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LIFELINER WEST

"If you want it done, call the 101!"

Volume 2, No. 11 *Deployment Edition*

Q-WEST BASE COMPLEX, IRAQ

March 15, 2006

142nd CSB marks 'One Million' milestone



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Icing flies as the 142nd CSB commanders celebrate reaching the unit's millionth mile of combat logistical patrols.

By Sgt. Rachel A. Brune
Editor

LSA DIAMONDBACK, Iraq – Soldiers of the 142nd Corps Support Battalion celebrated their millionth mile of ground covered in Iraq with a cake ceremony and toasts here March 7.

"The millionth mile is not the end of the line," said Lt. Col. Ronald Green, battalion commander.

Green and his subordinate unit commanders used a saber to cut the cake, before Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment, rolled out of the gates to complete the battalion's millionth mile of combat logistical patrols.

Along the battalion's wall of fame, Pfc. Joseph Hackett, an artilleryman from Blacksburg, Va., put the finishing touches on a new painting depicting an odometer showing one million miles and the date. Hackett, of B/2-5, contributed his unit's mural to the collection in front of battalion headquarters.

Soldiers from each unit under the battalion raised their glasses and made toasts to their units, the Army and to their fellow Soldiers.

Remembered in the toasts was Sgt. Ivan Alarcon, 473rd Quartermaster

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Retail Explosion: New shops add to Q-West Base consumer ops

By Sgt. Patricia Tso
Brigade Multimedia Illustrator

On March 5, a ribbon-cutting ceremony recognized the grand opening of Katar Plaza here at Q-West Base Complex, Iraq.

"I have been waiting over a year for this day to come," said Mehmet Katar, owner of Katar Plaza, minutes before the ceremony was to begin.

During the ceremony, Fatos Sahin, manager, delivered a brief speech to Soldiers who patiently waited for doors to open. Col. James E. Grayson, commander, 153rd Field Artillery (Forward) from Mesa, Ariz., assisted Katar in the ribbon cutting.

The Katar Plaza is an addition to the growing population of retailers, and allows Soldiers to purchase items such as jewelry, fabric, rugs, leather and glassware.

Some of the same items are available at other

locations to include the Troya Turkish Mall, De Ja Vu, Seven Eleven, Red Leg Shop, The Club and Old Bill's General Store; all of which carry their own merchandise. Some of the retailers have been serving Soldiers since they first occupied the base when the war began.

Shops like the Troya Turkish Mall features a Turkish restaurant, which is located near the dining facility, while others, like De Ja Vu, recently extended their business by opening a new barber and beauty shop. The base also has a barber shop where soldiers can get a free haircut which is located next to the Red Leg Shop.

"Soldiers will most likely shop at those closest to their living area," said Captain Jesse Ballenger, Q-West Base Complex retail manager. Ballenger, an Arizona native, ensures both parties of the retail

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Photo by Renee Favors

Col. James E. Grayson, Mehmet Katar and Fatos Sahin cut the ribbon for the opening of Katar Plaza.



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<http://www.dvidshub.net>

Million

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Company, who was killed Nov. 17, 2005, in a vehicular accident in the vicinity of Tal Afar, Iraq.

Soldiers also toasted Cpl. Frank M. Sandoval, B/2-5 artilleryman, who was wounded in action.

"Coming here, I never imagined we'd drive one million miles," said Capt. Thomas Caldwell, battery commander. The Charlotte, N.C., native, explained that although operating gun truck escorts is not a primary function of field artillery, the unit is trained to move from firing point to firing point, so "convoys are what we do."

Bravo's first sergeant has another thought on what has made the unit successful in its eight months in theater.

"Disciplined Soldiers [are] the key to a successful Army. Bravo/2-5 proves that every day," said 1st Sgt. Thomas Parsley, of Lawton, Okla.

The millionth mile combat logistical patrol rolled out of the gates to Forward Operating Base Sykes under the supervision of Staff Sgt. William Willoughby, of Sumter, S.C. Willoughby, a "quiet professional" according to Caldwell, recently assumed duties as CLP commander after several months acting as assistant CLP commander.

"Every time I come out, it's never the same," said Willoughby.

Backing up Willoughby were gunner Sp. Fran Toledo, an artilleryman from Salt Lake City, Utah, and driver Pfc. Eric Ray, an artilleryman from St. Louis, Mo. Although Toledo has three years of service, Ray received his orders for deployment the day he arrived at the unit from advanced individual training, or AIT.

"I just know what training and coming out here is like," said Ray, who has previous driving experience from working on his grandparents' cattle ranch.

Fellow artilleryman-driver, Pfc. Michael Pierce, of Exeter, Maine, used to work as a truck driver before joining the military. He and Ray went through basic training and AIT together, arriving at the unit and deploying together as well.

"It's a difficult mission to explain," said Pierce. "It's changing all the time."

The landscape the battery travels is different than Toledo had expected.

"I thought it would just be desert," said Toledo, who has been a gunner for more than six months on the CLP commander's team. The hardest part of his job is the decision calls he needs to make to respond to security threats, he said.

Toledo is also responsible for communications in his truck.

"I've just been out here for more than six months," said Toledo. "I've learned a lot."



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Pfc. Joseph Hackett, Battery B, 2-5th FA, paints a mural commemorating the 142nd CSB's millionth mile.

Willoughby joined the Army at the age of 26, and has served for four years. This is his second deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"It's a thinking man's game," said Willoughby. He credits his crew with knowing their jobs so well that they taught him what he needed to know as CLP commander.

"If you could have privates as convoy commanders, they could do it," said Willoughby.

Although the different mission has its challenges, the battery commander's troops have adapted and overcome those challenges throughout their deployment.

"As artillery, these guys have adopted this mission," said Caldwell. "They bring pride to the artillery and transportation corps."

Pierce and Ray said they do not mind the change in mission.

"[The mission] is fun," said Ray.

"I think it's a blast. I love it," said Pierce.

