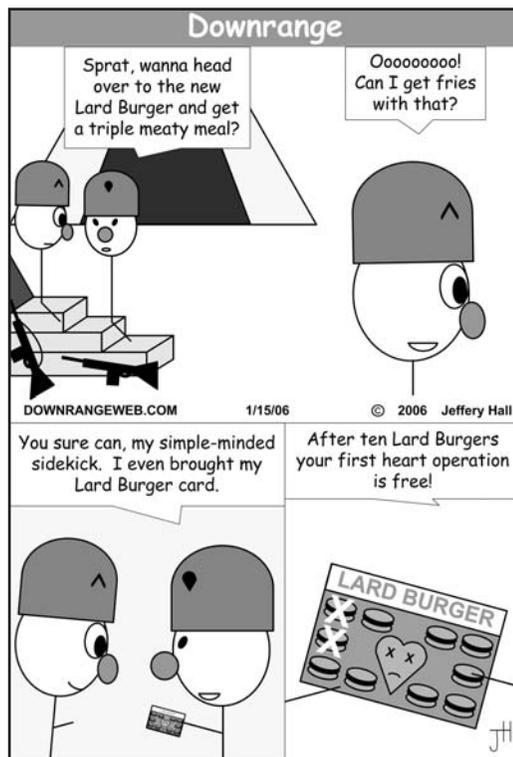
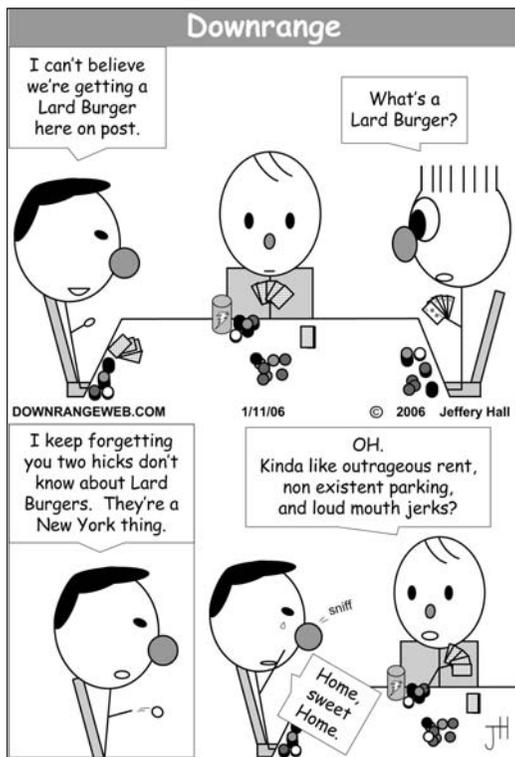
I have shared with you just a couple of the examples of the fabulous historical and biblical sites available in this ancient land. I know many of you are unable to travel and see these sites, but it is still nice to know that you are in a land so ancient and so often mentioned in the Scriptures. God Bless!



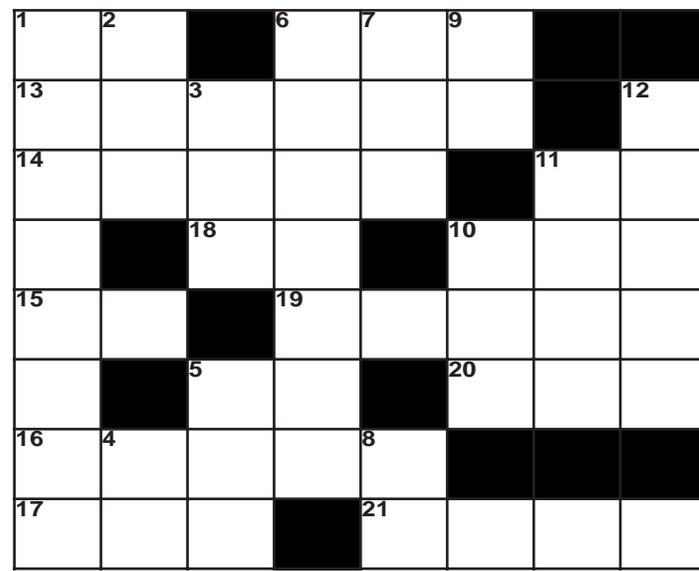
Courtesy photo

A pictograph sculpture, carved by ancient Assyrians, near Mosul.

