



SCIMITAR

MNF-1's Cutting Edge



Vol. 4, No. 6

Baghdad, Iraq

Feb. 10, 2006

M*A*S*H no more

Field hospital moves from tents to trailers

Story by Master Sgt. Will Ackerman
447th Air Expeditionary Group

SATHER AIR BASE — The thought of a field hospital conjures up images of medics rolling battle-wounded troops on gurneys into a dimly lit operating room.

The 447th Expeditionary Medical Squadron at Sather Air Base, at Baghdad International Airport, also faced the desert dust and worked in cramped quarters.

They moved inside recently to a new 15,000-square foot modular medical clinic, and they did it without degrading services.

"We opened the doors at the new clinic minutes after closing the doors at the tents. We basically duplicated services," said Col. Christian Benjamin, 447th EMEDS commander.

The new clinic more than doubles the workspace from the old 6,000-foot clinic. It also provides a cleaner, brighter facility to enhance the care for patients.

"The facility is a lot more clean and sanitary," said Maj. Jeff McLean, 447th EMEDS clinical social worker.

The clinic's mission includes providing primary care for the Airmen assigned to Sather Air Base, emergent care and surgery for battle-wounded troops and referral specialist services such as orthopedics and emergency dentistry.

Although the clinic's primary customers are Sather Air Base Airmen, the staff also provides referral and emergent and trauma care to other U.S. military, contractors and Iraqi forces assigned to the Victory Base Complex at Baghdad International Airport.

"Our care is at the same standard as you would receive in the states," said Benjamin. "We are only limited by what toys we have to use."

Instead of the dark green, dusty and cramped tents, the new clinic features linoleum floors, sealed windows and doors and room to expand services.

A key benefit of the new clinic is less dust accumulation.

"(Less dust) reduces chances of wound infections," said Maj. Jeff Rose, 447th EMEDS general surgeon.

The more sterile environment is key because the clinic is the first level of care off of the battlefield for many U.S. military troops who are fighting the war near Baghdad International Airport.

"We are the only surgical-based clinic at Victory Base



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jason T. Bailey

Water Bearer: An Iraqi construction worker, contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, carries a container full of water at the Shinafiyah Primary Health Clinic construction site in Shinafiyah. *More photos, page 7*

See *MASH*, Page 5

PERSPECTIVES

Medic becomes mom, cares for Soldiers

By Sgt. Ashley Voss

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

BAGHDAD — In the blink of an eye, I became the mom.

It is a role that was intrinsic, though I have no children of my own. I heard myself reminding them to wear ear plugs, and to drink enough water.

I laughed inside as I asked if they had packed enough socks or instructed them on what dosage of medication to take for their illnesses. I listened to their frustrations and fears and attempted to remain strong. My heart hurt as their hearts hurt. The most surprising of emotions was worry.

Each time a Soldier left the gate, I worried. I slept less there than I have ever in my life. Every bump in the night jolted my heart to a state of awareness. It took an hour to recover.

It was an emotion that seemed ridiculous as those Soldiers are some the most capable, and bravest men I have ever known. They are a fantastically trained force, unbelievable in their ability to endure, sustain and overcome.

They are the Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, and for one month I had the privilege of being one of their medics. I was the lone female Soldier at Forward Operation Base Yusifiyah, a situation that made some unnecessarily concerned. I can assure you that I was treated with the utmost respect.

Upon arrival in Yusifiyah, I was given the tour, which included a walk around the facility that was once allegedly a potato factory. The entire camp spanned the area of about two football fields.

One half of the area is occupied by Iraqi Army Soldiers while the other is occupied by Company B. The Soldiers of

Company B run a vigorous rotation of guarding a variety of established checkpoints, patrolling and securing the gates.

The aide station that was my home is nothing short of a miracle. Since their arrival in October, the physician's assistant and medics who run the aid station had seen 94 trauma patients by the time of my departure in mid-January. These patients included U.S. Soldiers as well as Iraqi Army Soldiers and Iraqi civilians. Their injuries were generally because of shrapnel from mortars or improvised explosive device explosions, with most casualties evacuated to obtain surgical treatment once stabilized.

Based on the number of personnel and equipment, it is amazing that this medical team has had the success it has. They are a truly gifted group of people and it was an honor to work with them.

There are memories that I never want to forget and those that I can't forget, regardless of my effort to try. There are images that become a part of a person's eyelids; traumatic injuries of Soldiers, 15-year-old detainees found with equipment to build explosives and children victims to improvised explosive devices set up by their neighbors and intended for Soldiers.

The men of Company B have seen more tragedy than a person should have to see in a lifetime. They have lost fellow Soldiers, they have risked their lives to save others and each day they continue.

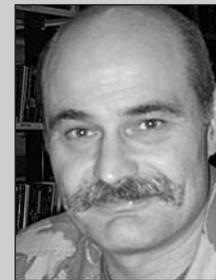
They attend a memorial, wipe their tears, and the next day they head out on patrol or to pull guard at another checkpoint. They are the epitome of the American Soldier. They are the source of my pride in the Army.

They are heroes.

Scimitar Pulse

What is your favorite Winter Olympic sport?

"Bobsled. I was on the team when I was 24."



Brig. Gen. Colin Boag
Civil Police Training Assistance Team
Glasgow, Scotland



"Bobsled. It's cool and fast. They're braver than I am. I wouldn't do that."

Jason Munn
Multi-National Force - Iraq,
Force Protection
Atlanta

"Figure skating. I grew up watching it."



Pfc. Miranda Durham,
738th Medical Company
Terre Haute, Ind.



"The ski jump. It looks like a lot of fun."

Spc. Robert Downs
Multi-National Division Baghdad
Liasion Team
Anderson, S.C.

"Downhill skiing. The speed and the skill for the timing and balancing."



Lt. Col. John Kanacey
Multi-National Force - Iraq,
Civil Management Office
Long Beach, Calif.

WELCOMING
our new "Landing Zone" on-air traffic controller...

Sgt. Lucrecia Gutierrez

Hear Sgt. Gutierrez play your favorite Rock hits
Monday - Saturdays, 2 - 6 p.m.
on **Freedom Radio 107.7 FM**



Occasionally, Freedom Radio must leave the air for service maintenance. We appreciate your patience during these times and hope you enjoy our satellite feed from our headquarters at the American Forces Network in Mannheim, Germany.



MNF-I Commanding General
Gen. George W. Casey Jr.

MNF-I PAO
Col. Dewey G. Ford

Combined Press Information Center Director
Lt. Col. Barry A. Johnson
barry.johnson@iraq.centcom.mil

Command Information Chief
Capt. Bradford E. Leighton
bradford.leighton@iraq.centcom.mil

Command Information NCOIC
Sgt. Jeffrey M. Lowry
jeff.lowry@iraq.centcom.mil

Editor.....Sgt. Jeffrey M. Lowry
jeff.lowry@iraq.centcom.mil

Assistant Editor.....Spc. Rick L. Rzepka
richard.rzepka@iraq.centcom.mil

Staff.....Spc. David J. Claffey
david.claffey@iraq.centcom.mil

The *Scimitar* is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents are not the official views of the U.S. Government or DoD.
The editorial content is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office of the Multi-National Force - Iraq. *Stars and Stripes* newspaper is not affiliated with MNF-I and acts only as a distributing source for the *Scimitar*. Questions and comments should be directed to the editor at scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil.

Scimitar welcomes columns, commentaries, articles and letters from readers. Send submissions to scimitar@iraq.centcom.mil

We reserve the right to edit for propriety, clarity and space.

The *Scimitar* can also be viewed on the Web at http://www.mnf-iraq.com/publications_theater.htm

Army captains share cockpit, bedroom

Story and photo by
Sgt. Ryan Matson

101st Combat Aviation Brigade,
101st Airborne Division

At the end of the day a lot of married couples may ask each other how their day went and what they did that day.

In the case of the Martins, the answer may be surprising.

"I flew a team of U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers in to a remote Iraqi village to capture suspected terrorists," Mrs. Martin may tell her husband.

Mr. Martin may answer, "I flew over an infantry troop and covered them from above in a firefight, then provided protection to a convoy with my helicopter."

