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# LIFELINER WEST

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

Volume 2, No. 12 Deployment Edition

Q-WEST BASE COMPLEX, IRAQ

April 15, 2006

## 71st CSB opens Mendez Learning Center



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Soldiers record the moment as Col. James D. Scudieri and Col. James Grayson cut the ribbon to the Mendez Learning Center.

By Rachael Van Horn  
**KBR Liaison**

When Sgt. Sabrena Wells, 23, and Spc. Amy Casey, 29, arrived in Iraq, they planned on long days of soldiering. But the two Soldiers are not filling sand bags, and they are not driving trucks – they are teachers at the only learning center for Soldiers in northern Iraq.

"I think that it is amazing that someone thought about building this," said Casey. "It shows that our leadership is thinking about us and developing us even while we're here."

The 71st Corps Support Battalion christened its hard-won and Soldier-built Mendez Learning Center with a grand opening ceremony March 16.

Leadership throughout the base attended the ceremony, held at the base of the stairs to the Center, which is built atop the 71st CSB's headquarters and named after a 40th Transportation Company Soldier, Pfc. Antonio Mendez, who was killed in October 2005.

"This is an example of how Soldiers help Soldiers," said Col. James D. Scudieri, commander, 101st Sustainment Brigade, a speaker at the ceremony.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Operation Beanie Babies: 142nd Soldiers bring toys to students

By Sgt. Patricia Tso  
**Brigade Multimedia Illustrator**

**ZAHKO, Iraq** – Soldiers of the 142nd Corps Support Battalion, based out of Fort Polk, La., disrupted classes to bring smiles to hundreds of school children during a civil affairs mission March 15 here.

Over an eight-month period, Soldiers began collecting stuffed animals, or Beanie Babies. What began as a small collection grew as the mail continued to flow. The stuffed animals were collected and stored in a container.

"The supplies were donated to us by corporations and accumulated over time," said Capt. John Smith II, battalion chaplain, Missouri native.

The morning of the mission, nearly 60 Soldiers from the 142nd CSB climbed into armored vehicles as they eagerly waited for things to kick off.

"Our Soldiers do not get a chance to do this," said

Smith of the group of Soldiers who volunteered for the mission. "We wanted to do something productive."

The Soldiers from the 142nd CSB conduct combat logistical patrols, or CLPs, after dusk and do not get the opportunity to interact with the community.

According to Smith, the most the Soldiers get to see during the CLPs are pedestrians alongside the roadways, debris and trash cluttering the streets.

"This mission will be memorable, and it will stay in the hearts of the Soldiers," said Lt. Col. Ronald Green, battalion commander.

Once the vehicles halted at the first destination, Soldiers gathered around the container outside the local kindergarten school while students inside peeked up and down the halls trying to get a glimpse of their visitors.



Photo by Sgt. Patricia Tso

A 142nd CSB Soldier digs deep for some toys to give to waiting students during a civil affairs mission.

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## Mendez

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That theme permeated the entire process of building that began in November with a team of Soldiers with special construction skills, who led and trained more than 40 others who learned new skills.

Those special-skills Soldiers are still tasked to the project as they put the finishing touches on the building, which includes four classrooms and a computer lab. But what about a way to support the learning process at the new structure?

Wells' and Casey's changes in status began when Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Spencer, 71st CSB, realized his dream of an education center was coming true quicker than he thought. He was about to have a completed school with no teachers.

But where does one find teachers and tutors in a war zone? In the Army Reserve and National Guard units, that's where.

"I think that you simply have many of those skills sets and Soldiers who have been attending college in the Reserves and National Guard," said Wells, who is a combat medic with the 725th Transportation Company. "Many times, that is why young Soldiers have gotten into the National Guard – to pay for college."

That is exactly what Wells was doing when she was deployed. The North Carolina National Guardsman is five hours away from a Bachelor of Science degree in biology and chemistry and serves as the Center's tutor.

Casey, a truck driver with the 454th Transportation Company, was on a similar track. Already a holder of an undergraduate degree, the special education teacher is working toward her Master's degree. She will be teaching the Functional Academy Skills Training, or FAST, program.

After the 71st CSB put out a feeler through the commands of the battalion's subordinate units, Casey and Wells volunteered for the program. Now the five-foot-two gate guard is helping Soldiers with math problems, and Casey, whose time used to be spent in the dusty seat of a tractor trailer rig on the roads of Iraq, is teaching Soldiers to give them more advantages in their careers.

While the classes are just beginning to take shape, Spencer said, he thought the best avenue to introduce the Center to Soldiers on Q-West Base Complex was to offer the FAST class, in which Soldiers can study to improve their military aptitude test scores, or complete



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Shortly before the grand opening ceremony March 16, the Mendez Learning Center Soldier construction team poses on the steps of the building the members raised.

requirements to be eligible to reenlist.

The classes are held in one of the Center's four classrooms. The FAST class is offered four hours a day, six days a week, during duty hours.

Here, at Q-West, there are day and evening classes, said Spencer. The day class lasts from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., and the evening class starts at 7 p.m. and lasts until 11 p.m.

At the end of three weeks, a testing agent from Balad will travel to Q-West to administer the military aptitude test to the students who have completed the course.

The first class ended March 25. The first day class counted 23 attendees, and the evening class was full, with 25 Soldiers attending, said Spencer.

# Band of builders create learning center

By Rachael Van Horn  
KBR Liaison

Staff Sgt. Kelly Lamp and Sgt. Earl Rich squinted a bit as they looked at plans for a building, handwritten in black Sharpie on a clear document protector.

