



# IBC

***Iron Brigade Chronicles***

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**MEDCAP helps  
children, adults**

**Pages 6-7**

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## Cover Photo

A little girl stares into the camera at the recent medical civil action project where Soldiers with the Iraqi Army and coalition forces provided medical care to citizen in the city of Tahrir. (photo by Pfc. Paul Harris)

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**Strikers-**

The hottest part of the summer is past, and although we lost a lot of sweat over the last 30 days (and stand to lose a bit more until the weather cools somewhat), it's another milestone in our deployment. With temperatures extending well into the 130s for weeks at a time, I am proud of the junior leadership's demonstrated ability to ensure our Soldiers are practicing proper hydration and eating well enough to offset the effects of these deadly temperatures. Our heat related casualty numbers are nearly non-existent. I am equally proud of the fact that such conditions did nothing to dull the offensive spirit of our Soldiers. You continue to take the fight to the enemy aggressively and relentlessly. On the streets, in the palm groves, and across the fields, our Soldiers continue to seek the AIF. It's impressive to watch.

Also impressive is the noticeable change in the discipline indicators such as uniform wear, IED discoveries, vehicle preparation, and weapons handling and care. In the last note I asked our leaders to take a hard look at these areas and work to keep our Soldiers sharp. It's a force protection measure at its basic level. Again, our young leaders have responded and the difference is apparent. **Great work!** But remember that this is a "what have you done for me lately" category that requires constant emphasis. Stay after it!

This next month will bring some changes in our formation. The "Bandits" of 1st Squadron, 32d U.S. Cavalry will depart for a well earned rest. They have fought a tough enemy and dominated him in every engagement. The "Hunters" of 2d Squadron, 9th U.S. Cavalry and the "Headhunters" of 5th Squadron, 73d U.S. Cavalry will bring additional combat power and capability to Diyala Province. Additionally, although the "Fighting Eagles" of 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry and the "Pacesetters" of 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery will not move physically, they'll align under another headquarters for the remainder of our time here. No matter, we'll continue to assist them in any way that we can.

I suppose the topics foremost on everyone's minds are the successful conclusion of the current mission followed closely by the possibility of another deployment in the Fall of 2007. As

you know, this is an unforgiving environment and taking your eyes off the mission could have deadly consequences. However, I also know that many of our Soldiers, their families, and their friends are concerned greatly by a short turnaround and return to combat and this could serve as a distraction. **Let me repeat what I told the Rear Detachments in July: while the possibility exists that we may return in the fall of 2007, I assess the probability of this occurring as low.**

Believe me, the Army understands that a short turnaround places a great deal of stress on families and that extending the lifecycle for this unit would break the faith it established with the Soldiers when this lifecycle concept began. I think this would occur only if the Army had no other recourse, and I am confident the senior leadership will do everything possible to avoid such a situation. However, we must acknowledge that the decision to employ units is driven by conditions on the ground in Iraq and that the Army will require of us whatever is needed to support national policy. That's why they call this the "service." **My advice at this point is this: allow the dust to settle on these matters and have faith that the Army leadership will make the best decisions given the Nation's requirements. I also told the Rear Detachments we'll probably get some better indications of what our future holds in September; so, be patient.**

The complexity of this AO grows daily. There are many forces and interests battling for control of this province. The lethality remains. You need to stay focused when you go outside the wire and when you walk around base. Continue to work on improving our Iraqi partners in the Army, the Police, and on the border, and continue to take the fight to the enemy. This is a critical time in the development of the Iraqi democracy and the Iraqi people need our help. Do the best you can. **"Steadfast and Loyal"**



Col. Brian D. Jones

**Soldiers -**

We have been in Iraq now for nine months and our Soldiers, non commissioned officers and officers have been doing a GREAT job. With only a few short months left I would like all of our Troopers to take a close look at our enemy again. As I have said so many times: "the enemy is always watching. If something does not look right, its not, so be careful."