Unit cohesion is also a factor in the battery's ability to adjust to the mission.

"Bravo keeps the morale up by being one big family," said Pierce.

"We have a lot of fun together," said Ray.

Toward the end of the ride, Ray inquired if he could give a "shout out" to his parents, Mitch and Kathy Ray, and sister Kristen, of St. Charles, Mo.

"I've never given a shout out before," said Ray.

When asked if he had a message for people back in the United States, Ray replied: "Thanks for your support."

Desert Fox Battalion finds weapons cache

By Sgt. 1st Class Jason Arneson
4-11th Field Artillery Regiment

The 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division Iraqi Army struck another blow recently against the terrorists in the Tigris River Valley.

The Desert Fox Battalion, under the command of Brig. Gen. Ali Mullah, recently conducted multiple operations in the villages of Al Hawd and Sert that resulted in the apprehension of 10 suspected members of anti-Iraqi forces.

These operations were the direct result of local civilians coming forward with information on terrorists.

The first operation consisted of a cordon and search that yielded two detainees, 10 blasting caps, more than 100 sticks of TNT, detonation cord, and 2x155mm, 2x152mm and 1x 130mm artillery rounds.

The cache also yielded large

amounts of small arms ammunition and a vehicle that was being converted for use as a possible vehicle-borne improvised explosive device.

During the second operation, also the direct result of civilian involvement, the 1st Battalion received small arms fire from multiple houses while conducting a cordon and search for a second possible VBIED. The IA soldiers returned fire, utilized their training and detained eight individuals suspected of terrorist involvement.

Along with the detainees, the IA also seized a large quantity of materials used in the production of improvised explosive devices, or IEDs.

These actions continue to demonstrate to both coalition forces and local residents that the Q-West-based Desert Fox Battalion is firmly in control of its battle space and leading the fight in the Tigris River Valley.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Cornelison

Jackpot! These explosives are a part of the cache uncovered by Iraqi Army troops from 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, during a recent operation.

Soldiers get education building learning center

By Rachael Van Horn
KBR LNO

It took 80 sheets of plywood, 80 four-by-sixes, 100 two-by-sixes, 35 six-by-sixes, 40 Soldiers on extra duty and 90 days to build. But even with all the needed material, the new 71st Corps Support Battalion Mendez Learning Center could not have come to fruition without spirit.

The center is open for business, but the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for March 16.

"The colonel and [Command] Sgt. Major Spencer never asked me outright to do any of this," Spc. Marcelo Balboa said. "They just brought me here and asked me to look at this building and tell them what I saw."

What Balboa saw was beyond anyone's imagination or ability to visualize, said Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Spencer, 71st CSB, based on Q-West Base Complex.

"This Soldier truly has been the life behind this project," Spencer said.

The project is a 3,000 square foot learning center that includes four classrooms that seat 24 students and a 50-station computer lab -- all perched atop an old, dilapidated Iraqi concrete masonry building that has also benefited from Balboa's skills.

The Mendez Learning Center was named for Pfc. Antonio Mendez of the 40th Transportation Company, killed October 2005.

The learning center was the brainchild of the 71st leadership who desired an opportunity for their Soldiers to continue to expand their education, even while fighting the global war on terrorism.

The supporting structure for the Mendez Learning Center serves as home to the headquarters for the 71st CSB. But it was in dismal shape upon Spencer's arrival. Before he ever thought about a learning center, Spencer had to make the building at least habitable.

"It was terrible," Spencer said.

Quite by accident, while out and about doing some "sensing sessions"



Photo by 1st Lt. Norman Tidmore

Soldiers work on building the Mendez Learning Center during construction.

at the 305th Quartermaster Company, Spencer noticed some desks and doors that were obviously newly constructed, and he asked who had made them.

Enter Spc. Marcelo Balboa, a family man from Texas, who at 35 followed his son into the military just a short year ago. He now finds himself plying his civilian trade, but in a wholly different way for the Army.

Indeed, the work on the desks and doors was impressive, but what Spencer didn't know was that Balboa received the tasks with nothing more than the raw wood, a saw, a rock and some nails.

With that same tenacity and dedication Balboa, the father of five, began the work toward turning an old Iraqi concrete structure into, easily, the most impressive building on Q-West Base Complex.

The Foundation

A simple desk was how his relationship and eventual attachment to the 71st CSB started, Balboa said. "They just brought me here and asked me to build this desk in the S-1 shop," he said.

That November night, Balboa and his partner throughout the larger project, Cpl. Brad Woolley, worked all night on the desk for the S-1 shop together. After seeing the work, the requests just kept coming, Balboa said.

"They now have me attached to the

71st," said Balboa.

So began Balboa's realization that just because he was in the Army, his days of working with leftovers and odds and ends were not over. That included the people assigned to his team, with whom he would accomplish the project.

"I had Soldiers who had no idea how to use tools or do any of this work," he said. "I had to teach them while we were building the project, how to use the tools. That first day, they cut the cords on the new saw we built."

Indeed, most of the labor provided for all the improvements made at the 71st CSB Headquarters was achieved because someone had misbehaved.

Spencer combined his passion for the complete renovation of the headquarters and the creation of the learning center with his disdain for undisciplined actions and created the perfect work crew for the building party.

"With what these guys learned doing this, they will leave here and never be the same," Balboa said.

With the same determination that he used teaching Soldiers, Balboa created an idea for how the project worked.

Before a piece of wood was laid, and because the space for the building resided on the roof of an existing structure, Balboa had to visualize and plan how much wood he thought he would need and began to build the

learning center "backwards," he said.

"I'm not an educated person," said Balboa. "I just tried to imagine what [materials the building] needed, and I had the forklift put up here on the roof [all the materials] I thought I would need."

Workers didn't even have stairs that first few weeks to bring things up with, they hadn't been built yet. Soldiers used every scrap of wood they could find construct the center, including some "dunnage" four-by-sixes that are normally discarded. The windows are out of discarded Humvee doors and the beams are the gusseted four-by-sixes.