"We looked at that drawing the first time, and it wasn't a bad design," said Lamp. "But from that day on, we never saw it again. From that point, whatever we thought was cool to do to the building, we did it."

Together with a team of duty Soldiers they led, the construction business-owner and electrician did just that – made the Mendez Learning Center "cool." The team did it all within 45 days, making the fastest building project Lamb, a Nebraska construction manager, had seen go up.

"It is strong ... there is nothing wrong with it," said Lamb. "There was just a lot we were able to do with the material we had that was different than we would do in the States."

Key to their success, they both said, was something they believe was more important than the 3,000 feet of electrical wire, 110 electrical fixtures,

wood, nails and air conditioners that went into the Center.

The two Soldiers, who were charged with guiding the more technical building portion of the learning center, including all of the electrical, said they could not have functioned without the skills sets that exist in the Reserves, and the Army knowledge on the active duty side.

"The active people knew how to get things we needed and how to work the Army system," Lamp said. "The Reserve people brought the different skills to the project."

It was that camaraderie and openness to learning that allowed the minimally-skilled electrician to take on such a large project.

The electricity for the building is a complicated labyrinth of wires that serve a newly-constructed conference room, complete with computer hook-ups and an automatic briefing screen operated by remote control.

The lighting includes fans and recessed lighting that indirectly lights the room. All of the work had to be done in concert with construction that was moving more rapidly than it ever



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Col. James D. Scudieri, 101st Sustainment Brigade commander, pins the Army Commendation Medal on Sgt. Earl Rich for his work on the building team.

would have in the United States.

"I was so nervous when the sergeant major went to flip that switch," Rich said. "I knew I had checked my work [but] I was still worried."

As Rich suspected, there was no reason to worry. The outlets remained intact and the fans, air conditioners and lighting began to work better than they had since the 71st Corps Support Battalion moved into the building.

Within 45 days, Lamp, Rich and their band of builders, who began with no construction skills, put the finishing touches on a project that has changed their lives.

"The bottom line was, we had virtually no experience, and we turned those guys who didn't know anything into guys who now have other skills," said Rich. "We turned this building that was nothing, into something."

# School visit

Continued from Page 1

Without hesitation, the metal doors of the container swung open. Each Soldier grabbed a clear plastic bag containing multiple stuffed animals and headed for the entrance of the school building.

"We want to be able to make the kids smile, and also to give the people of Iraq a better image of American Soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Edward Montemayor, a medic from Union City, Calif.

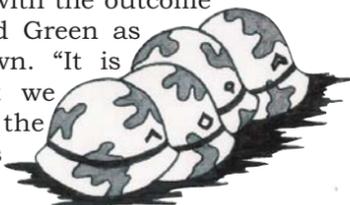
Some of the Soldiers entered the classroom where the children had already lined up to receive their gifts, while others were entertained by students as they recited their numbers aloud. The recital thundered through the classroom and showed the reflection of discipline among them.

Students at the Kazgary Primary School showed their appreciation by forming up in the courtyard and serenading the Soldiers.

Out of the hundreds of schools in the area, the Soldiers of the 142nd CSB visited a total of six primary public schools to include one at the kindergarten level.

The Soldiers' final task was to deliver school supplies that numerous American organizations donated to the Zahko Department of Education. The Director of Zahko School distributed the items to meet the needs of the students and teachers alike.

"I'm very pleased with the outcome of the mission," said Green as the day wound down. "It is good to know that we delivered from the American people this great gift."



# QBC team assesses case for courthouse repairs

By Sgt. Rachel A. Brune  
Editor

**MAKHMUR, Iraq** – The roof leaks, the furniture is broken and you wouldn't want to stand too close to the electrical box. The Makhmur District courthouse is in need of repairs.

A Q-West Base Complex-based team of Soldiers from Company A, 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, met with local contractor Suleyman Hozan and Judge Amer Abdulla Al-Dulaimy April 5 to discuss possible renovations to the courthouse.

Inside the judge's chambers, the decay was slightly less notable. Geometrically-patterned rugs covered the floor. The furniture was in one piece and included a solid desk and cabinets with a chair for a secretary.

On closer inspection, one bare lightbulb flickered on and off, although two tall windows let in light from outside, and the marble "tiles" that lined the bottom of the wall were actually just paint.

Maj. Andy Ingalsbe, team leader, met with Hozan and Al-Dulaimy to review a tender the contractor submitted a year ago. A tender is a list of repairs and estimated costs.

"We're trying to come up with funding to get repairs on the building," said Ingalsbe. During the meeting, Al-Dulaimy reviewed the tender to give his opinion on whether all the items listed on the sheet were still accurate.

Outside in the hallway, men in suits and traditional garb and women in dresses, suits and traditional abayas talked and waited to meet with one of the other two judges presiding over cases. The careful dress stood in contrast to the cracked walls, peeling paint, exposed wires and holes in the ceilings where light fixtures used to hang.

The judges conduct the cases in their chambers, as the courtrooms are unusable. The furniture, covered with a thick layer of dust, lies in broken heaps,



Photo by Sgt. Rachel Brune

**Maj. Andy Ingalsbe and Suleyman Hozan assess the Makhmur courthouse for repairs.**

and the walls are stained with water and bird droppings.

Ingalsbe asked Al-Dulaimy to also mark any items on the tender that might not be needed anymore, as well as those repairs that might be made on a smaller scale to save money. Spending money on items that are still serviceable would take away funds from other items in a total state of disrepair.

Before getting further into the discussion, Ingalsbe explained the funding is not yet in place, but by this meeting with the judge and the contractor, they could start the process of formulating another bid for the work.