Everyone who has been in our unit for more than a week has had this lesson drilled into their head. REMEMBER they are watching! When you move on the ground reacting to an IED, when you speak to the Iraqi people, when you patrol from FOB to FOB, you should assume that the enemy is collecting information about you and your Soldiers so they can KILL you.

Do everything you can to avoid setting patterns. The enemy needs time and a place in order to attack you; setting a pattern gives him that opportunity as we have seen in the past. Leaders do not allow yourself or your Soldiers to get sucked into this fatal tendency of complacency. The enemy will KILL you.

Most Iraqis are glad to have this brigade in their province. They realize that we are here to create a secure and stable environment for them to live and work in. Unfortunately, the enemy - ranging from foreign terrorists to unemployed Iraqis - will do anything in their power to hurt or KILL us. Their weapon of choice - the IED.

IED makers range from the very smart to the very stupid (we have killed or captured most of the stupid ones). Makers of these IEDs use everything from advanced

to simple techniques to achieve their desired result - to KILL us. They hide their IEDs just as varied, using human or non-human subjects.

Regardless of these facts, all attacks can inflict injuries or death on us and the Iraqi people. Always remember to pay attention to details. It will save your life and the lives of our Soldiers. **God Bless the Soldiers and Families of the 3rd Brigade!**  
**Strike 7**

Command Sgt. Maj.  
David H. List

# Key to saving time is to ship early

by Spc. Michael Pfaff

133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

After several months of being in Iraq, many Soldiers have accumulated a variety of excess gear and luxury items that will invariably be too much to take with them on the flight home.

In order to get the extra movies, books, souvenirs and many other things home, the answer will be to ship it through the postal service available at various forward operating bases.

Staff Sgt. Chuong V. Quach, the custodian of postal effects for the 394th Adjutant General Company at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, says a little planning can prevent you from waiting in long lines, sometimes up to four hours long, during the re-deployment rush to get excess items shipped home.

"There are a few minor things that people can do to make our lives easier, and get their package home as painlessly as possible," Quach said.

First, the best time frame to send packages home is four to six weeks prior to re-deployment, Quach said.

"I understand some last minute things come up, but most of the things people need to send home can be sent much earlier than two weeks prior," he said.

Most people try to send things home around the two-week mark, he said, which causes an extensive backup and long line.

The benefit of shipping things home early doesn't just mean avoiding the long lines, but also allows greater flexibility in terms of the type of shipping options that are feasible when trying to get your package home before you arrive.

There are two methods for shipping: space available mail, or SAM, and priority. SAM usually takes four to six weeks, whereas priority is usually two to four weeks, but SAM is significantly cheaper.

"If you don't care when your package arrives, it's best to use SAM," Quach said. "But, our cashiers will give you the cost of both when you get here."

Quach also recommends measuring and weighing your package before coming into the post office because there are some restrictions in terms of how large a package can be. He said that

packages cannot measure more than 130 inches when you add the height, length and width. And, the package cannot exceed 70 pounds. Expect to pay up to two and three times the normal shipping price for packages over 30 pounds.

Once you've decided when to ship, the method to ship it and you've measured and weighed the package to ensure it can be shipped, Quach suggested stopping by the post office and picking up the customs forms and address forms.

Make sure to correctly

fill out the customs and address forms. Putting a second address form inside large packages, like footlockers, is recommended in case the outer addressing rips the package can still be sent.

Also, by filling out these forms prior to coming to ship your package, you can get right in line for inspection.

All packages must be inspected prior to being shipped. Do not close the package before you show up at the post office, because it'll just have to be opened again and inspected.

A list of contraband can be obtained from the post office, but notable items include, flammable liquids (such as cigarette lighters), any type of weapon, or weapon accessory (such as sights, handguards, etc.), sand and soil, etc. Also, only one copy of items purchased from Iraqi merchants may be shipped. Cell phone batteries should be wrapped separately.