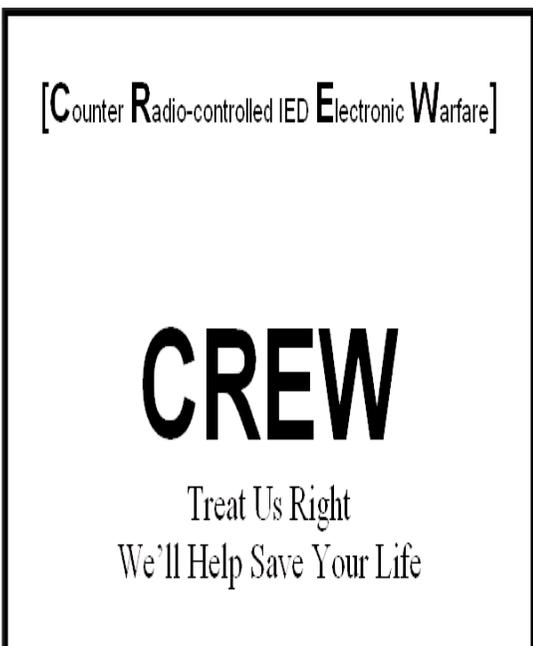
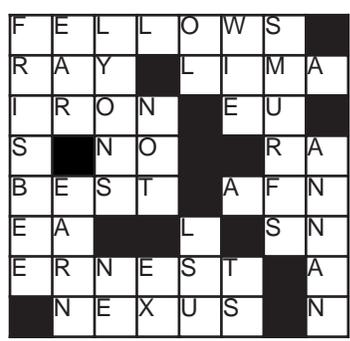
Scimitar Slapstick



Fightin' Words



Fightin' Words solution from Jan. 6, 2005



DOWN

- You can fix anything with it
- Irish fanatics
- Tina's crazy ex-husband
- Snoop's status
- Bush, Cheeny, and the Bonesmen
- Isolated incident
- British SF
- Name of *One Who Flew Over the Coo-Coo's Nest* protagonist
- Sea-Lab abbreviation
- The "Company"
- Idiot
- Location of LA riots, electrical measurement

ACROSS

- Marine teacher
- Southwest state abbreviation
- "Wild Bill" Donovan founded this
- Grunts sleep on these
- First name of "A-Team" character
- Commode synonym
- Selling like "hot ____"
- Lung disease
- Machiavelli strove for it
- Freudian concept
- _____ Arrival
- Stupid person
- Situps and crunches strengthen these
- Ugly dogs

Medical Soldiers help Iraqi teen

Story by Staff Sgt. Britt Smith
48th Brigade Combat Team

CAMP ADDER — In the middle of a country where medical care is tough to come by, a bond was recently forged between Georgia's Citizen Soldiers and local Iraqi citizens.

Ibitisam Hameed Kassar, a 17-year-old woman from the An Nasiriyah area was born with a rare blood vessel disorder called pulmonary hypertension.

This rare condition causes severe shortness of breath as well as fatigue, chest pain and dizziness. Ibitisam lives in an area of Iraq where the physical ability to work is necessary for all aspects of life, school included. Her condition made it difficult, if not impossible, to walk to school or to work the small plot of land her family calls home. She has spent the majority of her young life inside her home unable to do much more than smile and keep her mother company.

Hope for any treatment was remote and unlikely, until the 48th Brigade Combat Team showed up a few months ago. The 48th Brigade's Civil Affairs team heard about her plight and arranged for her to be seen at the Camp Adder base hospital staffed by the 10th Combat Support Hospital based at Fort Sill, Okla.

"We arranged it through the hospital (10th CSH) for Ibitisam

to be treated by U.S. doctors" said Sgt. 1st Class William Lawson from Midland, Ga., a platoon sergeant for the 48th's civil affairs section.

The road to treatment was a long one, Ibitisam's Mother Rahima Abid Lafi said. "It took three years to reach the Americans, and it's a very good feeling to have the help from the U.S. Soldiers."

Help is what the medical professionals of the 10th CSH provide and after running tests the doctors determined she needed additional treatment at a larger facility in the International Zone of Baghdad.

Ibitisam's short stay at the hospital produced new friends who were eager to make her comfortable while she was prepared for her first helicopter ride. 1st Lt. Fernando Mendez, head operating room nurse from San Antonio, Texas, said, "It gives the Iraqi people a new perspective about Americans. We are the final stop for many of them with regard to medical care." "It makes the job great, its medical care and that's what it is all about," he added.

Mother and daughter made the trip to Baghdad aboard a Black hawk helicopter for additional tests and treatments.

"We are mind changers. What we do here today will help both countries gain a better understanding of each other," said Mendez.

Physical therapist gets Soldiers back in game

Pfc. Cassandra Groce
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

TIKRIT — More than 50 percent of all Soldiers coming to sick call have muscular-skeletal injuries, making a physical therapist an invaluable asset in the combat zone.