After Al-Dulaimy reviewed the tender and gave his comments, he and Hovan agreed to meet again to discuss it in further depth.

Hovan and Ingalsbe then toured the building themselves, to view the items listed and make a note of others that would be needed.

Although he cautioned Hozan not to use the cheapest materials, Ingalsbe said: "We need to get good prices."

# It all comes together: IA Soldiers graduate basic training

By Sgt. Rachel A. Brune  
Editor

The ranks of trained and ready Iraqi security forces swelled March 14, as 42 Iraqi soldiers graduated from basic combat training at the NCO Academy here.

"This new group of Iraqi heroes will be the future force to protect our Iraq – the Iraq of freedom, and the Iraq of brotherhood," said Command Sgt. Maj. Bourhan, of 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Iraqi Army.

Five students received recognition in honor of their achievements: Mahmoud Abdul-Razik Abdul-Aziz, distinguished honor graduate; Ahmed

Mohammed, first platoon honor graduate; Mohamed Mahmood, second platoon honor graduate; Saeer Aied Asker, marksmanship awardee; Ali Saed Wasmi, physical fitness awardee.

Bourhan presented the graduates with their certificates. Gen. Ameen, commander, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, Iraqi Army, presented the five honor graduates with additional gifts.

"It all comes together today," said Sgt. Maj. Walter Murrell, NCO Academy commandant, in his remarks to the graduates. "We recognize your achievements over the past couple of weeks."

During the class, the soldiers stud-

ied basic skills such as marksmanship and physical fitness training. The cadre also instructed them in relevant skills such as entering and clearing a building, manning a traffic control point and first aid.

"The graduates will be examples for their fellow soldiers by giving them instruction and good training," said Bourhan. "They will be the future force for Iraq."

After returning to their units, the soldiers will pass on the skills they learned at the Academy to their fellow soldiers.

Soldiers at the Academy are drawn from the three battalions of 3rd Brigade. 1st and 3rd Battalions, 3rd Brigade, took control of their battlespace in January and December, respectively.

Although the Iraqi army units have accomplished this much, there is still more to do.

"We have a lot to do in the future," said Command Sgt. Maj. Abdul Jabar Mohammed, of 3rd Brigade, in his impromptu closing remarks.

The graduates joined the Army in a "hard time," said Mohammed. The training at the Academy is hard, but good.

"We don't want to stop in the limit lines," said Mohammed. "We need to continue the training because this training will help the soldiers to fight."

At the end of his remarks, Mohammed apologized for his long



**Sgt. Maj. Walter Murrell, NCOA commandant, congratulates an IA basic training graduate March 14.**

speech, but said he wanted to express what was in his heart.

The newest Academy instructor, Sgt. 1st Class Ala, successfully completed his probationary instruction period and has now been accepted permanently at the Academy, according to Murrell.

After four days of rest and recovery, the cadre and interpreters began a new cycle at the Academy March 19. The current class is a Primary Leadership Development Course for noncommissioned officers.

With 72 attendees, the Academy is on its way to setting another record of training Iraqi soldiers to become the future force of a free Iraq.



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

**An Iraqi basic training soldier completes part of the obstacle course Feb. 25.**

# FMC takes care of business

By Sgt. Rachel A. Brune  
Editor

If you're looking for someone to show you the money, stop by the finance office here, run by Soldiers of Detachment D, 101st Financial Management Company, of Fort Campbell, Ky.

"Our main goal is to give the best financial support possible," said Staff Sgt. Melvin Williamson, detachment NCOIC, of Fayetteville, N.C.

The 11-Soldier team provides Soldiers on the base with all the financial services available in the rear such as customer service, debt management and bonus processing, although the team does not process travel vouchers.

In addition to the normal finance center services, the 101st Soldiers can assist their fellow military members with deployment financial opportunities as well.

The Savings Deposit Plan is an investment opportunity in which Soldiers can save up to \$10,000 with a 10 percent annual return, said Williamson.

Soldiers in need of cash can get up to \$300 worth of check cashing per week or \$350 of casual pay per month. If a Soldier does not wish to walk around the base with that much money in his or her pocket, and does not want to keep making trips to the finance office, he or she will soon be able to take advantage of a new service, the Stored Value Card, also known as the Eagle Cash Card.

This handy item, which is also scheduled for use at Forward Operating Base Speicher, will be accepted at every vendor on post and can store up to \$1,200.

"[Soldiers] can use it instead of carrying cash to pay



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

**Spc. Adam Sackman counts out some bills from behind the cashier's cage, which his team built in their improvements to the finance office at Q-West, located next to the post exchange.**

for items on post," said Williamson. "It makes it easier for the Soldiers, so they don't have to carry around a lot of cash."

If the card is ever lost or stolen, Soldiers can visit the finance office and cancel the card. The card will be available this summer.

The Soldiers' journey from Fort Campbell has been long and filled with challenges. The team jumped location twice, each time building an office from the ground up, said Williamson.

At Q-West, the Soldiers literally built their office, and the sounds of construction echoed around Williamson as he spoke. Still, his Soldiers have performed well, he said, getting the job done with the resources available.

"They took it all in stride and were professional about it," said Williamson.

One of the improvements the finance detachment made was to build a cashier's cage. From behind the bars of the cage, Spc. Adam Sackman, finance specialist, counted out several bills and handed them

to a customer.

Sackman is from the small town of Helmville, Mont., which has a population of about 25 until the Labor Day rodeo, when it grows to 2,000. He has been a college student, ranch hand, mine worker and county employee before joining the Army.