The cement they used was what they could find.

But despite these roadblocks and others such as rain and ruined tools, 90 days later, the center is nearing completion.

It is comprised of not more than \$10,000 of wood, but looks like a log home any self-respecting woodsman could be proud of. Its "lap and gap" siding makes one think of better days.

The building bears the unique marks, in some places of a Soldier's miscalculation, and on others, another Soldier's creativity. Its sturdy desks are in place and nearly ready for students to tap their feet under. Other utilities, such as air conditioners and wiring stand by as a silent testament to "other help" who have declined to be mentioned, but who have had equal pleasure in watching the project develop.

The same structure, built by carpenters in the U.S. would have been upwards of \$50,000 said KBR construction manager, Edward Parham.

But the most value was not in what went into the building, said Balboa. The value is what was realized from the construction of it.

"When I went into the Army, I took the Army values seriously," he said. "This project, whatever becomes of it after I leave, has given me the chance to teach those values to Soldiers while we build."

Retail Explosion

Continued from Page 1

world are content and satisfied.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Services, or AAFES, also has a history here at Q-West Base Complex. The post exchange, or PX, first opened in July 2005 after months of renovation and reconstruction to the building.

"We were supposed to open in June 2005, but the merchandise never made it here," said Ana Cardenas, AAFES Manager, from San Antonio, Texas. Cardenas has seen the PX go from its renovation stage to its present stage and knows what it is like for Soldiers in need.

"Soldiers at the time were overwhelmed to see AAFES," said Cardenas. "They hugged us, kissed us and even offered to help us."

AAFES is working on expanding the PX in the near future to accommodate the Soldiers and civilian workers better.

For now, Soldiers enjoy Subway and Green Bean Coffee, both of which opened a month ago and are located in the vicinity of the PX. Green Bean recently changed its hours and is now open 24 hours.



Photo by Sgt. Patricia Tso

A Soldier browses the merchandise in a clothing store at the Katar Plaza grand opening March 5.

"We plan to arrange for more seating areas," said Ballenger as he pointed to the table and chairs outside Subway.

Residents on Q-West may expect more changes and additions. New shops on the installation are still possibilities for the future.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Brigade
NCO of the Quarter

Staff Sgt. Erik
Duiker



Brigade
Soldier of
the Quarter

Spc. Christopher
Mercado

Virgin Islands Soldiers keep Speicher-dwellers pumped

By 2nd Lt. Suzanne K. Schultz
506th Quartermaster Company

FOB SPEICHER, Iraq - The 506th Quartermaster Company, 561st Corps Support Battalion, is privileged to work closely here with a tactical water distribution system, or TWDS, team from the 610th Quartermaster Company.

The team consists of Staff Sgt. Myron Fredericks, team leader, Sgt. Roanne Dowe, Spc. Sherelle Freeman and Pfc. Dianne Fox. Their parent unit is currently working out of Logistical Support Area Anaconda; however, when not deployed, the unit operates out of the Virgin Islands.

Their mission here at Speicher consists of checking, servicing and replacing more than 25 miles of hoses. Before pumping more than 25,000 gallons of water through these hoses every day, the team must ensure that everything is operational.

In addition to these maintenance tasks, the TWDS team is responsible for the 12 separate holding bags into which the water is pumped.

Two Soldiers remain at the pump and at the download site in order to fill the bags. They communicate via radio since they are often as far as 800



Photo by 2nd Lt. Suzanne K. Schultz

Spc. Sherelle Freeman, Staff Sgt. Myron Fredericks, Sgt. Roanne Dowe and Pfc. Dianne Fox, (left to right) work together to fill and inspect a water storage bag.

meters apart.

Distance is not the only inhibitor to communication for the team. The greatest challenge is working

with individuals who speak foreign languages.

Fredericks views this opportunity as a rewarding experience, because he must accomplish a mission with people of many backgrounds who do not speak the same language, but still find a way to communicate effectively. Fredericks said that this experience has afforded him the ability "to meet with many people from different walks of life."

Although there is also a lack of communication with friends from their parent unit, the TWDS team members still enjoy free time by working out together, participating in sports or simply relaxing with books or games.

Dowe is a regular participant on the 506th QM basketball team, and Freeman has joined the women's basketball league here.

All of the team members agree that what they miss most is the food that their home base has to offer. The fish and passion fruit of the Virgin Islands are particular favorites.

Fredericks remains diligent as the team leader, and his goals during this deployment are to "always remain positive and ensure everyone returns to their families safe and healthy."

IA, CA, FA visit water plants



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Maj. Andy Ingalsbe, 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, and Tahseen Omar, Makhmur District water manager, inspect the Sultan Abdullah water pumping station March 3.

MAKHMUR DISTRICT, Iraq - From the rooftop of the Sultan Abdullah water pumping station, fields of green stretch to the base of the Makhmur foothills.

An ancient tel overlooks a bend in the Tigris River, as it curves lazily past the station, glinting brightly in the afternoon sunshine.

Inside the station, noise from the pumps roared over the conversation as Tahseen Omar, Makhmur district water manager, and Maj. Andy Ingalsbe, Company A, 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, discussed the scope of work needed on the district's water stations.

The Makhmur water stations provide water for approximately 50,000 people in the district, according to Sgt. Brian Hawthorne, 401st CA, civil affairs NCO. The Sultan Abdullah station pumps water to the local area, then to the Aliyawa station.

From Aliyawa, the water travels to Makhmur and the nearby villages.

The civil affairs team, an Army Reserve unit from Webster, N.Y., contracts local national workers to work on the stations, according to Hawthorne. The work ranges from building a plant from the ground up, to simple repairs.

Soldiers from Battery B, 4th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment and Iraqi Army troops from the Makhmur based-3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, escorted Ingalsbe's team.

At a location near the Iraqi Army compound, Ingalsbe and Omar inspected a water tower originally built in 1964. With the help of the civil affairs team, local contractors fixed the many leaks and replace worn-out supports.