That's because the Martins have a rather unique marriage. They are both commanding officers in the U.S. Army, both Soldiers in the same brigade and both helicopter pilots.

Capt. Elizabeth Martin is commander of Company C, 5th Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, and an Army Blackhawk pilot, while her husband, Capt. Aaron Martin, commands Company C, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, and flies Kiowas.

Both are deployed with the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade to different Forward Operating Bases in Iraq.

"I think most people aren't surprised that we're both in the military and married, because if you think about it, it makes better sense than somebody trying to maintain a civilian profession with a military profession and going at it from opposite ends," Aaron Martin said. "I think they're more surprised or impressed with my wife being a female captain, commander and pilot in such a male-dominated profession. They're usually more taken back by that."

"When they find out this woman who totally doesn't look like she fits the mold when she is in civilian clothes is a pilot, they are totally amazed by her and could care less about talking to me then!" Aaron added with a laugh.

They met as freshman in January 1995 at Florida Tech, in Melbourne, Fla. Aaron had come to Florida Tech from his hometown of Ozark, Missouri, while Elizabeth was from Greece, N.Y., a suburb of Rochester. Aaron was enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Course, he met his future wife when she joined the program during both student's second semester. They wound up being in the same squad.

For the Martins, it was not love at first sight. The two became friends, but said that at the time had different things going on in their lives and were both dating other people. It wasn't until their senior year that they started dating each other. The two said their relationship just started to naturally develop into dating as they spent increased time together as part of the ROTC program. They said they couldn't remember who asked the other on their first date.

The pair married while on Christmas leave following college in 1998. They earned their commissions on the same day. Aaron said out by luck of the draw he was a higher sequence number than Elizabeth.

Even though the two are now in the same brigade, their careers took winding paths to get there. Aaron started in the artillery branch, before switching over to the aviation branch.

Once the two shared the same branch, it did not mean they were constantly together, or even together on a frequent basis. In fact, the two are in the same brigade, but are not often together.

"We've been married for a little over seven years and have spent about four years of it apart," Elizabeth said.



Capt. Aaron Martin offers to help his wife Capt. Elizabeth Martin down from the roof of a Blackhawk helicopter



This photograph was taken by Alfred Eisenstaedt for Life Magazine on Victory in Europe day, 1945. Happy Valentines Day.

Couple on joint deployment

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

BALAD AIR BASE — Deployments can place family members in unique situations, and require them to find creative ways to stay connected.

This is an experience Air Force Staff Sgts. Craig and Millie Nordman have gone through twice before, but this deployment has been much different since they deployed to Balad Air Base together.

Both Airmen are wrapping up a four-month deployment with the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron. Craig is deployed as a heavy equipment operator and Millie is deployed as an engineer journeyman.

The joint deployment came as a surprise to the couple, who have been married for four and a half years.

"I never thought we would deploy to the same base together," she said. "I was told it would never happen. When I found out I was going to Balad in June, I told my supervisor my husband was already going there. They said it was OK and I would be going as well."

Sergeant Craig Nordman said, "I liked the idea; I thought it was cool. I was interested in seeing what she does while she is deployed."

Sergeant Millie Nordman left Davis-Monthan Air Force Base's 335th Civil Engineering Squadron and

arrived to Balad a few weeks before her husband, so she was able to tell him what to expect.

"Getting here first, I was able to tell him what the squadron and base were like," she said. "I told him what to bring and what not to bring."

Being deployed together has its ups and downs according to the Nordmans.

"It is better being deployed together for many reasons," she said. "I don't worry as much here. When he deployed the first time, he was not able to call me often; I would hear things on the news and not really know what was going on. This time, I know where he is during alarm

reds and if he is safe."

Craig said, "The alarm conditions can also cause the biggest worries."

"One of the hard parts is that we don't have anyone at home to take care of bills and other things for us," Millie said.

Although the couple is assigned to the same unit, they work in different duty sections, so they don't see one another at work much. But, they make

a point to spend their off-duty time together.

"We have only worked on one project together here," Craig said. "However, we have the same day off and we are always together after work."

Millie Nordman said, "We just hang out and talk about how our days went. We spend time hanging out in the recreation tent playing cards, video games and putt-putt golf."

"It is better being deployed together for many reasons. I don't worry as much here."

Staff Sgt. Millie Nordman

MASH

from Page 1

Complex,” said Benjamin. The Army has general practice clinics in tents scattered throughout the complex.

“We’ll do emergency surgery here, but then move (the patient) to a higher-level facility (in or out of theater),” he said.

An Army special forces medic, who treats Soldiers in combat here, said having the facility nearby “raises the Soldier’s life expectancy.”

“I’m limited what I have with me (on the battlefield),” said the medic, who cannot be named for security reasons.

Although the combat wounded keep the orthopedic and general surgeons here busy, many patients are seen for fitness-related sprains and strains at the orthopedic clinic, said Maj. J.T. Tokish, 447th EMEDS orthopedic surgeon.

Many of his patients are what he calls “bingers”—people who decide to get in shape while deployed without following a proper exercise routine.

“Instead of adopting a proper fitness lifestyle, they go to the gym, and get injured because of overusing their muscles,” Tokish said. “They pay the price.”

“Most of the time I reassure them and teach them how to strengthen their muscles,” he said.

The clinic space also provides room for the clinic’s other services — bioenvironmental, public health, life skills, general, dental, and sick call — to operate in individual offices. McLean, who provides counseling to patients, said this is a benefit from the tents because patients can relax on a cot and talk about the stress they face from combat or deployment.

Although still an expeditionary clinic, the clinic’s M*A*S*H-era days are done.



U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Will Ackerman

Tech. Sgt. Sherri Connerly, 447th Expeditionary Medical Clinic technician, cleans a wound on Spc. Michael Harold, 755th Adjutant General Postal at Sather Air Base. The Soldier was one of the first patients seen at the clinic.

709th remembers fallen comrade

Story by Sgt. Dennis Gravelle

138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL — At a packed theater on Logistical Staging Area Diamondback, Military Police Battalion Soldiers of the 709th honored a fallen comrade and friend.

Pfc. Kasper Dudkiewicz also known as “Duck” died from injuries sustained during a traffic accident while en route to Al Rabian Iraqi Police Headquarters.

“We are here to honor a great Soldier, a warrior, a great person,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Blair, commander, 709th MP Battalion.

Dudkiewicz was assigned to the 511th MP Company, 91st MP Battalion, Fort Drum, N.Y., and was stationed at Forward Operating Base Marez supporting the 709th during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

While serving as a gunner, Dudkiewicz provided security on some of the most dangerous roads in Iraq, allowing Coalition Forces safe and secure passage.

“He knew everything about his mission and was always there to offer assistance to any Soldier.”

Lt. Col. Thomas Blair

Dudkiewicz was one Soldier that never complained about anything, loved life and always made people smile no matter what the situation was.

“He was more like a sergeant than a private first class,” said Blair.

“He knew everything about his mission and was always there to

offer assistance to any Soldier, about anything,” he said.

Dudkiewicz enlisted in the Army in 2003 and has been awarded the Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Korean Defense Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the Army Service Medal.

He is survived by his wife, Army Sgt. Katie Marie Parker of Fort Lewis, Wash., and his mother, Maria Camacho, of Maagilco, Guam.

Service held for members of Joint Contracting Command



Army Maj. Christopher J. Lackovic, places a folded flag while Navy Cmdr. Walter A. Blaney reads “The Watch.”

Story and photo by Tom Clarkson

Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

BAGHDAD —With the dignified solemnity, so much a part of military memorials, a fully-packed chapel in Baghdad’s International Zone paid homage to deceased comrades.

Barbara Heald and Lt. Cdr. Keith Taylor were killed by an insurgent’s rocket on, Jan. 29, 2005. Both were members of the Joint Contracting Command-Iraq, which at that time, was housed in what is commonly called the “The Palace” in the IZ.

The tragic incident occurred on the first day of Maj. Gen. John M. Urias’ command of the JCC-I. Accordingly he commenced the memorial with testimony to their exceptional character and dedication to service, recounting numer-

ous stories regarding their work in Iraq. He capped his remarks by reading from a letter he had received from Heald’s brother that spoke of the “endearing value” of her service and life.