"I've done a little bit of everything, it seems like," said Sackman.

As a cashier, Sackman checks the information from the encoder or certifier, gets the signature from the Soldier requesting funds and then disburses those funds.

In his spare time, Sackman enjoys building things with the spare wood lying around from the construction. He made a set of bookshelves, which work, but "are not that great," said Sackman.

Sackman, Williamson and their fellow detachment members work seven days a week to ensure Soldiers on Q-West receive the assistance they require.

"Our main goal is to give the best finance support possible," said Williamson.

## Eagle Card coming soon

Coming this summer, servicemembers deployed to Q-West Base Complex will have a new way of managing their cash – The Eagle Cash Stored Value Card!

The EagleCash Card is very similar to a debit card. The cardholder places value on the card and then, as each transaction takes place, the value on the card is reduced.

Adding value to the card is easy. Servicemembers can go to the finance office and receive a casual pay, write a check or exchange cash and, instead of receiving dollars, have the value immediately added to the value of their EagleCash Card. Because of the embedded microchip technology, funds will become immediately available for use the minute the customer adds value to the card.

Once you have stored value on your EagleCash Card, you can use it at the post exchange, the post office and at most local vendors on post.

There are no fees or interest incurred for using the EagleCash Card.

An important benefit of the EagleCash Card is the ability to recover funds that are stolen or lost. Usually if a servicemember loses money, it is gone.

With the EagleCash Card, the servicemember simply goes to the finance office right away and has the card turned off. The remaining money on the card will be placed on a new card.

You may also receive a cash refund for any value remaining on the card at the end of your tour.

Another convenient aspect of the EagleCash Card is the kiosk. The kiosk is an ATM-like machine that allows a servicemember to perform transactions on their EagleCash Card 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, without having to visit the finance office and wait in line.

Using the kiosk allows a servicemember to transfer value directly from the bank account of their choice onto their card. No checks or casual pays required!

Funds can be loaded to the card, or unloaded from the card into their bank account. Funds can also be transferred between two cards, and the kiosk can also be used to check the balance of their EagleCash Card.

Service members need not worry about the security of their EagleCash Card either. They simply select their own personal identification number, which is entered into the kiosk to process a transaction and can be changed at any time at the kiosk.

The EagleCash Card and the kiosk will be convenient, simple and fast ways for servicemembers to manage their money without the need to carry large sums of cash, and without having to wait in long lines at the finance office.

### 101st Financial Management Detachment

#### Hours of Operation:

Monday through Saturday

9 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday: 10 p.m. to 2 p.m.

Seven Days a Week!

NCOIC: Staff Sgt. Melvin Williamson



## DFAC Events: Awards, honors, history ... and food



Left: Lt. Col. Patricia Sellers, brigade support operations OIC, presents Sgt. Maj. Belinda Johnson, brigade support operations NCOIC, with a token in honor of Women's History Month. Johnson was the keynote speaker at the Women's History Prayer Breakfast March 23 at the Q-West Base Complex dining facility.



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

Above: Lt. Col. Daniel Gall, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion commander, presents an award to a dining facility employee. Gall presented each employee with a Certificate of Appreciation for their work on the Christmas Day meal. Gall said: "I like to eat!"

# North Carolina road warriors report Sasquatch sightings

**By Sgt. Rachel A. Brune**  
**Editor**

Who knows what lurks in the heart of the desert? If you, like the Soldiers of the 725th Transportation Company, drive the long, lonely roads of northern Iraq, you may have become aware of the phenomenon known as the Desert Sasquatch.

"It's Sasquatch-mania around the 725th," said Sgt. Jarrod Dennis, of Oakboro, N.C. Dennis, a member of his unit's gun truck platoon, first became aware of the existence of the creature during missions to Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq.

Dennis and his gun truck crew, Spc. Chase Johnson, of Fayetteville, N.C., and Spc. Christopher Snider, of Elkin, N.C., even named their truck after the elusive creature.

"They're about the same size," said Dennis. "I think my truck has bigger tires."

Large pits randomly strewn across the desert first tipped the gun truck crew to the existence of the Desert Sasquatch. They soon realized that the large holes in the ground were Desert Sasquatch fighting positions, said Johnson.

The blue flashlights, carried by Iraqi Police at traffic control points, are actually a force protection measure against the predations of the Sasquatch.

"They don't like blue lights, Pepsi cans, anything blue," said Johnson.

The Soldiers of the 725th, a North Carolina National Guard unit, have traveled through many parts of Iraq since arriving in country in June, 2005. The Sasquatch crew began running missions together in August, said Dennis.



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

**Spc. Chase Johnson, 725th Transportation Company gunner, sets up his M2 crew-served weapon before heading out on another mission.**

During that time, the Soldiers have seen many unexplained phenomena in their travels.

"Pretty much anything that happens outside the

wire that you can't explain, the Desert Sasquatch has a hand in it," said Dennis.

The Soldiers created black-and-white stickers to publicize the Sasquatch Hunters' Society.

"[The Society] is all of us and a German shepherd named Klaus," said Johnson.

The stickers read: "Got Sasquatch?"

The Desert Sasquatch is unique for other reasons.

"He's the one creature on the planet with more body hair than Chuck Norris," said Dennis.

In a controlled environment, the martial arts superstar might be able to take on the desert warrior, but in his natural environment, the Sasquatch would be undefeated.

"He does eat people whole," said Dennis.

Unlike some other Bigfeet, the Desert Sasquatch is a loner, although he is reputed to be a master aviator, joined in the air by fellow Sasquatches as door gunners, according to Johnson and Dennis.