Contractors also installed a new fence and poured 144 square meters of concrete.

"The district of Makhmur is

a mixed Kurdish/Arab area, where ethnic issues sometimes impede progress," said Hawthorne in an e-mail interview. "The money we spend benefits both groups equally, and this is a very important consideration with each of our projects."

A scope of working is the list of funding requirements, including materiel to be purchased and the price. The civil affairs team visited each station personally to ensure that the projects required the repairs listed on the scope of work.

"It puts [us] as the customers and the contractor on the same sheet of music, so that we can hold them accountable for what we are paying," said Hawthorne.

Once the scope of work is set, troops from Battery B will return to check on the progress, according to Capt. Michael Bugaj, battery commander.

Working with the locals to provide the area with clean water is one of the many functions of civil affairs in the Tigris River Valley.

"Providing the people with critical infrastructure such as water, electricity, education and roads helps them see that Iraq is a good place to live," said Hawthorne.

Better living has widespread effects.

"The money we have spent helps the government help its people, as the work is being done by Iraqis," said Hawthorne. "They see their government employees overseeing the work, [which] gives the government credibility and helps maintain peace."



Photo by Sgt. Patricia Tso

Battery B, 4-11th FA Soldiers wait for the civil affairs team to wrap up a site inspection as they conduct an area familiarization mission in the Makhmur District March 3.

Artillery troops survey new AO

By Sgt. Patricia Tso
Brigade Multimedia Illustrator

MAKHMUR, Iraq - The armored vehicles rolled across the open fields and left behind a trail of dust as Battery B, 4th Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Soldiers viewed their new area of responsibility during a civil affairs mission conducted on March 3.

The artilleryman provided security with Iraqi Army troops as the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion conducted the mission.

The Soldiers, who recently relocated to Q-West Base Complex from Mosul, must also take on the challenge of working with the Iraqi Army, or IA Soldiers, based in Makhmur, Iraq.

Capt. Michael Bugaj, battery commander, led the area familiarization mission, which gave the Soldiers a better view of the district they will soon be working in.

Battery B Soldiers plan to improve the Iraqi Army's training, but first they must resolve equipment issues for the IA Soldiers based near the pipeline in order for them to begin the new operation.

"One of the main concerns is training," said Bugaj, who believes his Soldiers can accomplish this mission.

"Instead of handing the IA soldiers a vest [and] an AK-47 rifle and demanding that they guard the pipeline, we need to train them," said Bugaj with concern.

Battery B Soldiers plan and look forward to improving the IA Soldiers' tactical skills through better training.

Once a training site has been established, Battery B Soldiers will begin training the IA Soldiers to standard, which should better prepare them to safeguard the pipeline.

IA battalions conduct "Operation Dragnet"

By Sgt. 1st Class Jason Arneson
4-11th Field Artillery Regiment

AL QAYYARAH, Iraq – As a young boy grows up in the shadow of his older brother, there can be at times an overwhelming desire to please that older sibling. This view can change with time as he grows older and more mature and steps out from under that shadow.

At this stage, the older sibling looks on with pride as the brother sets out on his own. The members of Task Force Thunder and the Military Transition Teams, or MiTTs, feel this way about their Iraqi Army brothers in arms.

These soldiers are charged with the professional development of the Iraqi Army into full-fledged, combat-capable units ready not only to take the fight against the terrorists but also to defend their country against foreign enemies. These Soldiers, NCOs and Officers work and, in most cases, live with the Iraqi units they train.

As the U.S. Army increasingly hands over "battlespace" to the Iraqi Army, it is a credit to both Task Force Thunder and the MiTT advisors who got them to that point.

A prime example of this joint training effort was exemplified as the 3rd "Mountain" Battalion, under the command of Lt. Col. Salahaddin Hogar and 1st "Desert Fox" Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Iraqi Army, assumed their own battlespace on Dec. 27, 2005 and Jan. 28, 2006, respectively. This Transfer of Authority meant that now the Iraqi Security Forces would take the lead with Coalition Forces being in a supporting role if called upon.

On one cold and rainy morning the Desert Fox Battalion, under the command of BG Ali Mullah, would demonstrate its capabilities. Coalition forces notified the battalion that an improvised explosive device, or IED, cell was targeting coalition forces convoys on a major supply route.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jason Arneson

An Iraqi Army jundi, or soldier, from 1st "Desert Fox" Battalion, stands guard over three detainees captured in a recent cordon and search operation.

Through the battalion's intelligence section, its leaders determined that the possible members of anti-Iraqi forces were operating within a nearby village. Based on this analysis, the battalion decided to conduct a "cordon and knock" of the village in question.

With the assistance of their MiTT advisors, the battalion troops planned a mission involving local Iraqi Police.

With its plan firmly laid out, the soldiers of 1st Bn. geared up and conducted Pre-Combat Checks in the cold rain prior to heading out.

"They don't even really need us anymore. They have checked their fuel, ammunition, vehicles and even made last minute changes to their plan without us having to say a word," said Sgt. 1st Class Vela, a 1st Bn. MiTT member who watched the Iraqis' preparations.

The Iraqi Army moved out in a column of Nissan pick-ups, trucks and a field medical section that utilized a civilian ambulance. The Soldiers are accustomed to fighting the terrorists with the equipment on hand.

The IA forces quickly established an outer cordon of the village with the assistance of Iraqi Police, and proceeded to search and clear all the houses.

The operation ultimately resulted in the capture of three suspected terrorists.

The IA units of the 3rd Brigade would take their training to the next level with Operation Dragnet. On this operation, more than 350 soldiers from both battalions launched a simultaneous cordon and search of 12 homes on both sides of the Tigris River. Executed under the cover of darkness, this operation tested and validated the IA's ability to conduct multiple battalion operations independent of coalition forces.

Before this night was over, 22 suspected AIF members were in Iraqi custody. Unlike before the transfers of authority, when detainees were routinely handed over to coalition forces, these detainees would be questioned and then processed through IA facilities.