U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalizad spoke of how the “terrorists’ attempts to stifle democracy have failed ... but at a tragic price (as) Barbara and Keith answered the call and made a difference.”

He told the gathering that it was imperative that all “honor them for what they were - great Americans and good friends of Iraq.”

Heald’s co-worker, Naomi Olin, spoke of grieving for Taylor’s infant son who would never know his father, and for her friend who was killed barely two years before her retirement.

Air Force Lt. Col. Charles A. Hurry recounted Heald’s time as an Air Force captain in his branch of

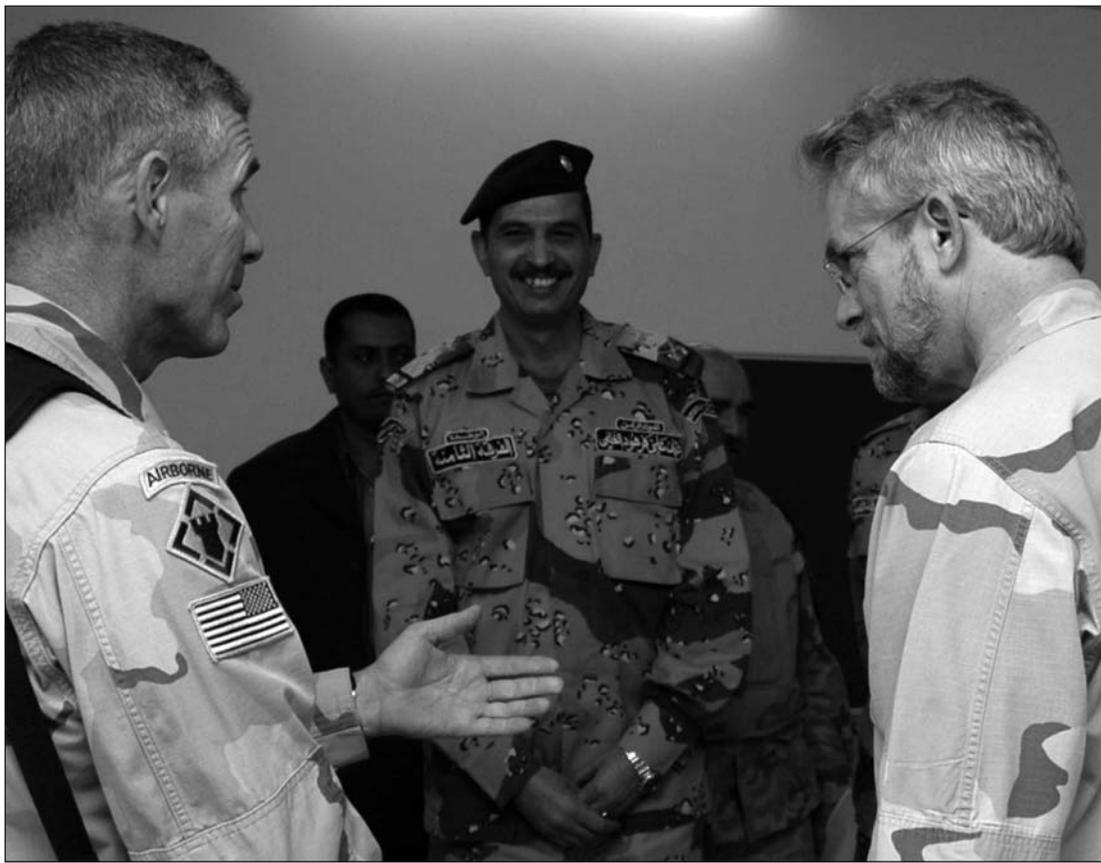
service before becoming a civil service professional and being one of the first to volunteer to come to Iraq as a contracting officer. He had been the person who had driven her to the airport in the United States when she deployed on her third, and fateful, tour of duty in-country.

Don Buchanan, Taylor’s friend and whose desk was next to his, spoke of how the two had often joked and enjoyed their combat zone work and companionship.

The memorial culminated with the slow, somber folding of the U.S. flag, and its respectful presentation to the candle altar.

A slow, grave salute was rendered by Army Maj. Christopher J. Lackovic while Navy Cmdr. Walter A. Blaney read “The Watch” — a poem metaphorically relieving a Sailor from his long and arduous duties on watch.

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



At the new 8th Iraqi Infantry Division Headquarters, (left to right), Col. Larry McCallister, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South; Maj. Gen. Farhoud, Iraqi Army; and Howard Strickley, Gulf Region Division, enjoyed meeting their counterparts from other countries at the facility's official opening ceremony.

8th Iraqi Army HQ opens

Story and photo by Suzanne M. Fournier

BASE CAMP ADDER — The Iraqi Army's 8th Infantry Division moved into their \$2.4 million new compound at Camp Echo here.

Maj. Gen. Farhoud, 8th Division commander welcomed Polish Maj. Gen. Piotr Czervinski, Commander of the Coalition Multi-National Division — Central South, Col. Larry McCallister, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region South commander, and Howard Strickley, director of business management, Gulf Region Division, toured his new facilities recently.

Farhoud pointed out features of each building in the complex, which is laid out in a curved horseshoe pattern to maximize efficiency. Each of the 11 buildings in the complex is designed to support specific staff functions for the management of the four brigades and multiple battalions that protect and defend the five provinces south of Baghdad: Qadisiyah, Wasit, Karbala, Babil and Najaf.

The construction was completed by an Iraqi construction company who hired local Iraqi construction and trade workers. Each building is equipped with its own water, air conditioning, modern plumbing, offices, conference rooms, computers and living quarters.

The 8th Infantry Division has trained with the Polish Army as the Iraqi Army continues steady progress toward defending their own country. There are now 128 Iraqi Army battalions conducting combat operations. Fifty-four are in the lead in defending their people and protecting the process of democracy.

The task of equipping an Army to function effectively requires modern installations such as headquarters and garrisons. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for constructing military facilities and working with Coalition Forces who are equipping and training the Iraqi military leaders and soldiers.

The Corps of Engineers has a long history as the engineering and construction managers of U.S. military construction projects for the Army and Air Force installations and deploying forces around the world. Now after building facilities for their own military forces since 1794, the Corps is managing construction for their new allies, the Iraqi Army.

Iraqi Soldiers take an oath of allegiance to the state of Iraq and the new Constitution. These forces are increasingly taking the lead in operations and responsibility for the security of their nation and as they stand up, Coalition Forces will stand down.

Iraqi highway patrol improves effectiveness

Story by Suzanne M. Fournier

BASE CAMP ADDER — The Iraqi Highway Patrol was a little known entity under the former regime. It was a small paramilitary-trained police force of approximately 600 officers, driving junk vehicles and operating out of dilapidated buildings.

Since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began reconstruction in Iraq two years ago, the Iraqi Highway Patrol has made major advancements.

Ten times more men and women now serve as Highway Patrol officers. They are trained by the U.S. Army Special Forces and military police on modern apprehension, detection, security and law enforcement to defend and secure the roads of Iraq.

The junk vehicles are gone, replaced by a fleet of new 4-door blue and white Chevrolet pickups, outfitted with blue and red lights, radio systems and spot-

lights.

Also disappearing are the dilapidated buildings. Safe, secure and professional highway patrol facilities are under construction or already occupied.

Thirty-three Iraqi Highway Patrol stations and six border-entry barracks are needed to provide sufficient law enforcement along Iraq's six major highways. The stations are being built to ensure that continuous sections of road remain secure until the entire network is completed. The goal is to have an Iraqi Highway Patrol station every 31 to 37 miles, starting in the south where three of six stations on Iraqi Highway One are complete and the other three will be finished next month.

The Iraqi Highway Police have two new \$2 million buildings in Fawwa in Qadisiyah Province and Al-Shaiba in Basrah Province.

The two-story buildings will house 160 officers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mosul center makes electricity reliable

MOSUL — A new electrical system control center has been built here.

The \$4.9 million Northwest Regional Control Center will help improve the reliability of electricity in six governorates in northern Iraq.

Local Iraqis built the center, while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversaw the project.

— Polli Barnes Keller

Hospital gets upgrade

BAQUBAH — After a year under construction, the Baqubah General Hospital renovation is complete.