Capt. Joseph Miller, the physical therapist in the Tikrit area, has trained medical personnel in physical therapy.

Miller's training began in Kuwait, as the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division prepared to move into Iraq. He's continued the training in Iraq, traveling to remote locations.

The inclusion of physical therapists in the combat zone is a new concept for the 101st in Iraq, resulting from the Army's overall transformation to the Brigade Combat Team design. Each Brigade Combat Team has their own physical therapist assigned to them instead of back in a hospital, Miller said.

"I think we are more effective on the front line with the Soldiers than back in the hospital," said Miller.

Around 35 percent of injured Soldiers were sent back to the states for treatment during the initial phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The arrival of physical therapists has



Capt. Joseph Miller, the physical therapist for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, checks a Soldier's lower back for pain.

decreased that number by about 5 percent, Miller said.

Miller has seen around 700 different patients since he arrived at FOB Speicher in September. He and his physical therapy technician see approximately 80 to 100 Soldiers a week. They also advise commanders

on training and work loads to minimize the stress on Soldiers' bodies.

In addition to five years in the Army and six years as a Marine, Miller has a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology, the study of movement.

He attended the Army-Baylor physical therapy program at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and graduated with a master's degree in physical therapy. He is now three courses from a doctorate in physical therapy and will have completed the program by the end of his deployment.

Miller is also passionate about helping his Soldiers.

"My ultimate goal is for them to not come back," said Miller. "We do a lot of conditioning and rehab so a Soldier can take care of himself. It's not just helping them, but teaching as well."

Miller, remembering a picture of a Soldier about to raid a house that he saw

recently on the Army Knowledge Online Web Page, said that is a symbol of who he is here to help.

"Those guys are the reason we [physical therapists] are here," said Miller. "We want to make sure they aren't distracted because of pain."

Soldier honored with patch while recovering from injuries

Story by Spc. Dan Balda
4th Brigade Combat Team,
3rd Infantry Division

Since the Global War on Terror began, many Soldiers have earned combat patches. For one Soldier a patch was created especially for him.

Staff Sgt. Ronell Bradley lost one of his legs in an IED attack while on a mission and had to have the other leg removed during surgery at the combat support hospital in Baghdad.

Bradley's battalion sergeant major, Command Sgt. Maj. Clarence Stanley, was present to make sure he was OK. Right before Bradley was anesthetized, he told Stanley, "Don't let me out of the Army."

The Army will honor Bradley's wishes; but while he is recovering at Walter Reed Army Hospital, his brothers in Company E, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor do not want anybody to forget what he means to them.

The company designed a patch inscribed with "Don't let me out of the Army," that each Soldier carries on their person when they go on patrol. It's their way of taking him out on patrol even while he recovers.

Sgt. Rayner Lopez, a team leader who was in the vehicle with Bradley when it was struck, designed the patch. The Miami native wanted to honor Bradley and his sacrifice, but almost as important, he wanted to honor his friend and mentor.

"He was my first team leader when I got into the Army," Lopez said. "He taught me everything I know, and I owe all my military accomplishments to him."

They served together during OIF 1 and made it home together, and though Bradley won't be going back to the United States with his unit, Lopez will make sure his patch is fastened snugly in his pocket until he sees his mentor.

Bradley has already seen the patch that bears the unofficial motto of E Company.

Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey was visiting FOB Prosperity and a Soldier told him about Bradley and presented Harvey with a patch. When Harvey returned to the United

States, he visited Bradley at Walter Reed. He presented him with the patch and told him how his brethren in Iraq keep a small part of him with them.

Capt. Barrett Emenheiser, Bradley's company commander, praised Bradley.

"The Army is his life, he is a hardcore Sapper, he is a graduate of the Marine Sapper Leadership Course, a real tough school," said Emenheiser, a native of Lebanon, Pa. "He epitomizes what a Sapper should be."

Emenheiser said Bradley goes the extra mile when it comes to training his Soldiers. He thinks it ended up saving his life.

"It was his squad members that pulled him out of the Humvee, administered initial first aid and evacuated him to the (combat support hospital)," Emenheiser said. "Whenever they had downtime, he was doing weapons training, physical training or something else to make sure his guys excelled.

"He went above the call of duty of any squad leader I have ever seen in my 10 years in the Army."

Capt. Barrett Emenheiser

Freedom Photographs



Courtesy photo

Maj. Gen. Othman Ali Ferhood holds a Kalashnikov rifle, presented by MND-CS Commander Maj. Gen. Piotr Czerwinski as a symbol of the 8th Iraqi Army Division's certification on Dec. 20. "We want to see the Iraqi Army capable of maintaining the domestic order," said Czerwinski. The Iraqi Soldiers will take the lead role in combat and security missions in the area, becoming independent of Coalition support.