After becoming aware of the existence of the Desert Sasquatch, Johnson and Dennis researched the creature on such esteemed Internet sites as Google.com. They learned that the Desert Sasquatch has a North American relative, the Canadian Sasquatch, who likes French fries and gravy.

"And he drives a Dodge Caravan," said Dennis.

One distant cousin is the European Sasquatch, "Le Sasquatch."

"He's trashy," said Dennis.

The Desert Sasquatch may also be related to the Asian Yeti and the Australian Yowie, but neither was available for comment.

The truth, as they say, is out there.

## Company A keeps you connected

**By Spc. Amber Moody**  
**Company A, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion**

Being the smallest unit in the 101st Sustainment Brigade has its advantages.

We are the troops of Company A, 101st Brigade Troops Battalion, the unit that supplies the 101st Sustainment Brigade and other Army and Air Force units with communications.

We are Signal, proud and defiant. We stand here with less than fifty people, and we run around at times like chickens with their heads cut off to make sure that everyone has phones and internet.

We are the communications hub for the brigade. We have equipment worth millions of dollars that allows our users to use secure and non-secure communications.

"We bring telephones, the Internet, Secret phones, and Secret internet, and video telecommunications capabilities to the battlefield," said 1st Lt. Matthew Benton. "We are currently using the newest telecommunications equipment that the Army has to offer."

"We are AT&T in a box," said Spc. Jeremy Waning as he summed up Alpha Company.

We have a help desk that images your computers so that you are on the network, either SIPR or NIPR or both. The help desk is an integral part of the unit. It allows people to bring their computer to us to be fixed. They not only focus on computers, they do work orders for lines to be run, i.e. lines for computers and phones. The helpdesk is a combination of providing general

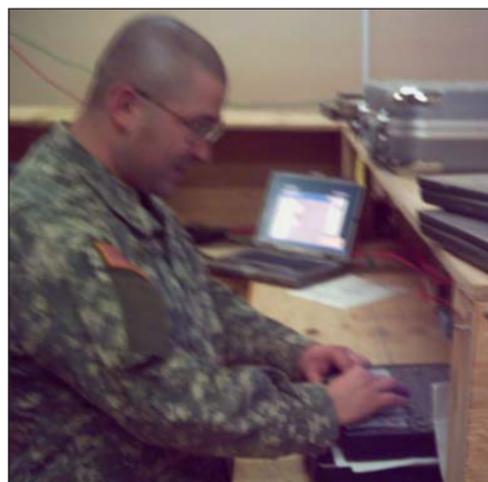


Photo by Spc. Amber Moody

**Pfc. Jose Escalante, Company A, images a computer at the help desk.**

technical support for users on as needed basis and they provide technical support over the phone for issues related to general technical issues when not needed to provide on-site support.

Network Operations, or NETOPS, is an important aspect of this unit because the people on the team help the teams we have at other FOBs run effectively and smoothly. They monitor the system and provide expertise to Company A's mission.

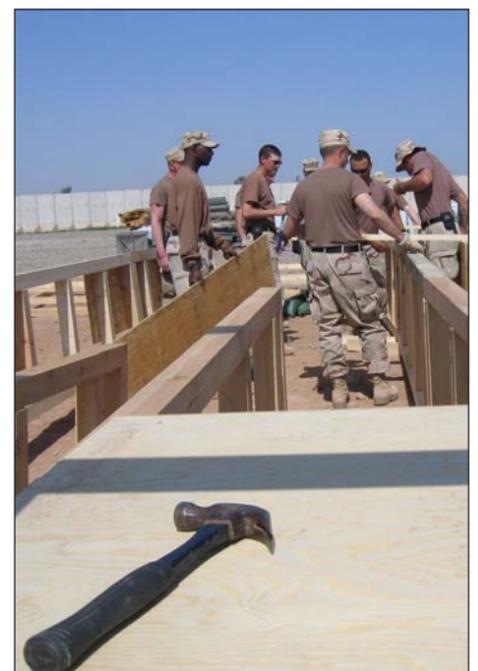
The members of Company A form part of the most dedicated and diligent Signal Support companies in the 101st. We are a team that goes for the gold and settles for nothing less. We have had to scrap and scrounge to get what we need to do the mission, but the mission itself we have never failed. We will continue to provide the best services to this brigade that we have in the past.



## Soldier-built with pride...

**Above: Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Spencer, 71st Corps Support Battalion, discusses the Soldier-built improvements to his battalion's headquarters area from the roof of the newly-opened Mendez Learning Center.**

**Right: Soldiers from subordinate units of the 71st CSB work on building a project. The finished stage will be used to host Memorial Day activities, according to Spencer.**



## SAFETY: SUCCESS THROUGH STANDARDS

By James Fraser Jennings  
Brigade Safety Officer

The safety column is usually filled with tales of accidental losses, warnings of dire consequences and suggestions on how to improve risk management.

But this article focuses on recent successes. It's time for a positive spin on a topic that is often filled with negatives.

On Feb. 13, a component failed in a fluorescent light mounted in the 101st Sustainment Brigade headquarters building. An NCO smelled the smoke and immediately ran to get a fire extinguisher.

As he extinguished the fire, a staff officer disconnected the light from the electrical source. A third person called the FOB fire department.