The hospital includes a new incinerator, water treatment system, plumbing and sewer system upgrade, architectural renovation, emergency backup generator and properly working elevators.

The facility is a 331-bed hospital with surgery and consultation service clinic that sees 400 to 500 patients daily.

— Claude D. McKinney

University upgrade underway in Baghdad

BAGHDAD — Al Barz Company of Baghdad has the \$980,000 contract for the repair and rehabilitation of Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad Province, Rusafa District. Construction started Oct. 27, with a required completion of April 25.

Eighteen Iraqis are on the crew involved with removing old tiles outside, brickwork on the outside walls, cleaning the façade brick work. About 10 percent of the work is completed.

— Polli Barnes Keller

Firestation facelift

BAGHDAD — Parsons Delaware was awarded the \$1.2million contract to construct the Al Benook Fire Station at Adhamiyah in eastern Baghdad.

Construction started Dec. 31, 2004, with a construction completion date of April 30.

The project is 65 percent finished. About 15 Iraqis are working at the site. They are involved with plastering and installing terrazzo tiles, sanitary system pipes and water pipes.

Al Mabani Company is the subcontractor. The three-story structure is 9,956 square feet and features five bays, three for ladder trucks, two for SUVs. It will include a dormitory area for 20 firefighters, dining room for 30, commercial grade kitchenette to feed 40 people, a training room for 20, locker room, a Control Room, and a chief's office. About 100,000 residents will benefit from the fire fighting capabilities this facility will provide.

— Claude D. McKinney

Maternity hospital to be reborn next year

BAGHDAD — Parsons Delaware has the \$11.5million contract to renovate the Karkh Maternity Hospital in Karkh District of Baghdad. Work started Dec. 12, 2004; with a required completion of March 30.

Renovations include the repair of plumbing, increasing the number of toilets and showers, installing an exhaust system to remove unhealthy air, and the installation of a generator system. About 50 Iraqis are on the crew. Construction is 59 percent complete.

— Suzanne Fournier

"This Week in Iraq"

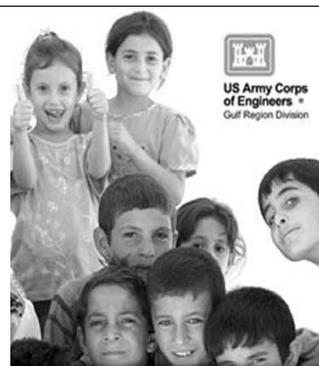
a weekly review of how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is rebuilding Iraq, and improving the quality of life for the next generation.

Saturday & Sunday

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



Freedom Radio 107.7 FM



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

Rebuilding Iraq



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jason T. Bailey

Iraqi construction workers, contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, spread mortar on a wall at the Shinafiyah Primary Health Clinic construction site in Diwaniyah, Jan. 28.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jason T. Bailey

Workers, contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, mix mortar at the Shinafiyah Primary Health Clinic.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jason T. Bailey

An Iraqi construction worker, contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, pours water on a brick wall at the Shinafiyah Primary Health Clinic construction site in Diwaniyah, Jan. 28.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jason T. Bailey

Iraqi construction workers, contracted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, mix mortar at the Shinafiyah Primary Health Clinic construction site in Diwaniyah, Jan. 28.

Handover of Honor

Iraqi Brigade assumes responsibility of



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

Soldiers from the Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 6th Division celebrate after the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division relinquish control of FOB Honor.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class David D. Isakson

A convoy stands by as extra security following the transfer of authority ceremony.

Story by Pfc. Jason Dangel
4th Brigade Combat Team,
4th Infantry Division

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division assumed control of Forward Operating Base Honor from the 4th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team during a transition authority ceremony last week.

The ceremony marked the increased role Iraqi Security Forces are undertaking in Baghdad, and throughout their country in enforcing the sovereign government's rule of law.

"This brigade is responsible for ensuring Iraq's new government here in the International Zone," said Col. Mohammed Wasif, commander of the 5th Brigade, Iraqi Army Division. "We will work day and night to achieve our mission for the new government of Iraq."

FOB Honor is in the palace district of central Baghdad and housed the former Ba'athist regime prior to the war. Coalition strikes destroyed five of the 20 buildings of the former regime headquarters. Only 15 buildings still stand as Iraqi forces transition with the 4th BCT "Cobra" to make FOB Honor their new home.

Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, were the first to move into FOB Honor in October, followed by the 3rd Inf. Division's 3rd Squadron, 8th Cavalry in January.

The 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div., arrived in Baghdad in December.

"The turnover of FOB Honor demonstrates the increased capability of Mohammed's brigade to assume the responsibility and security of Baghdad," said Col. Michael Beech, commander of the 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"The 5th Brigade has earned a reputation of being a tough well-trained and well-led unit," he said.

"Today is another great step for the future of Iraq," said Maj. Gen. Hatim Hazya Al-Duleimi, commander, 6th Iraqi Army Div.

"Today we lay a new brick in the building of our Army," he said. "We are committed to the citizens of this country, this army and will defend our homeland from the threats of the terrorists as we bring freedom back to this country."

The FOB Honor transition marks continued improvement in the Iraqi Security Forces' capability over the past year, as it continues to assume more responsibility in the battlespace throughout the country, said Beech.

"With the seating of the new government and the increased capability of the Iraqi Security Forces, I'm very optimistic about the future of Iraq," said Beech. "I think 2006 is going to be a great year for Iraq."

r

International Zone forward operating base



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class David D. Isakson

Col. Michael Beach, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division commander, left, and Col. Mohammad Wasif, Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 6th Division commander, raise the Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 6th Division flag.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

Col. Michael F. Beech, and Col. Mohammed Wasif, raise the Iraqi Army 5th Brigade, 6th Division flag at FOB Honor.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

Col. Michael F. Beech, presents a key to Forward Operating Base Honor to Col. Mohammed Wasif.



U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Jason Dangel

Soldiers from the Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 6th Division stand in formation at the Forward Operating Base transfer of authority ceremony.

5th
assumed
e Honor
th
transfer of

asing
ertaking
country,
ment's

protect-
the
hammad
ade, 6th
rk day
or the

dict of
ormer
U.S. air
ildings
. Today
rces
as" and

l
the first
er 2003,
s 6th
2004.
ved in

mon-
Col.
reater
adad,"
der 4th

reputa-
and

ward for
Mubdar
nding

e build-
e com-
ry and
es from
bring

s the
ji
e past
re bat-
aid

vern-
of Iraqi
ic," said
e a great

The making of Marine NCOs

2nd Marine Logistics Group graduates 25



Cpl. Jonathan T. Bowman sheaths his sword after drilling with other Marines during a Corporals Course here Jan. 24. More than 25 Marines from different sections within 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) received their Corporals Course certificates here Jan. 25.



Cpl. Claudia L. Ramirez awaits orders from the Corporals Course chief instructor Gunnery Sgt. Thomas E. Clough at Camp Taqaddum Jan. 24.

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

CAMP TAQADDUM — More than 25 Marines from different sections within 2nd Marine Logistics Group (Forward) received their Corporals Course certificates here Jan. 25.

At garrison bases, Corporals Course is held over a two-week period and comprised of uniform inspections, sword manual, drill, physical training and numerous hours of academic instruction.

It is not much different here in Iraq, according to Gunnery Sgt. Thomas E. Clough, 8th Engineer Communications Detachment commander and chief instructor for the Corporals Course.

“We do the same things here,” Clough said. “Except here we don’t have the same uniform inspections because all we have are our [camouflage utilities].”

Other minor differences include drill, PT and the length of the course, according to Clough.

“It is hard to get Marines away from their shops,” Clough admitted. “We shortened the course from 14 to eight days because we all have demanding jobs that directly support our mission here.”

Although the schedule was shortened, this did not mean all the materials pertinent to the course were not covered, according to Cpl. Roy G. White, data network specialist with Marine Wing Communication Squadron-38, 2nd MLG (Fwd), and Corporals Course graduate.

“We were here everyday from [7 a.m. – 8 p.m.]. Although the schedule was intense, I learned a lot,” White said. “There is a lot that goes into this course than what I originally thought.”

In the rear, uniform inspections are part of the schedule, where Marines are judged by their attention to detail. Here, there are few changes to the uniform inspections, according to Sgt. Matthew A. Phelps, who was one of three squad instructors working with the junior Marines during the course.