The neater the package is packed, the less time it'll take to inspect it and you can get up to the cashier and finally get ready to send your package. Make sure to bring plenty of cash,

because the post office only accepts cash. All the materials you need to prepare your package for shipping can be found at the post office, including tape, markers, etc.

Quach said that by following this simple guideline, shipping packages home for re-deployment

should be no hassle and help you avoid long lines.

"This is really going to help us out a lot," he said. "Just by having everything prepared before you come in will save everyone a lot of time."

*Packages cannot measure more than 130 inches when you add the height, length and width. And, the package cannot exceed 70 pounds. Expect to pay up to two and three times the normal shipping price for packages over 30 pounds.*

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# Entertainment Center is big change at Norquist building

by Pfc. Paul J. Harris  
IBC Staff Writer

The Norquist Morale, Welfare and Recreation building at Forward Operating Base Warhorse got a partial facelift. The building's former cardio room was closed down and transformed into an entertainment center for Soldiers and FOB employees.

The decision to make the conversion was prompted by MWR's staff members who believed the room was under used, and that most Soldiers gravitated to the other two gyms, Salie and Cash, instead of doing their cardio at the Norquist cardio room.

With the conversion complete, a grand opening was held August 6 with a ribbon cutting ceremony presided over by Chaplain (Capt.) Leonard Siems, chaplain, 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers.

The new Norquist Recreational Room is equipped with pool tables, a big screen TV, plush couches and ping pong tables. Since the entertainment center is connected to the Norquist phone and computer centers, which are open 24 hours, seven days a week, it will share the same hours.

With the upcoming football season rapidly approaching Soldiers like Spc.

Travis Draper, combat engineer, Company E, 1-68 Combined Arms Battalion, is already planning to spend Sunday evenings on some of the couches and beanbag chairs.

"I think a lot of people will make time for it now that it is here," said Draper. "It is not run down; it is a nice place to actually go play."

Before the grand opening Soldiers who wished to play pool were subjected to playing inside of the MWR hangar. With temperatures averaging around 120 degrees it was not the most pleasant of places to play. Now with the pool tables moved inside with air conditioning it

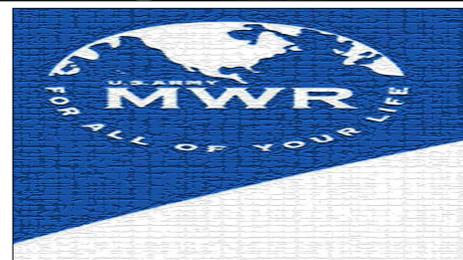
presents a nicer area to relax in.

"I think people will look forward to it while waiting for the phones or computers," Draper said.

Maj. Bobby Haskin, chief of operations, 3rd HBCT, praised MWR for their hard work.

"We do not say thanks enough to the MWR folks, who really do look out for our best interests," Haskin said to the gathered crowd. "They work just as hard as we do and it is not always appreciated."

The new addition will be open to all personnel who are approved by force protection to use MWR facilities.



Photos by Pfc. Paul J. Harris

(Above) Spc. Veren Govindeisami, gunner, Company B, 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd HBCT, plays ping pong after the grand opening of the new Norquist MWR Entertainment Center. The EC is open 24-hours, seven-days-a-week.

(Left) Spc. Travis Draper, combat engineer, Company E, 1-68 CAB, 3rd HBCT, prepares to "break" while playing pool at the grand opening of the new Norquist MWR Entertainment Center at Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

# WINNING HEARTS, MINDS WITH A MEDICAL CIVIL ACTION PROJECT

by Pfc. Paul J. Harris  
*IBC Staff Writer*

With tears welling up, a little Iraqi girl reacts to receiving a shot from a coalition forces medic that will clear-up her upper respiratory infection. While pain is minimal, the after effects will provide her with a more healthy start in her young life.