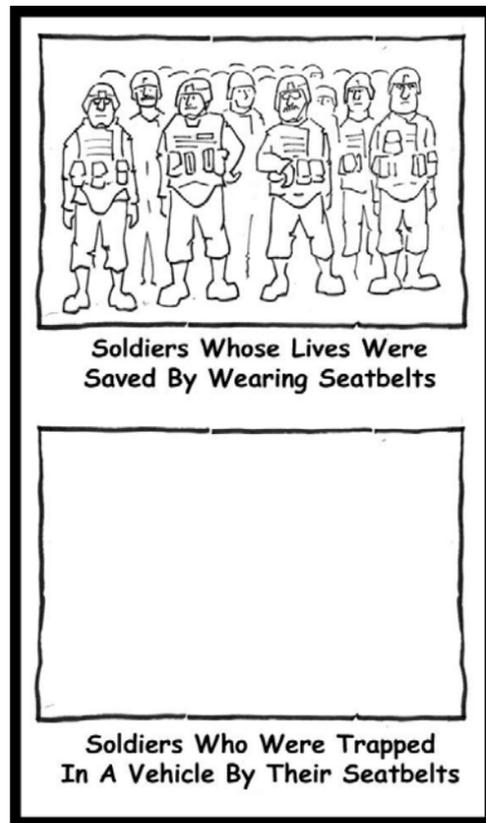
The ignition point was a faulty starter, probably the result of a factory installation flaw. Despite this problem, the ready availability of a fire extinguisher and immediate action by those in the vicinity of the light turned the fire into a mere annoyance rather than a deadly blaze.

On Feb. 26, a component failed on an M1078 5-ton medium tactical vehicle. The gun truck, traveling at approximately 45 miles per hour, rolled over.

The gunner, complying with standards repeated over and over in pre-mission briefings, immediately executed rollover procedures. He was able to drop down into the cab and survived the rollover.

In fact, he walked away from the accident. He listened to his leaders, complied with the standard and is alive today.

Two days later, an officer from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team was leading a Stryker-mounted patrol



on the streets of Mosul.

An improvised explosive device detonated, spraying deadly shrapnel into his vehicle.

Thrown violently backward by the blast, he recovered and checked his Army-issued glasses. A jagged piece of metal protruded through the lower right corner of the lens.

The glasses stopped the flying shrapnel. Compliance with Army standards on personal protective equipment saved the sight in his right eye and may have saved his life.

Three weeks in February 2006, three incidents, three success stories. The link between each of these happy endings: Compliance with known standards.

## Doc's Tips: Beat the Heat

By Capt. A. Michelle Callahan  
Brigade Surgeon

The sun can pose a significant threat to Soldiers deployed here in Iraq. It is important that Soldiers know the risks and know how to protect themselves.

Ultraviolet, or UV, radiation exposure is what causes damage to human cells. UV exposure not only comes directly from the sun, it also comes from scattered rays in the surrounding blue sky.

UV radiation can also be reflected to you from the ground. Green grass doesn't reflect much, but sand, sea and fresh snow reflect more. In our environment we don't have the benefit of grass or trees to give us shade.

UV radiation is strongest when the sun is high in the sky. There is a simple "Shadow Rule" for UV protection: The UV hazard is worst when the shadow you cast on the ground is shorter than you are tall.

The amount of UV radiation exposure increases dramatically as the sun gets higher in the sky. The exposures are most intense when the sun is more than halfway to being directly overhead.

During the summer months, you should take protective measures between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

There are both short- and long-term effects of UV radiation exposure. Short term effects on the skin

vary from a light reddening of the skin, commonly known as a "sunburn," to more serious burn with blistering.

Having a sunburn puts you at high risk for heat injury because the normal sweating mechanisms are affected.

Long-term effects include increased wrinkling of the skin, premature aging and skin cancer, and cataracts (clouding of the lens of the eye).

To protect yourself, reduce outdoor activities during the midday hours.

When outside, clothing is the first line of defense. Wear long sleeved shirts and clothing that covers the legs. To protect the head and neck, wear wide-brimmed hats.

You may have noticed that the local nationals, who are the experts at living in a hot desert environment, wear clothing that covers them from head to toe. If the skin isn't protected by clothing, use 15+ sunscreen for the exposed skin. Apply liberally and apply every 2 hours.

Protect the eyes with wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses. Wrap around sunglasses give the best protection.

For more information visit the US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil>.



Q: Why did the goat cross the road? A: To annoy the CLP.

## Female Soldiers: Tell your stories

Women have worn the uniform of U.S. servicemembers in nearly every major conflict of the past 100 years and continue to serve throughout the armed forces in this century as well.

The Women in Military Service for America Memorial is a monument, museum and historical archive dedicated to preserving and honoring the service of women in America's military forces.

Information about the Memorial and its collections can be found online at the Memorial's Web site: <http://www.womensmemorial.org>.

Any woman who has served in uniform is eligible to register her experience in the museum's archive. Eligibility includes living or deceased women veteran as well as active duty, Reserve or National Guard servicemembers. In addition, U.S. Public Health Service uniformed women, and women in the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Civil Air Patrol.

Registration is available online or through the mail. The Museum accepts donations through the Web site or through CFC donations.

The Museum is also open for event planning. Lt. Col. Patricia Sellers, brigade support operations officer, held her promotion ceremony at the museum in October 2004. It is also open for re-enlistments, commissionings and other events.

Another feature of the site is the "In Search Of" page. Members of the Memorial, family members, friends, military personnel and veterans' organizations may post listings to organize reunions or conventions, or just to get in touch.