“We don’t have the [service A uniforms] here,” Phelps said. “All we have are our cammies, which we have been wearing everyday since we have been here. And because we wear them all day we don’t try to focus as much attention on uniforms compared to other things such as drill or periods of instruction.”

Some Marines, like Cpl. Richard S. Jackel, believe the class here will benefit them here in Iraq and when they return to the states.

“Because we are in Iraq, we not only learned how to become leaders in the Corps but also learned time and stress management,” said Jackel, who is an engineer with MWCS-38, 2nd MLG (Fwd). “Corporals Course is vital to becoming a great leader. Setting the right example through consistency is the best thing some of us have learned here.”



Marines stand in formation during a Corporals Course here Jan. 24.

Man's best friend sniffs out trouble

Story and photo by
Sgt. Ann Drier

363rd Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY — Staff Sgt. Archie, 67th Engineering Detachment, 16th Engineer Brigade, greets everyone with warmth and friendliness.

His tail wags and his tongue lolls from his mouth as he places both huge paws on his visitor's chest and gives them a dead-on look in the eyes.

Staff Sgt. Figo greets her visitors with a serious stare, more aloof than her counterpart, but still friendly. She'll gladly accept a pat on the head for a moment or two before turning to more important business.

Three years ago, the 67th Engineering Detachment adopted the British Army program of using dogs to find explosives and contraband.

Most of the dogs are found in pounds or donated to the program. They undergo a training period of about three months before being placed with a handler.

"I went to train under Roger Tredwell, who's been doing this kind of thing for 30 years," said Sgt. Daniel Broda, of 67th Engineering Detachment, handler for Staff Sgt. Figo. "I didn't see my dog for quite a while. He can judge in one week which dog to team up with each handler. He makes the choice based on personality and temperament of both the dog and the handler. Most of the time it works out."

"Figo is a Lab and Springer Spaniel mix, so she's a bit high strung. She's very independent," said Broda. "It took quite a while before we were able to bond. I didn't think it was going to work out because she wouldn't listen. Then one day it just clicked. Now we're inseparable. She goes with me everywhere."



Staff Sgt. Figo watches as Staff Sgt. Archie practices his paces.

The pair has been together for almost two years now, sharing the same sleeping space and daily routine. "It feels weird when she's not with me, like not having my weapon with me. Our dogs are actually more important than our weapons because we can't do our mission without them," said Broda.

Each dog is awarded rank in the Army system and receives special treatment by the system and their handler.

"The dogs are always one step higher in rank than their handler," said Broda.

"If a handler abuses the animal, they are subject to UCMJ action.

If I get promoted, she gets promoted as well."

The dogs, usually Labrador retrievers or a Labrador mix, are given rigorous training and their relationship with their handlers is very important. When working, they wear a special harness. They know that when wearing it, it's time to work. "They won't work without

"Our dogs are actually more important than our weapons because we can't do our mission without them,"

Sgt. Daniel Broda

their harnesses," said Broda.

And work they do. Staff Sgt. Figo has been at the Victory complex almost two years. During that time, she has found many caches of weapons and stockpiles of munitions. She was awarded a Bronze Star and a Combat Action badge during her deployment to Iraq.

"Engineer specialized search dog teams are definitely a force multiplier for all combat and combat support operations and have proven their ability and worth during multiple military operations. The dog teams are highly-trained professionals and perform every mission in a superior manner. From a command perspective, they are invaluable," said Brig. Gen. Robin Timmons, commander, 16th Engineer Brigade.

For now, the dogs and the handlers share the routine, and the dangerous missions, as special teams — keeping the forces on the Victory complex safe.



Lt. Col. Richard O'Connor talks with his son Pfc. Ryan O'Connor at FOB Gabe. Lt. Col. O'Connor met his son for a birthday surprise and was able to spend a few hours with him for a lunch celebration.

Celebration! Father meets son for his birthday

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

BALAD — Perhaps some of the most important issues for most Soldiers deployed for long periods of time is their absence at normal holiday dinners and spending birthdays with family.

To be able to spend quality time with a loved one is something special.

That was the case when Lt. Col. Richard O'Connor, commander, support squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment visited his only son.

"I wanted to surprise my son on his birthday, and give him something to remember while he is deployed in Iraq," said Lt. Col. O'Connor.

Lt. Col. O'Connor boarded a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter at FOB Sykes and headed to greet his son, Pfc. Ryan O'Connor, 4th Infantry Division, 168th Combined Arms Battalion at FOB Gabe.

When the Blackhawk landed, the crew chief opened the side door and Lt. Col. O'Connor took off his seat belt and stepped out. About 30 feet away his son stood tall with a few Soldier friends. Pfc. O'Connor came to attention and saluted his dad for the very first time. His dad snapped to attention and saluted his son back.

"I have always wanted to salute my dad, and it was awesome," said Pfc. O'Connor.

They boarded the Blackhawk and flew to FOB Anaconda for a birthday lunch and were able to spend four hours together.

Pfc. O'Connor grew up as an Army dependent, and followed the same career path his father has for 29 years.

"I have a lot of pride in my dad and what he does. It was my duty to join," said Pfc. O'Connor. "It's a rewarding job and I like it a lot."

Because they are deployed to separate FOBs, they have not seen each other since September when Lt. Col. O'Connor was home from Iraq on leave.

"I am just honored that I had the opportunity to come and see him before I left to go home," said Lt. Col. O'Connor. "It was honorable, and emotional to see him here, it's just awesome," he said.

As his dad prepares to leave Iraq and head home, Pfc. O'Connor is just beginning his tour, which began Nov. 30. Pfc. O'Connor serves as a scout for his unit and his father is very proud of his son for joining the Army.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of what he's done, to follow in his dad's footsteps, how much prouder can you be?" said Lt. Col. O'Connor.

"Both of us are serving our nation during a time of war. I am proud that he wears the uniform," said Lt. Col. O'Connor.

After their celebration they flew back to FOB Gabe. They gave each other a hug and Ryan saluted his dad once more.

Lt. Col. O'Connor boarded the Blackhawk and waved to his son as the crew chief shut the door.

Don't fall victim to an IED.

Create a safe standoff when halted.

STAY ALIVE

0080 IEDs KILL

HEALTH & FITNESS

Mental health is not mental illness

By Eric D. Cipriano
Mental Health Service

What is good mental health? Many people confuse the term mental health with "mental illness."

People with good emotional health are in control of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. They feel good about themselves and have good relationships. They can keep problems in perspective, not letting manageable problems develop into larger uncontrollable events. Stress is normal, but excess stress can be damaging and even deadly.

It's important to remember that people with good emotional health sometimes have emotional problems or mental illness. Mental illness often has a physical cause such as a chemical imbalance in the brain. Stress and problems with family, work or school can sometimes trigger mental illness or make it worse. However, people with good emotional health have learned ways to cope with stress and problems.

Many emotionally healthy people have good people around them, allowing them to talk out their problems – often, with a family member, loved one, friend, co-worker, or supervisor. Good leaders understand the importance of talking and taking care of their people when they have problems. Asking for help is a sign of good judgment. It should never be seen as a weakness – good decision making requires us to know when to ask for help.

Unit chaplains can provide many people with a good source of support. They know when they need to seek help from their health care provider or a counselor.

A common emotional symptom of frustration and stress is anger. People are sometimes not aware of what causes their anger, how much anger they are holding inside or how to express anger. Certain events or actions by other people can make you angry. Also, many little things can build up to make you feel life is unfair.

If you find yourself becoming increasingly irritable or taking unhealthy risks, like drinking too much or abusing drugs, you may have a problem dealing with anger. It's very important to talk with your doctor, health care professional, chaplain, medical corpsman or a counselor about getting help.

Emotional Rescue

— **Learn to convey your feelings in appropriate ways.** It's important to let people close to you know when something is bothering you. Keeping feelings of sadness or anger inside takes extra energy and can cause problems in your relationships and at work or school.

— **Think before you act.** Emotions can be powerful. But before you are carried away by your emotions and say or do something you might regret, consider the possible positive and negative consequences.

— **Strive for balance in your life.** Don't focus all your energy on problems at work, at school or at home. Focus on positive things in your life. Make time for things you enjoy.