The little girl's medical treatment was courtesy of the Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division and Soldiers from 1-68 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers, who jointly conducted a medical civil action project in the town of Tahrir; a town that is not used to readily available

medical care.

A building in the town had been converted into a waiting room, pharmacy and doctor's offices where one Iraqi doctor, Capt. Farhan, from 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, and one American Maj. Jeremy Beauchamp, battalion surgeon, 1-68 CAB, prepared to see patients.

Word of the MEDCAP was broadcast over Humvee loudspeakers that joint forces were ready to see patients; then the people began to pour in from the surrounding streets.

"It's one way to make the Iraqi people see the Iraqi Army and the U.S. as good people," said 1st Lt. Edmond Jackson, operations officer for the Military Transition Team, 1-68 CAB, about the

MEDCAP.

Often the local people hear information about coalition forces and the Iraqi Army that has been distorted by the enemy, Jackson said as he was about to be overrun by a squad of six year-olds who desperately wanted the Beanie Babies in his hands.

While the medics were treating Iraqis, Jackson and his Soldiers were handing out toys, pencils and notebooks to the children.

One Iraqi father bought his little boy to be examined who had been shot by an AK-47 and still had the bullet lodged in his head. An old x-ray his father brought with him showed the bullet had barely missed his spinal cord. Surprisingly,





the boy had few complications from the bullet, but he will eventually need surgery.

"It is disheartening," said Spc. Kimberly Smoot, a healthcare specialist with Company C, 64th Brigade Support Battalion on loan to 1-68 CAB for the mission. "There is not a whole lot we can do for something that would be easy to fix in America (yet) would be impossible here."

Smoot referred the man to Baghdad General Hospital and said she wished she could take every severe patient she saw back to the U.S. with her, but knew that would be impractical.

Part of the reason for the MEDCAP exercise was to get the Iraqi people comfortable with coming to a clinic that will eventually be run by their own government.

One Iraqi man who came to the MEDCAP to seek treatment for an ulcer was glad to see an Iraqi doctor present. The man said through an interpreter he felt more comfortable seeing an Iraqi because he is from the same country, speaks the same language and knows more about the common issues he might have. Though he pointed out he was happy with the U.S. involvement with the Iraqi Army because he felt it has made the Iraqi Army stronger.

Capt. Farhan said the majority of medical issues locals face is due to the lack of iron (mineral) incorporated in their daily diet. He made a point to give out the pink

iron supplement pills with almost every case he saw.

Three or so hours later, with the last patient of the day seen, Beauchamp was happy with the way the MEDCAP turned out.

"(The MEDCAP) shows people a different side to the American and the Iraqi Army; instead of riding down the street in their armored vehicles and their guns pointing outward. It fosters good will between all of us," Beauchamp said. "We are here on the ground with smiles - there is more of a personal face to both the Americans and the Iraqi Army."



Photos by Pfc. Paul J. Harris

(Left) An x-ray of a local Iraqi boy shows a bullet still lodged outside of his brain, yet inside of his skull. The boy will eventually need surgery. (Inset) The boy's father talks with Maj. Jeremy Beauchamp, Battalion surgeon for 1-68 CAB, about his son's condition.

(Above and bottom right) Capt. Farhan, brigade surgeon from 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, checks on patients. Most of the patients he saw were men and children.

(Upper left) Maj. Jeremy Beauchamp checks the foot ulcer of a woman who has Spina Bifida. The patient said she has had the ulcer for ten years.



# Field Artillery unit bids their Cavalry brothers farewell



Marking the end of their time here, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Vuono, left, presents B Troop, 2-9 Cavalry Commander, Capt. Toby Austin with a plaque honoring their service.

Photos by Spc. Lee Elder

by Spc. Lee Elder

*133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Part of a cavalry unit's job description is to be on the move; so its latest relocation comes as no surprise to members of B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Band of Brothers.

The troop is leaving Logistical Support Area Anaconda and is headed to Forward Operating Base Warhorse but will eventually wind up joining the rest of its squadron at FOB Normandy. It's the fourth move for the squadron since arriving in northern Iraq eight months ago.