Polish Army photo by Lt. Commander Bartosz Zajda

An Iraqi school girl holds a bouquet of flowers at the Al Budayr school opening ceremony. Polish Soldiers helped rebuild the school.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl Bryson K. Jones

An Iraqi Soldier of the 1st Iraqi Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade, 1st Battalion works out on a rooftop on Firmbase Castle.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Timothy S. Edwards

Sgt. Christopher S. Woodward, a weapons instructor for Personal Security Detail Development course, observes as an Iraqi Soldier fires his pistol.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. James Arrowood

Air Force Capt. Ryan Haden climbs down from an A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft after flying operations in support of Operation Dynamic Weasel, Dec. 2, at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. Dynamic Weasel is a multi-aircraft exercise imitating combat operations taking place in Southeast Asia.

JESSE JAMES VISITS SANDBOX

Tattooed toolmaster soups up Humvee with troopers help

Story and photos by Sgt. Ty Stafford
207th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers and Airmen recently joined with Jesse James and the "Monster Garage" crew to create a hybrid Humvee.

James and crew arrived at Logistical Support Area Anaconda on Dec. 17 and set up in the 181st Transportation Battalion's Skunk Werks shop to create their masterpiece.

"Monster Garage" is a syndicated television show that airs on the Discovery Channel.

The show involves challenges set by James and his crew to create interesting vehicles. The mechanics have a five-day window to transform their vehicles into machines that do things the manufacturer never intended them to do.

The crew brought an 800-horsepower engine with them and custom Jesse James 28-inch and 26-inch wheels to add to the Humvee along with West Coast Chopper painter Pete Finlan to design the final exterior paint job.

The "Monster Garage" crew chose Iraq for an episode to show a different side of servicemembers to their families back in the United States.

"We set out to come over here not to focus on a TV show, or me, but on these Soldiers building something cool. And I think we did that," James said.

James also wanted to give servicemembers something else to concentrate on while in Iraq.

"They were focused on getting a part here or putting a part on there and worried about completing this challenge and not about what's happening out there," he said.

Several mechanics auditioned for the show, but only five made the cut after being put through a casting call by the producers.

Truncating the show's normal time frame from five days to four days presented a challenge to the mechanics involved in the show.

"These Soldiers had little equipment to work with and no parts store to run to," said Command Sgt. Major Cynthia Graham, 181st Transportation Battalion sergeant major.

"We were working long hours, and we are in Iraq. This is not your average scenario ... every minute, every second, every part they put on this truck was a success story," Graham said.

The ability to work as a team is one of James' favorite traits in people and why he is especially fond of servicemembers.

"The military is the ultimate team aspect. You enter the military and everyone is an equal team player. I love it," he said.

"Compared to the other crews I've worked with, I've never seen a crew work as hard as these guys," said producer Ned Judge.

The servicemembers working on the project also enjoyed the teamwork with James and his crew.

"He didn't have to come here,

but he did. He came to Iraq to see Soldiers and servicemembers.

Every day he was out here, he had a smile on his face," Graham said.

After four production days, the crew performed a test run on the engine.

After blowing a transmission the first go around, the crew worked hard to rebuild another one before the deadline.

However, after a failed second attempt 20 minutes before midnight, James called the mission off and an air of sadness floated across the Skunk Werks shop.

"It was hard coming all the way out here and not having the chance to see it work," James said.

But for most of the servicemembers, working together was more important than actually getting the vehicle to work.

"The last four days have been one of the best moments of my life, and I will definitely take these memories back with me," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason Gregg, of Detachment 1058, based at Camp Speicher.

"We bonded and we grew together. The morale of not only these mechanics or this battalion, but the whole installation improved because of this Humvee and him (James)," Graham said.

James and his production crew came back the next day and gave the Soldiers some good news - the project will be completed back in the United States.

The episode will air as the season finale in late April or early May on the Discovery Channel.



Army Sgt. Andy Staeven, 181st Transportation Battalion, and "Monster Garage" star Jesse James examine the engine before it is installed in a modified Humvee. The team had five Soldiers and two Airmen working on the project with them.



Airmen Jason Gregg inspects the undercarriage of the renovated Humvee used in the filming of an episode of *Monster Garage* at Logistical Support Area Anaconda.



Monster Garage star Jesse James helps fine tune the custom engine for the Humvee rebuild. James provided the engine and signature tires.