— **Take care of your physical health.** Your physical health can affect your emotional health. Take care of your body by exercising regularly for minimum of 30 minutes three days a week, drinking plenty of water throughout the day, eating healthy meals and getting 8 to 9 hours sleep. Don't abuse drugs or alcohol. Physical health is a vital part of mental health. Remember, your head is connected to your body.

— **Don't work to exhaustion.** While there may be occasions to work long hours in our current environment or be involved in continuous operations – working until exhaustion is the precursor to illnesses, poor morale, and mental health problems.

— **Go see a counselor.** Most people benefit from short-term and brief problem-solving oriented counseling. When seen as an opportunity, it is beneficial to a person, his family, friends, and co-workers. Counseling should not be seen as a "career ender" – it typically does not cause changes in security clearances, especially when it is self-referred, and for family, martial, and/or grief counseling.

— **Get to know your mental health care resources before you need them.** The Iraq theater has many mental health providers and resources.

CHAPLAIN'S TALK

Making the 'Hard Right' choices

Chaplain (Lt. Col.)
Robert Meyer
Joint Area Support
Group - International
Zone



Chaplain Meyer

An eminent naturalist in one of his text books describes a marine plant which grows from a depth of 150 to 250 feet and floats on the breakers of the western ocean. The stem of this plant according to the naturalist is less than an inch thick and yet it thrives and grows and holds its own against the fierce pressures of the breakers.

The ocean never ceases its relentless assault against this marvelously resilient plant. The breakers hammer away and yet the little plant endures.

What is the secret of this seemingly slender, frail plant? What is the key to its remarkable endurance and resistance of the pressures that are brought to bear upon it? The naturalist goes on to say the slender plant endures the fury of nature because its roots are firmly anchored in ocean bottom rocks. Its security and success is in its ability to grasp visible and immovable rocks at the bottom of the sea.

So it is in our own lives when

the pressures of life seem to bear down on us. All of nature and Scripture resound in concert that God is our constant source of strength when life's difficulties come our way.

The Bible records the remarkable saga of the prophet Daniel who faced incredible pressures to compromise his faith and integrity. Early in his career while serving in Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian court, Daniel makes a remarkable stand for religious principle. Daniel 1:3 records, "But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine and asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. Now God had caused the official to show favor and sympathy to Daniel, but the official told Daniel, I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned you food and drink."

What was the rest of the story to Daniel's dilemma and ethical stand? Daniel along with his three friends didn't eat the king's food or drink the king's wine. Consequently, in choosing the "hard right," God blesses

Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1:17), "To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds."

By extension and application, we who serve here in Iraq face numerous pressures everyday. For some, being away from home is difficult. Family separation coupled with long working hours, and mental and physical fatigue can often deplete our spiritual vigor. Yet, we must take the time to stay physically fit. Spiritual fitness may include attending a religious service, fellowship with those of like faith, prayer, meditation, and Bible study. By doing so, our spiritual roots are tapping into a well of strength and support that will allow us to endure.

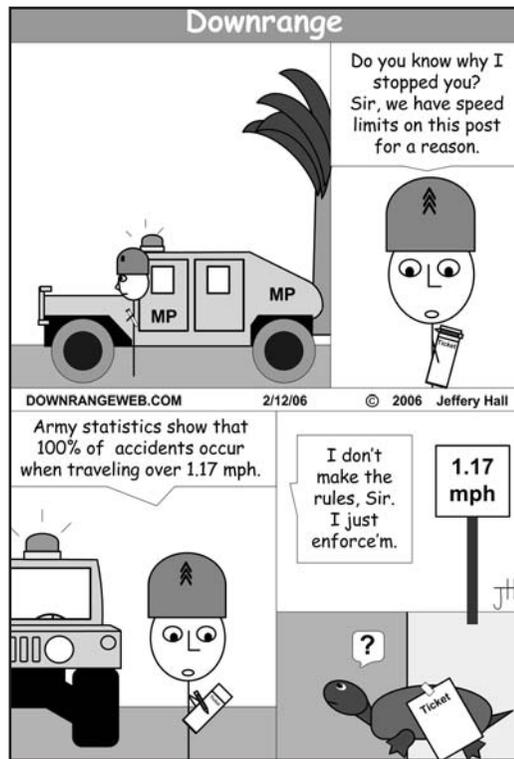
Finally, each of us must conduct ourselves above reproach. Don't let your personal and religious standards of conduct slip or ebb away. Our mission here requires the very best people, you and I, to do the "hard right" every day. And yes, the "hard right" includes making a conscious effort to do our routine daily duties as best as we can.

You will bless others and God will bless you in the process ... no matter what the pressures!



Food center welcomed: Capt. Ben Simms, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.; Saleh Husen Alwan, Diyarrah imam; and Capt. Majed Hady Al-Shemevy, a company commander in the 8th Iraqi Army Division, officially open a new food distribution center in Diyarrah. "We hope this is the beginning of many openings and celebrations for us," said Alwan.

Scimitar Slapstick



Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree

Shhhh!

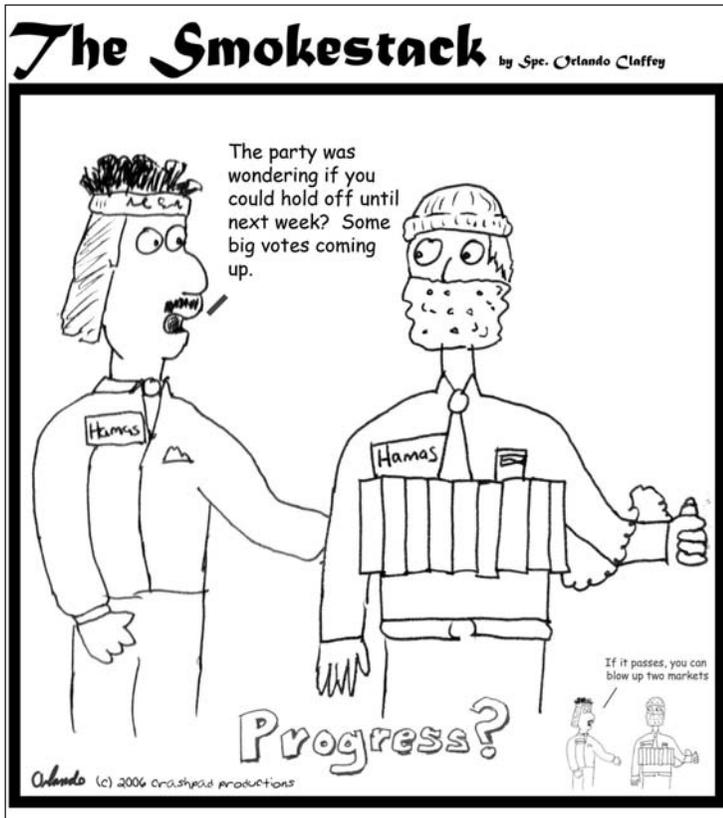


Operational Security...

OPSEC

Keep cell phone and email comms free of sensitive information.

You don't know who's listening.



Fightin' Words

1	2	3				4	5
6						7	
		8	9	10	11		
12	13						
14						15	
		16				17	
18	19			20	21		
			22				

ACROSS

- The 11th sign of the zodiac
- Abbreviation for mountain
- Groups of atoms with a net electric charge
- Succulent, voluptuous
- To flatter sincerely
- "If it's in the game." video games
- Hi-___
- A type of duck
- The 1st sign of the zodiac

DOWN

- Bewildering or perplexing
- Keeping it on the down low, ____, abbreviation
- To become a unit or team
- Baby blue beret troops
- Hit this button to e-mail some one
- Canada's national capital
- Actress ___ Long
- Army or Marine E-5, abbreviation
- Morning time, abbreviation
- 1980s supermodel ___ Macpherson
- Jack Nicholson movie, ___ *Good ___ It Gets.*
- Abbreviation for Army regulation.
- Atomic number three, abbreviation.