What is of even greater significance is that this whole operation was at the request of the Mosul Police. The police had identified these terrorists and asked the army for assistance in apprehending them.

These soldiers are taking the lead in securing the Tigris River Valley.

Army expands referral bonus pilot program

By Sgt. 1st Class Lori Simmons
Brigade Public Affairs Officer

The Army has announced the expansion of the Referral Bonus Pilot Program to include Soldiers performing duty in the hometown recruiter program.

The program gives Soldiers the opportunity to assist in the Army's recruiting efforts.

Eligible active duty, Reserve and National Guard Soldiers can receive a \$1,000 bonus for referring qualified applicants, other than their immediate family. Referring Soldiers receive the bonus in a lump sum after the applicant completes basic training and advanced individual training, or AIT.

The Defense Financing and Accounting Service, DFAS, will deposit the money directly into the referring Soldier's military pay account at that time.

Not all Soldiers are eligible to participate in this program. Ineligible Soldiers include any active, Reserve or National Guard member serving in a recruiting or retention assignment, receiving special duty assignment pay for recruiting or retention or assigned duties perceived to be a conflict of interest.

To find out more on this program, Soldiers should contact the United States Recruiting Command, National Guard Headquarters or their unit's retention office.

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In honor of Women's History Month, we bring you ... Ladies Night, Iraq!

By Spc. Amber Moody

Company A, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion

Going back to my room the other night, I popped my head into Staff Sgt. Michelle McNeill's room to find her and Spc. Kate Grieshaber talking and laughing.

I joined in, as Grieshaber told me to ask McNeill about her trip to the shower. Our unit, Company A, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion, is sharing showers with Company B, 101st BTB, until we get showers for our building, and McNeill found a "pond."

The story ended with McNeill standing in a mop bucket full of ammonia to kill "macro organisms," as she said. Somewhere on Q-West there is a picture of McNeill in the bucket looking helpless.

Laughing, we all proceeded to another topic, this one funnier than the last. I don't know when I laughed that much in the space of one hour but it was great.

We were joined by McNeill's roommate Staff Sgt. Anne Schock, and Spc. Carrie Blanton. That is when the real fun started.

We talked about all the things that females talk about, bonded more and shared a night of laughter.



Staff Sgt. Anne Schock, Company A, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion, demonstrates her "King Kong" impression for the amusement of her fellow Soldiers.

It was our own version of "Sex and the City," without the high heels and New York background.

Pfcs. Tyeshia Edwards and Chantel Smith joined,

and then conversation went to cheerleaders and the flyers they have. McNeill was a cheerleader, and we were sharing stories about our high school cheerleaders.

Blanton said that there was a flyer in her school who was constantly dropped. The other cheerleaders didn't like her.

The comment I made, "My school was too poor to have flyers," had Schock choking on her water and everyone else rolling with laughter.

Laughter is good medicine for all kinds of things. Sometimes, it is the cure-all for the blues and melancholy atmospheres.

"A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in the doctor's book," is a quote from the Web site, <http://www.itsmardan.com/quotes>. I don't know if it is true, but laughter does seem to refresh the senses and gives a person a different, if not better, viewpoint.

It was a way for us females in Co. A to release some stress, share a few stories, and just let loose.

So if you are ever in the mood, stop by! Co. A has many interesting people, and we live up to our motto: OUTLAWS!

Crash band heats up stage at Q-West MWR

By Pfc. Paul Molan

HHC 101st Sustainment Brigade

"Versatile."

That's what Frank Ortado, a representative of AK Productions, and road manager of Crash Dance, said in one word to describe the band.

In the five-piece band is: singer Becky Moon from Chicago, Ill./ Los Angeles, Calif., bass/sax player Patrick Langford from L.A., guitarist player Sean Hall from Orange County, guitarist Erich Schnieder from L.A., and drummer Tim Williams from Reno, Nev.

I was lucky enough to ask the band a few questions before their performance.

Who inspired you to become a musician?

BM: "I really didn't discover my talent till I did karaoke when I was 28 years old."

PL: "I'd have to say my dad. Music was always around the house."

SH: "Eddy Van Halen inspired me to be a guitarist."

ES: "My father was a guitarist."

TW: "The other kids in my neighborhood, the Beatles and Jimi Hendricks."

How has it been so far performing for the troops in Iraq?

BM: "Iraq rocks and I love it. The Soldiers make it worthwhile."

PL: "It's been a blast and full of

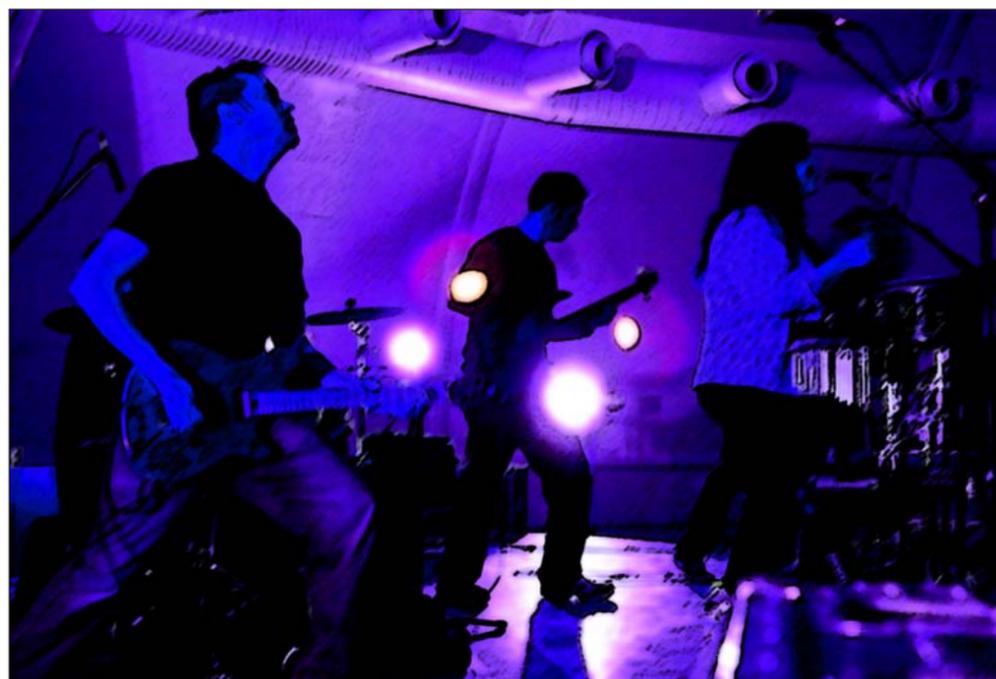


Illustration from photo by Spc. Richard Vogt

energy."