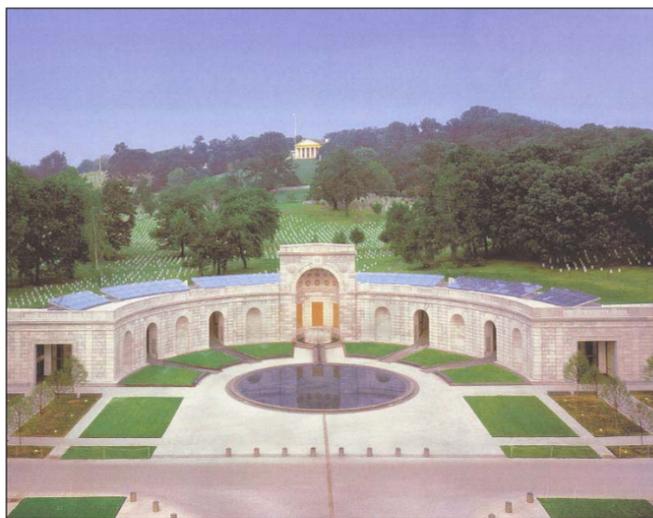


Photo by Carol Highsmith

**A wide-angle view of the Women in Military Service For America Memorial at the Ceremonial Entrance to Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va.**

The site features two resources for education, one compiled for teachers, and one for students. The Web site offers information on current collections and exhibits, as well as contact information for tours and volunteer opportunities.

If any brigade Soldier wishes to register with the Museum and contribute to its collection of personal histories of women in uniform, visit the Web site, or contact the Museum at: [regdept@womensmemorial.org](mailto:regdept@womensmemorial.org).



Photo by Sgt. Rachel A. Brune

## Hamming it up...

Some military photographers can take insightful pictures of cute local children. Somehow, the editor of the *Lifeline West* snaps shots of all the future comedians of Iraq. On a recent trip through the Makhmur, Iraq, marketplace, this young gentleman decided to show his appreciation for the fine art of photojournalism.

# 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! April 16, 2006**  
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

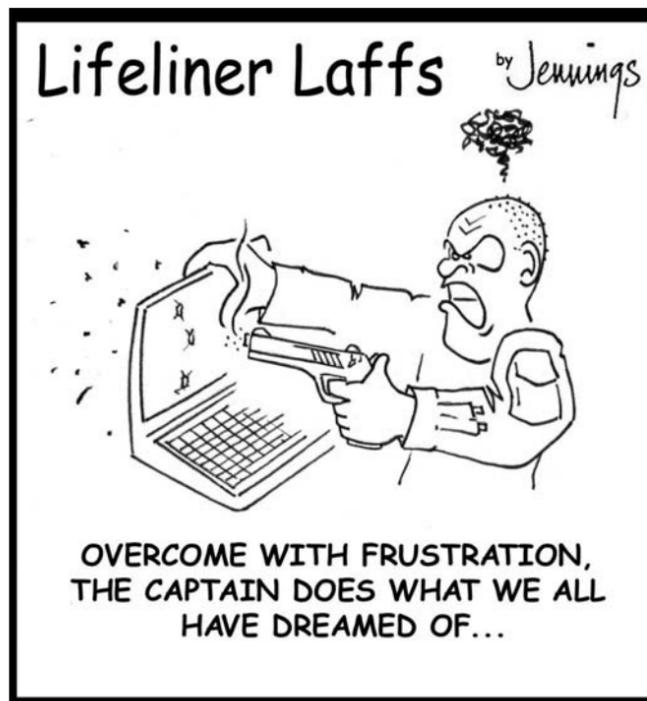
**Tuesday**  
Extreme Abs & Core Conditioning 0530  
Yoga & Mat Pilates 1900  
Abs & Glutes 1800 & 2000  
Spinning Class 2000

**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



## 142nd Soldiers make pilgrimage to ancient monastery

By Sgt. Mitch Armbruster  
207th MPAD

Hidden away from the populace of Forward Operating Base Marez sits a monastery nestled next to a graveyard of old Russian tanks.

The Dair Mar Elia Monastery of St. Elijah is located on Marez and is open to the servicemembers and civilians who live on the FOB or those living on the adjacent Logistical Support Area Diamondback.

Infantry units operate and work from Marez to provide security in Mosul and keep northern Iraq safe.

Strykers cruise down the dirt roads of the FOB while humvees and non-tactical vehicles pull to the side to let them through. With all of the FOB's activity, this small historical site has quietly endured the elements of time.

"This is a big morale booster," said Pfc. Allan Ambrose, a chaplain's

assistant with the 142nd Corps Support Battalion. "It's not everyday that you get to visit a 2,000-year-old monastery."

Soldiers found the trip allowed them a chance to view a historical location unlike the tourist sites available to them back home.

"I'm a spiritual person," said Spc. Whysheka Robinson, who works for the 203rd Personnel Service Battalion. "This gives you time away to think to yourself. Coming to a site like this is something different. It's something new that you don't see in the United States."

The commanders of many of the units have supported the visits by allowing their Soldiers time to go to the monastery.

"The Soldiers are in awe when they step inside the monastery. They have this feeling that they are get-



Photo by Sgt. Mitch Armbruster

Soldiers walk from the monastery on FOB Marez.

ting a piece of history," said Capt. John P. Smith II, a chaplain for the 142nd CSB and tour guide for the monastery trip. "They can almost put themselves back in the fourth or fifth century and realize all of the history around here and they are a major part of that now."

Visiting the monastery is a great experience for all Soldiers and shouldn't be limited to those with religious backgrounds, explained Smith.

"Those who have a more religious base are going to see the experience through religious lenses. Those who don't are going to see it through historical lenses. Either way, it's all good because there is a lot of history here," Smith said.

The last Wednesday in November is dedicated to remembering Mar Elia, a man that entered the monastic life and established the Dair Mar Elia Monastery sometime before A.D. 595.