Fightin' Words solution from Feb. 3, 2006

C	A	N	A	D	I	A	N
O	R	R		I		B	E
R	C	A		V	I	E	W
N	O		P	E	G		Y
E		B	C			Y	O
R	U	S	S	I	A		R
S	S			P	U	C	K
	A	L	T	O		J	

[Counter Radio-controlled IED Electronic Warfare]

CREW

Treat Us Right
We'll Help Save Your Life

Soldiers at their best



An Iraqi Army Soldier aims his rifle after successful battle movements.

Rakkasans help develop Iraqi Soldier combat skills

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

SAMARRA — The Iraqi Army in Samarra has been working closely with 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Soldiers, also known as Rakkasans, in training designed to bolster the proficiency of the new, reconstituted army.

The regimen consists of weapons training, map reading, general orders and basic first aid that is taught to the officers and noncommissioned officers in the military. The higher ranking officials will then teach the classes to other Soldiers.

“It empowers their leaders and gives them the experience and knowledge to control their Soldiers,” said Capt. Christopher Swint, the assistant Military Transition Training team chief, 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

After the classroom and hands-on training, the Iraqi Army Soldiers’ level of understanding is tested with patrols in the streets of Iraq. The Soldiers search homes and arrest detainees in a quest to eliminate anti-Iraqi forces.

“The word independent is important - it means they do this without Coalition force help,” Swint said.

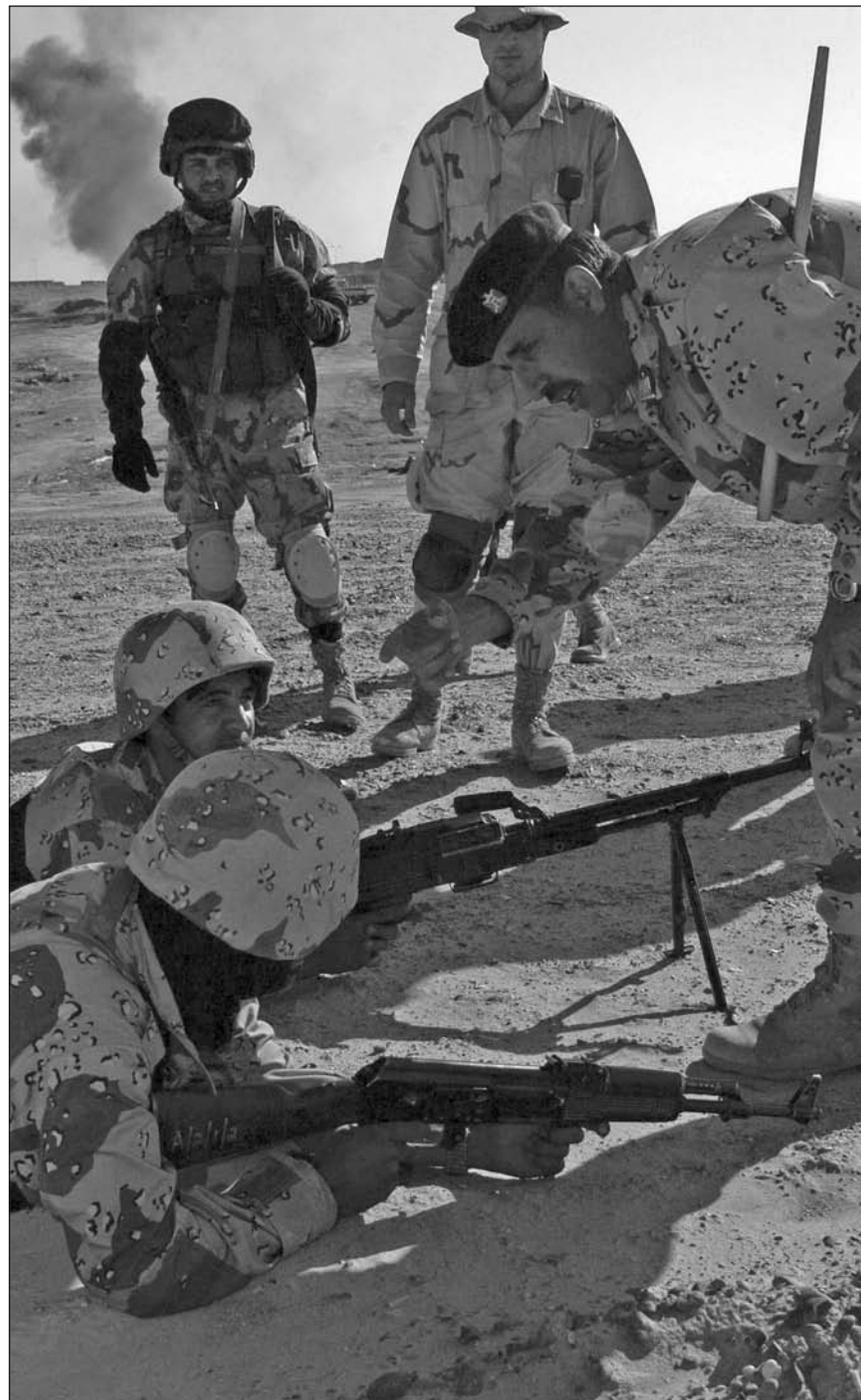
Every unit is evaluated once a month. Categories tested include training level, sustainability, logistics ability, communication, leadership and operations. The evaluation for each unit can vary slightly since the testing is devised in conjunction with the Iraqi Army’s commander.

“We don’t force a particular way of doing things because in the end it’s not our Army,” said Swint. “So we evaluate the end-state, not the procedures.”

Ultimately, the Iraqi government has to accept the unit as ready to take over operations based on the evaluations.

Regardless of how well the unit does on evaluations, IA Soldiers struggle to prove themselves to their communities. IA Soldier’s have to wear civilian clothes while at home because they often become targets of anti-Iraqi forces.

“Soldiers in America are heroes, but that pride is not established here yet,” said Swint. “But it will be.”



Iraqi Army Sgt. Maj. Hatem Ashmn Kahlef, right, instructs two infantry Soldiers in battle drill movements with a machine gun.

MITT team Soldiers are working to help the Iraqi Army gain that history and respect as Iraq’s heroes. The team here in Samarra feels that the training is a step in that direction for the Iraqi Army.

“They perform guard duty well and their base is safe. They operate a machine gun properly, and the enemy learns that they are lethal,” said Swint. “These basic skills hold a small amount of worth alone, but combined they create a force to be reckoned with.”



Iraqi Army Soldiers practice sector fire.

Soldiers get down and dirty

Army engineers fill void left by blasts

Story and photos by
Spc. Orlando Claffey
Scimitar staff writer

BAGHDAD — Running parallel to the Tigris River in south Baghdad, Route Red Wings is a hotbed of insurgent activity and the scars can be seen all along the 5 mile road.

One of the most dangerous in Baghdad, it is a mud-slicked path dotted by deep craters from past improvised explosive devices, the largest making the road impassable.

Soldiers from the Equipment Support Platoon, 62nd Engineer Battalion (Heavy), were charged with refilling the holes left by several deadly IEDs on Jan. 25.

Their efforts focused on the largest hole, left by a shaped charge that tore through an Abrams tank the night before. Straddling an irrigation canal and flanked by farms and fields, the crater was more than six feet deep and 20 feet across.

“The first step is the clear out the debris,” said 1st Lt. David Korman, the EQ platoon leader. “Once we clear the area, we refill the hole.”

Using a Bobcat, the engineers pushed

the mud and dirt back into the hole, then poured gravel in to even out the surface and prepare it for concrete.

“It should only take about two hours,” said Korman, “depending on the hole.” For this hole, it took the team more than eight hours, using three cement trucks to cap the top of the crater.

It was a longer day for 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. The unit cleared the road 24 hours prior to the engineers’ arrival, walking 5 miles from the nearest check-point to secure the road.

“It took six hours to clear,” said Capt. Tim Gittins, the battalion commander. The Soldiers checked for secondary devices or wires, then provided security through the night to deter insurgents from placing more explosives.

“It is important to repair these holes,” said Gittins. “After an IED goes off, it is really easy to dig another one in the same spot. Now, they would have to break up the concrete. We would know if they did that.”

Once the concrete is poured, the Soldiers keep the area secured for up to 18 hours, to make sure no one tampers with the soft material. “We stay until the concrete hardens,” said Gittins.



Spc. Matthew Saffell rakes concrete with a shove.