SH: "It's a blessing and a real honor."

ES: "A real adventure and a great opportunity to support the troops."

TW: "The military kicks butt. It makes you feel safe from what you watch them do."

What has been a highlight for you so far?

BM: "For me, it's been talking one on one with the Soldiers, and them taking part in the show."

PL: "I've never been out of the country, so just being overseas is huge for me."

SH: "Getting the chance to hang out in one of Saddam's former palaces was a shock."

ES: "The time off in Germany was very enticing."

TW: "Getting to shoot different rifles and riding in helicopters."

Who do you listen to on your iPod or CD player when you travel from post to post?

BM: "Right now I'm listening to Raul Midon, Maxwell, Gretchen Wilson, Stevie Wonder and some Christian rock."

PL: "I like jazz, so Cannonball Adderly and John Coltrane."

SH: "Some rock and classical like Van Halen and the Church."

ES: "I'd say Pink Floyd and Eric Clapton."

During the show, they played everything from Rick James to 3 Doors Down, from Lynyrd Skynyrd to the Eagles. After the show, I caught up with a few Soldiers to get their reactions to the night.

Spc. Kevin Clank, 725th Transportation Company, who got up on stage and sang Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," said: "It got me riled up."

"The best part was the crowd surfing," said Sgt. Stephanie Honeycutt.

Pfc. Jerry Leal, of the 101 Sustainment Brigade said: "It felt like I was back in California."

Pfc. Rodger Garcia, of 2nd Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, who rocked out to Metallica's "Enter Sandman," said: "It's my best memory of Iraq ever."

All in all it was a great show. Loud music, different genres and crowd participation makes this a must-see show if *Crash Dance* ever makes another stop in Q-West.

MedNews: An introduction to the new, Improved First Aid Kit

By Spc. Spencer Case

207th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

As more and more Soldiers are issued Improved First Aid Kits to replace the old first aid pouch, there is an increasing need to understand the equipment.

Staff Sgt. Thomas Hayes, who works for the 30th Medical Brigade as the course manager for the Combat Lifesaver course at the Jameson Combat Medical Training Center, said that the ability of Soldiers to use this equipment can save lives.

"I think it is a good tool to promote lifesaving skills," Hayes said about the new kits.

Some of the items in the pouch that some Soldiers may not be familiar with:

The Combat Application Tourniquet (CAT)

The Combat Application Tourniquet (CAT) is one of the most valuable life-saving tools in the pouch, said Hayes, who also trains instructors at semi-annual Medical Skills Validation Trainer Training.

Hayes advises Soldiers to remove the plastic wrapping from the tourniquet. Removing the plastic allows for quicker access and gives Soldiers the chance to practice slipping on the tourniquet.

"The CAT tourniquet, because it's so important, should remain outside of the packet so that it's ready to go," Hayes said.

After removing the plastic, make sure to keep the

tourniquet inside the pouch because dirt can wear down the Velcro and make it ineffective, said Sgt. Scott Stewart, a CLS instructor at the Jameson Combat Medical Training Center.

The Nasal Pharyngeal Airway (NPA)

The NPA replaces the oral pharyngeal, or J-tube. Like the J-tube, the NPA is inserted to keep the airway open. Unlike the J-tube, it is inserted through the nose to avoid triggering a gag reflex.

Before inserting the tube, Soldiers must make sure the length of the NPA matches the length from the corner of the casualty's nose to the bottom tip of the casualty's ear and that the diameter of the tube is no larger than the casualty's pinky finger.

If surgical lubrication is available, it helps for inserting the tube. The tube should be inserted with the angled hole pointed towards the septum of the nose. The person giving aid should stop inserting the tube if there is resistance.

Trauma bandage or "Israeli dressing"

The trauma bandage replaces the field dressing found in old first aid pouches. The main purpose of the trauma bandage is to serve as a pressure dressing. Soldiers can also use the bandage for a "tourniquet-like effect" to slow blood circulation, though Hayes emphasizes that Soldiers should use a CAT as a first choice if a tourniquet is needed.

Unlike the CAT, it must be kept inside the package to keep it clean. Directions on how to use the bandage can be found on the back of the package.

"I think it's a big improvement from the field dressing," Stewart said about the trauma bandage.

The kit also contains a bag of compressed gauze, a role of surgical tape and a pair of sanitary gloves.

Each kit is designed to treat only one Soldier, so it is recommended that Soldiers keep it accessible, especially when going off post, said Spc. Alfredo Varela, a CLS instructor at the Jameson CMTC. Varela recommends that Soldiers keep it attached to their Interceptor Body Armor (IBA) at all times.

Since all of the items in the kit are intended for one use only, all of the items are expendable, except for the pouch itself, which is durable, said Sgt. 1st Class David Hooker, the unit supply NCOIC for the 19th Support Center. Soldiers are expected to pay for any lost pouches unless they are determined to be field losses.

If Soldiers are unfamiliar with any one of the items in the Improved First Aid Kit, they should consult the nearest medic, or speak with their training NCO about registering for the Combat Lifesaver course. Training NCOs or anyone else who has questions about the course can contact Hayes by e-mail at doc.hayes@balad.iraq.centcom.mil.



Ready for your 15 minutes of fame?