## Lifeline West Caption Contest!



### We still need funny!

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.

## Ready for your 15 minutes of fame?

Contact the brigade public affairs office!

(302) 673-5142

\*Hometown News Releases...

\*Unit Events...

\*Missions...

\*Anything cool!



## OFF THE WIRE: News from the American Forces Press Service

### 4th ID trains Iraqi soldiers on GPS, combat lifesaving

#### Army News Service

BAQUBAH, Iraq (Army News Service, April 10, 2006) – Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division are helping train Iraqi soldiers on how to use the Global Positioning System and how to save the lives of wounded buddies.

#### Global positioning system

The 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, is training the 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, on how to use the GPS. Through GPS technology, Soldiers use satellites to locate and navigate to predetermined positions.

Sgt. Justin Buck of the 3rd BCT, 4th ID, is in charge of the GPS training, which he does with the help of an interpreter.

“We drive out to a location and have the Iraqi army soldiers plot the position of our location. They then call the coordinates up to their higher headquarters,” said Buck, a Wilson, Okla., native.

“It’s good for us to be



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

**Staff Sgt. Paul Briscoe instructs an Iraqi army soldier on how to properly monitor a casualty's pulse.**

training on this. It will help us in the future,” said one Iraqi soldier.

#### Combat lifesaving skills

Combat lifesaving skills are also being shared with the Iraqi soldiers by members of the 3rd BCT, 4th ID, 1-68 Combined Arms Battalion.

“The whole point of this training is for their infantry soldiers to be able to keep their buddies alive long enough for the medics to arrive,” said Staff Sgt. Paul

Briscoe, a medic with the 1-68 CAB.

“It’s almost like our [U.S. Army] combat lifesaving training, but they are not using some of the advanced techniques,” said Briscoe, of Las Vegas, Nev.

With the Iraqi Army becoming more independent and conducting operations, U.S. Soldiers are providing the training so Iraqi soldiers have the knowledge and skill to be successful in security operations.



#### AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE

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## Anchors Aweigh!



DoD photo by Lithographer 3rd Class Sean Stafford, U.S. Navy

**The guided missile cruiser USS Cape St. George (CG 71) leads amphibious assault ship USS Nassau (LHA 4) and other members of Expeditionary Strike Group Eight through the Suez Canal April 7, 2006 on their way to the Mediterranean Sea.**



DoD photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Sean Stafford, U.S. Navy

**The USS Carter Hall (LSD 50), USS Norfolk (SSN 714), and amphibious transport dock ship USS Austin (LPD 4) steam in file as they transit through the Suez Canal on April 7, 2006.**

## Riggers prepare supply bundles to drop for Afghans in need

By Sgt. 1st Class Michael Rautio

Joint Logistics Command Public Affairs Office

**BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan (Army News Service, April 10, 2006)** – For the neediest citizens of this mountainous country, humanitarian and relief supplies often arrive in bundles attached to parachutes and dropped from Coalition aircraft to the ground.

Members of the 647th Quartermaster Company, made up of platoons from Fort Bragg, N.C., and Fort Campbell, Ky., have prepared 82 such bundles – with 45 tons of supplies – since arriving here Feb. 12.

They Soldiers are known as riggers because of their mission: rigging the bundles to parachutes and preparing them to withstand the exit from an aircraft, the descent and finally the impact with the ground.

They also are responsible for making sure they have enough supplies to build each bundle. For a winter bundle, that means blankets, shoes, sugar, stoves and coal; for a survival bundle, that means tool and hygiene kits, beans, rice, cooking oil, salt, tarpaulins and more.

Building bundles takes time, accuracy

Bundles are built on request, based on when the aircraft will be taking off, explained Army Staff Sgt. Raul Mercado, a rigger deployed from Fort Campbell. Each bundle takes about 20 minutes to build.

“A container delivery system, or CDS, is used to

prepare the supplies for the airdrop,” explained Chief Warrant Officer Cortez Frazier.

The supplies are wrapped up with a cargo harness and secured to a skid board. Once a bundle is secure a parachute is attached to its top.

A regular cargo parachute, 64 feet in diameter, or a high-velocity parachute, 26 feet in diameter, may be used. The type of chute depends on the durability of the supplies and the size of the drop zone, explained Sgt. 1st Class Tommie Selmon, also from Fort Campbell.

Before a bundle is loaded onto an aircraft, it must be inspected by a member of the aircrew and a member of the rigging team. This “joint air inspection” ensures that the bundles have been properly rigged, Mercado said.

Once a bundle is on an aircraft, the crew and riggers make sure it can exit the aircraft properly, and then they attach its static line to the anchor line cable. A static line pulls out the pilot parachute, which in turn deploys the main chute when the bundle leaves the aircraft, Mercado said.

Upon landing, Coalition troops on the ground break the bundles down and distribute the contents. The parachute and other gear used to drop the supplies are returned to Bagram for future use, Mercado said.

While the riggers of the 647th don’t get to see the results of their work, they know they are making a contribution to the rebuilding of Afghanistan, one



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Michael Rautio

**Sgt. Juan Felix, a rigger with the 647th Quartermaster Company based at Fort Campbell, Ky., pushes a pallet into place aboard a C-130 Hercules on Bagram Airfield.**

said.

“It feels real good. I am very confident in everyone doing (his or her) job and everyone is happy to be here,” said Sgt. Harvey Johnson, from Fort Campbell.

(Editor’s note: Sgt. 1st Class Michael Rautio writes for the Joint Logistics Command Public Affairs.)