Engineers from the Equipment Support Platoon, 62nd Engineer Battalion (Heavy) dump gravel over the muddy surface filling a crater left behind by an IED blast.



A track from an Abrams tank lies on the side of the road. A shaped charge IED blew debris more than 30 yards away.

Enter the Dragon

Chuck Norris influences Army captain to kick butt

Story and photos by
Sgt. Susan Redwine

159th Combat Aviation Brigade

LSA ANACONDA — Hiiyah!!

For one officer, deployment is a perfect chance to refine his martial arts skills, and to teach others about the martial arts.

Capt. A.C. Wiley, battle captain, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, has a passion for the martial arts - he has a 3rd degree black belt in Goju Ryu Karate, a 3rd degree black belt in Jujika Jujutsu and a 1st degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do - and a passion for passing on his knowledge of the martial arts. He teaches Karate four times a week at the Balad West MWR center's aerobics room.

"I'll continue teaching until I can no longer teach," Wiley said. "But I'll continue studying and learning until I can no longer learn, which means I'll probably be dead."

Wiley said his interest in the martial arts began at age six, when he saw his first Chuck Norris movie. "It just looked cool," he said.

His interest didn't waiver until he was finally able to talk his parents into letting him take classes as a young teen. Now, he is an expert in two different schools of martial arts and studies several others to help develop specific skills.

Wiley said he studies Tae Kwon Do to improve kicks, Judo for throws and Kenpo for hand speed. He said he's also become more interested in Modern Army Combatives for ground skills and plans to study Brazilian JiuJitsu when he returns from deployment for ground skills.

"The first thing I do when I move to a new place is get out the phone book and open up the martial arts section," he said. He then visits as many schools as he can, just to get a feel for atmosphere of each so he can either become involved in the school, or at least be able to recommend one to prospective students.

However, studying the martial arts is just one of Wiley's interests. Teaching is also a passion of his.

"I thought about teaching after the first year [of studying martial arts]," he said. "I knew it would take awhile, but knew I enjoyed it and wanted to pass it along.

"Teaching is the best way to learn something," Wiley said.

"You've gotta learn it to know it and relearn it to teach it."

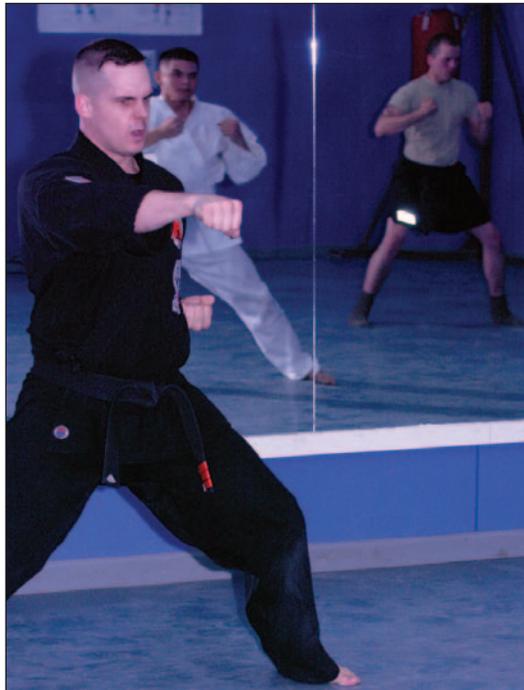
Wiley said he had his first regular teaching job while in flight school in Alabama, but has taught on and off since he first began learning Karate.

Any time he has taught Karate, he has done it as a volunteer, but a long-term goal is to eventually have his own full-time school, he said.

"It's quite a ways down the road, but it's a goal," he said.

When he found out the 159th was deploying, Wiley said he started thinking of the possibility of offering Karate classes.

"I wanted something to do," he said. "I wanted to share the art and personally felt I



Capt. A.C. Wiley, battle captain for 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, teaches Karate at Balad's West MWR facility. Wiley has black belts in three different martial arts.

"I'll continue studying and learning until I can no longer learn, which means I'll probably be dead."

Capt. A.C. Wiley

He said the number of students in the class varies due to operational tempo, but he averages about seven students per class.

Some students have martial arts experience, but most are beginners. Wiley said he's flexible and will spend more or less time on specific techniques depending on the needs of the students.

"It's an excellent class," said class regular Pfc. Isaac Obregon, Company A, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion, 159th Combat



Capt. A.C. Wiley, spends time during his Karate class at Balad's West MWR facility instructing students one-on-one to better address individual skill levels.

needed the experience of learning to run a school.

"I'm hoping that by teaching, I can pass along a love of martial arts to a group of people who may have not gotten into it otherwise. I'm looking to refine my teaching abilities and hope to continue to develop myself as a teacher and a person."

Aviation Brigade. "I love it."

"For this hour and a half, I'm not in Iraq anymore. I'm in his world," Obregon said. "I completely forget about everything that's going on around out there. When I'm here, I just look forward to class. I live from class to class. It's my time to better myself - physically, mentally and spiritually."

Obregon, who has been studying various forms of martial arts since he was three years old, said he had been frequently working out in the gym before finding out about Wiley's class.

He said he discovered the class by poking his head in the door one day after working out.

"Coming to the gym every day wasn't the same as coming here," Obregon said. The workout in the class helps keeps in him shape and flexible for other sports, such as boxing and Muay Thai kickboxing, he added.

Obregon said Wiley one of the best teachers he's had.

"He's a real good role model," Obregon said. "I think he has a lot to do with why I come back. It's not just the class, but the teacher."

2006 Torino Winter Olympics on AFN

Saturday February 11, 2006

0400 Atlantic 2006 Torino Olympic Games: Opening Ceremony
1500 Sports Men's Biathlon
1500 Xtra Women's Hockey
2000 Sports Women's Hockey: USA vs. Switzerland
2000 Xtra Men's Biathlon
2230 Xtra Women's Hockey
2300 Atlantic Luge, Nordic Combined, Figure Skating

Sunday February 12, 2006

0030 Xtra Women's Hockey
0400 Atlantic Luge, Nordic Combined, Figure Skating
0500 Xtra Luge, Nordic Combined, Alpine Skiing, Figure Skating

0800 Xtra Men's Biathlon
1100 Xtra Figure Skating, Freestyle Skiing, Speed Skating, Luge, Alpine Skiing
1500 Xtra Ski Jumping, Figure Skating
1600 Xtra Women's Hockey: USA vs. Switzerland
1830 Xtra Women's Hockey: Canada vs. Russia
2100 Sports Women's Hockey: USA vs. Germany
2200 Xtra Figure Skating, Freestyle Skiing, Speed Skating, Luge, Alpine Skiing
2300 Atlantic: Speed Skating, Cross-country, Luge

Monday February 13, 2006

0200 Atlantic Women's Hockey USA vs. Germany
0300 Atlantic Alpine Skiing, Speed Skating, Ski Jumping, Snowboarding, Luge
0500 Xtra Speed Skating, Cross-country, Luge

1100 Sports Men's Curling, Women's Biathlon, Women's Curling
1100 Xtra Alpine Skiing, Short Track Speed Skating, Ski Jumping, Snowboarding, Luge
1700 Xtra Women's Hockey
2200 Xtra Alpine Skiing, Short Track Speed Skating, Ski Jumping, Snowboarding, Luge

Tuesday February 14, 2006

0000 Atlantic Luge
0100 Xtra Men's Curling
0400 Atlantic Figure Skating, Snowboarding, Speed Skating
0400 Xtra Luge
0530 Xtra Men's Curling
1100 Sports Curling, Biathlon, Luge, Alpine Skiing
1100 Xtra Figure Skating, Snowboarding, Speed

Skating
1500 Xtra Women's Hockey
2230 Sports Women's Hockey: USA vs. Finland

Wednesday February 15, 2005

0100 Xtra Women's Curling
0400 Atlantic Figure Skating, Alpine Skiing, Speed Skating, Luge
1600 Sports Curling
2300 Sports Men's Hockey: USA vs. Latvia

Thursday February 16, 2006

0000 Atlantic Speed Skating, Short Track Speed Skating
0400 Atlantic 2006 Olympic Games: Freestyle Skiing, Luge, Nordic Combined

For more details check

<http://myafn.dodmedia.osd.mil/>