Contact the brigade public affairs office!

(302) 673-5142

*Hometown News Releases...

*Unit Events...

*Missions...

*Anything cool!



We Can Do It!



March is...

Women's History Month

Watch for upcoming EO announcements regarding Women's History Month.

And call your Mom.

FUN

Sunday
QBC Unplugged Coffeehouse 2000

Monday
Tournaments Galore!

Tuesday
Acting Class 2000

Wednesday
Salsa Lessons 1900
Guitar Lessons 2000

Thursday
Tournaments Galore!

Friday
Alternating Country & Hip Hop Night
2100

Saturday
Flea Market 0800-1600
Alternating Karaoke & Latin Night 2100

5K RUN! March 17
6:30 a.m., Sign up at the fitness center!

FITNESS

Sunday
Take a break!

Monday
Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
4-Week Weight Training Program 1000
Spinning Class 1600
Dynamic Abs 1700
Cardio Kickboxing 1800
High Impact Step Aerobics 2000

Tuesday
Extreme Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
Yoga & Mat Pilates 1900
Abs & Glutes 1800 & 2000
Spinning Class 2000

Wednesday
Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
4-Week Weight Training Program 1000
Spinning Class 1600
Dynamic Abs 1700
Cardio Kickboxing 1800
High Impact Step Aerobics 2000

Thursday
Extreme Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
Yoga & Mat Pilates 1900
Abs & Glutes 1800 & 2000
Spinning Class 2000

Friday
Abs & Core Conditioning 0530
4-Week Weight Training Program 1000
Spinning Class 1600
Dynamic Abs 1700
Cardio Kickboxing 1800
High Impact Step Aerobics 2000

Saturday
Abs & Glutes 1800
Yoga & Mat Pilates 1900
High Impact Step Aerobics 2000
Spinning Class 2000



Lifeline West Caption Contest!



Can you think of a funny, printable caption? Send your ideas to: rachel.brune@us.army.mil. Enter as many times as you like. Prize: One Free Green Beans item.

561st CSB Soldiers shine on the Speicher stage

By Sgt. Ashly Rice
Staff Reporter
FOB SPEICHER, Iraq - Lights! Camera! Action! Dancing, singing, spoken-word talent and rhythmical lyrics graced the stage during A Night to Shine, talent show held at the Speicher Gym Feb. 25 here.

Units under the 561st Corps Support Battalion, from Fort Campbell, Ky., participated in the first 561st CSB talent show.

The show opened with a surprise guest, who isn't really a surprise to the soldiers of 561ST CSB, Command Sgt. Major Clinton L. Jackson, recited an "old-school" rap with two junior enlisted soldiers to give it a new-school feel.

The opening act brought to us by Command Sgt. Major Jackson opened mouths for laughter and created anticipation as we awaited the next acts to come.

Two professionally-trained salsa dancers, deployed here in Iraq,

approached the stage as a flavorful salsa beat graced through the crowd. The crowd cheered as she turned and he dipped to the fast tempo upon the stage.

A wonderful crowd-pleasing event that I am sure will be talked about for the rest of the deployment is the amazing dancing talents of the various 561st CSB unit commanders and first sergeants.

During intermission, the commanders and first sergeants displayed what they believed to be talent and shook, jerked, and almost broke a leg, dancing with sportsman-like enthusiasm across the stage.

The crowd however was the deciding factor on who the winners of the "First and Last," dance, as named by Jackson, commanders and first sergeants.

Some participants had more talent than others, and some were there for just pure comical enjoy-

ment. With seven individual talents, Sgt. Eric Miller, of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment, of Fort Sill, Ok., walked away with the first place trophy in the individual event category.

Miller, of Sedalia, Mo., sang an original song he wrote for his wife during Operation Iraqi Freedom I. He accompanied his laid back vocals with an acoustic guitar.

"I am happy that I was able to win, I have written other songs as well, but this is the song I wanted to go with," said Miller.

Spc. Richard Alston of 506th Quartermaster, of Fort Lee Va. and Pfc. John Pickens, from Little Rock, Ark., of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 561st CSB, beat out five other group contestants.

Alston and Pickens wrote and rapped an original song, and did well performing in front of the demanding crowd.

Both seemed poised and well prepared for their performance, and even added a few dance steps with each verse. With the crowd obviously enjoying the show, it was like an actual rap concert, and not just a talent show.

"That is how the game is done," said Pickens in full joy over winning first place in the group category.

The show ended with more salsa enjoyment. Master Sgt. Francisco Ramos, from Miami, Fla., of HHD, 561st CSB walked out on stage with a swagger and confidence that only a true dancer possesses.

Ramos showed that what is parents taught him paid off, since his parents are credited teaching salsa, merengue and other tropical and American music since the age of five. Thirty-five years later, dancing on stage in Iraq was a pure enjoyment for Ramos.

Ramos added: "This was a great event, and a great morale booster."

Immersion language software here free for Soldiers

Sgt. Marshall Thompson
207th Public Affairs Det.

A language program designed to help Soldiers communicate better while in a foreign country is up and running on the Army's e-learning Web site.

"Rosetta Stone" is an immersion-based language software available on the Internet or on CD ROM that uses pictures and audio to simulate the way a person learns his native language. Fairfield Language Technologies, the developers of Rosetta Stone, announced a \$4.2 million contract with the U.S. Army on Sept. 27, 2005.

The agreement makes courses in over 25 languages available via the Internet to both active duty and reserve-component Soldiers and Department of Defense civilians.

"Critical foreign language capability and skills are increasingly important to our Army. Rosetta Stone provides the Army with an immediate, interactive language training tool to train our Soldiers, leaders and civilians for operational deployments and professional development," said Brig. Gen. James M.

Milano, the Army's director of training, in a press release on Oct. 3, 2005.

Among others, a Soldier can take courses in Pashto, spoken in Afghanistan, or Arabic, spoken in most of the Middle East, and 3rd Corps Support Command Soldiers might be particularly interested in German courses. Upon completion of each unit, the student will receive a certificate via e-mail for four credit hours from Army e-Learning.

To access the software, log on to the Army Knowledge Online Web site and click on My

Education. This goes to the Army e-learning Web site where there is a link to Rosetta Stone. Or, go directly to <https://usarmy.skillport.com>.

Soldiers need to register at the site and get a username and password separate from their AKO account. Once registered, the Soldiers can start learning. The software uses a non-traditional approach.

There is no verb conjugation or memorizing lists of vocabulary words. Instead, the student compares pictures and infers the meaning of the words, just as a baby does when he learns.

OFF THE WIRE: News from the American Forces Press Service

U.S. ambassador: Iraqi leaders make progress toward unity

Army News Service

WASHINGTON, March 12, 2006 – Iraqi leaders took a "very positive step" today toward establishing a government of national unity, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq said moments after an emergency meeting with Iraqi leaders.

"It was a good day today in Baghdad," Zalmay Khalilzad said today in an interview from Baghdad on CNN's "Late Edition" with Wolf Blitzer.

The meeting, called to initiate progress in the formation of a new government, was an indicator that leaders "are taking the problems of the country seriously," the ambassador said.

Khalilzad said he was encouraged by the meeting's results. "Leaders decided to bring forward the opening of the assembly now rather than on the 19th," he said, adding that the first session of the new parliament will be held March 16.

Leaders from all factions also agreed there is "no red line in terms of the inclu-

sion of any faction in the formation of the government," the ambassador added.

Khalilzad said leaders plan to meet continuously as of March 14 until there is agreement on the government, including a prime minister, one of the primary concerns of the country's leaders. "Everyone agrees the prime minister has to be someone who can bring this country together, someone who is competent in terms of dealing with the problems of Iraq," he said.

"That is one of the key issues in the coming days that Iraqi political leaders will have to decide on; there was a lot of flexibility on all sides," he said.

Khalilzad said he was unable to predict just how long decisions like the selection of a prime minister would take. "This decision, the formation of a government of national unity is extremely important," he said. "If they (Iraqi leaders) make the right decision forming a national unity

government -- competent ministers, good process with a good program governing from the center -- it will put Iraq on the right trajectory; it will be a major step forward for Iraq."

However, he said, "It's still going to take a bit of time."

"We'll work with them and do it as quickly as possible. They understand it's an urgent matter."

Khalilzad also commented on a neighbor to Iraq that has been prominent in the headlines - Iran. "We have concerns with regards for their support for some of the militias and some of the extremist groups," he said. "We want good relations between Iraq and all its neighbors. And, at the same time, we do not want any of its neighbors to dominate Iraq, and that is our policy with Iran as well."

The ambassador said Iraqi leaders are "concerned about aspects of Iranian policy interferes with the development of a successful democratic Iraq."

High Flight



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Ben Bloker, U.S. Air Force

Clockwise from left, an F-16 Fighting Falcon, an A-10 Thunderbolt II, an F-4 Phantom, and an F-22A Raptor fly in diamond formation over the mountains outside Tucson, Ariz., during the final portion of the Air Combat Command Heritage Conference March 5, 2006.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Veronica Pierce, U.S. Air Force

A TF-51 Mustang, right, and an F-15 Eagle fly in formation with another TF-51 over Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., during the final portion of the 2006 Heritage Flight Conference March 5, 2006.



AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE

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Senate Youth Program students get ground-level view of Pentagon

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, March 10, 2006 – High School seniors involved in the Senate Youth Program learned about life in the Pentagon and got to ask questions of senior military leaders as part of their Washington program today.

A total of 104 students from throughout the country and DoD schools overseas got a tour of the Pentagon and a chance to ask questions of Army Lt. Gen. C.V. Christianson, Joint Staff director for logistics.

The two DoD Education Activity students are both from Japan. Anthony Soroka is a senior at Kadena High School, and Elizabeth Michael is a senior at Yokota High School. Both participated in the DoDEA-wide competition for the program, which includes an all-expense-paid "Washington Week" and a \$5,000 scholarship.

Soroka, who hopes to attend Princeton University in the fall, said the week gave him an excellent overview of the federal government. "We visited the museums, of course, and then spoke to people at the State Department, the Supreme Court, here and other agencies," he said. He said he was especially excited to meet Pakistani Ambassador to the United States Jehangir Karamat.

Michael said she appreciated the opportunity to meet students from all over the United States. "It's been a great experience," she said. "I'm glad I did it

and would recommend it to everyone."

The U.S. Senate and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation sponsor the program. It began in 1962 to expose student delegates to the highest-ranking members of government.

Accompanying the delegates are military officers who also go through a selection process. This year, Navy Lt. Janelle, a lawyer at Little Creek, Va., was one of those selected. She is no stranger to the program, having been a delegate herself from Hawaii in 1997.

"It was an amazing experience for me then," Kuroda said. "It was one of the most significant weeks of my life in helping me choose what I wanted to do."

"Coming from Hawaii, I didn't know how well I would deal with people from all over the country," she said. "After meeting the delegates, I found that anything is possible, if you apply yourself."

The lieutenant volunteered to be an escort officer as her way of "paying back" to the program. "I hope I can make it as great for these students as the escort officers made it for me," she said.

Christianson spoke about the role of the military in the United States, saying that the most important aspect of the U.S. military is that it is under civilian control.

"The only body that is authorized to raise an army in this country is the Congress of the United States," said Christianson.



Photo by Tech Sgt. Andy Dunaway, U.S. Air Force

A bird's-eye view of the Pentagon.

Civilian control of the military is important to the country, and that's why the students see military officers and civilian officials from the Defense Department on Capitol Hill. "There are not many countries in the world who have that kind of concept embedded in their constitution," Christianson said.

Checks and balances in the federal system prevent any one portion of the government from growing too powerful, he said.

"Day to day the military works for the Department of Defense," Christianson said. "But we answer to Congress and ultimately work for the people of the United States."