Packing up and leaving does not phase his troopers said the unit's top noncommissioned officer, 1st Sgt. Martin Kelley. He said it was just part of being in the cavalry.

"We've been operating independently for more than eight months," Kelley said. "My guys are pretty disciplined and the cavalry's organization is to go where you're told. A lot of times we're told, 'We want you 100 (kilometers) away and we want you there yesterday,' so we're used to doing that."

The move allows B Troop to relieve Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division, who have worked the hard-fought area in and around Muqdadiya. Kelley, who hails from Laurel, Del., said either way, the cavalry's mission remains focused on finding the enemy.

"They give us our battle space area and then our objective is control that area," Kelley said. "We do route clearance (operations) and get with the population to find out where the insurgents are at. Each area we move to, the mission is pretty much the same."

To show his unit's appreciation, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Vuono, commander of 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery, 3rd 3rd HBCT, gave the Troop's commander, Capt. Toby Austin, a plaque marking the Bulldogs' service as a part of Task Force Pacesetter. He said B Troop had played a large part in the Pacesetter battalion's success operating in and around Logistical Support Area Anaconda.

The task force was unsure of its mission and the blending of different units while they were training up in Kuwait. However, those concerns were put to rest when they met face to face, Vuono said.

"From the moment I met Capt. Austin and our brothers here from B Troop, 2-9 Cav, I knew we had something special," said Vuono. "I love you guys and I appreciate all the hard work."

"I am sorry to see you go because I know there's more to be done."

While B Troop is off on its next mission, Vuono said the bond would remain. He wished the departing Soldiers luck on their next mission.

"You are always members of the Task Force Pacesetter, 3-29 Team," Vuono said. "I appreciate you."

For his part, Austin said his unit is grateful for its time as part of the task force. He hoped the Soldiers would all see each other when they returned to their home at Fort Carson, Colo.

"I just want to say thank you," said Austin, a Tampa, Fla., native. "Your support has been outstanding. 'You brought us here and took care of us. It was great working with you.'"



As they prepared to leave LSA Anaconda, 1st Sgt. Martin Kelley gives Soldiers from Troop B, 2-9 Cavalry, their marching orders.

# Training keeps medic platoon sharp, missions keep them busy

by Spc. Lee Elder

*133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Soldiers of the Task Force Pacesetter Medical Platoon show a lot of heart as they manage the day-to-day task of taking care of more than 600 Soldiers here while remaining vigilant.

The bulk of the platoon has only two or three years in the Army, and they lack the manpower given to many of their counterpart units across northern Iraq.

Yet, they find a way to get the job done and protect the lives of fellow members of 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Band of Brothers, who have yet to have a Soldier killed during more than eight months in this contentious area.

"We have a small section, but everybody does his part," said Sgt. Justin Folts, who serves as the platoon's treatment noncommissioned officer in charge.

The medics' tasks include the daily sick call hours, riding as medical support on combat patrols, training the task force's combat lifesavers and the constant task of being prepared for casualties from indirect fire. Logistical Support Area Anaconda, where the platoon is based, is a constant target for insurgent mortar attacks. Folts works hard to ensure the nine medics in the platoon are trained for whatever mission comes their way.

"They are very high speed," Folts said. "They are very smart and motivated. That's the number one key, motivation."

That motivation starts at the top, Folts said. He praised the platoon's physician assistant, Capt. Paul Ruchalski Jr., as a professional, trainer and leader without peer. "He's the best I've ever worked with."

Second Lt. Casey Russell and Sgt. 1st Class Brian Delaney serve as the platoon leader and platoon sergeant, respectively. Both credit the Soldiers for being a group that rises to every challenge without complaint.

"They have a crazy schedule," said Delaney, "They are always having to cover down because there is nobody there to replace them."

Russell, said many

infantry medical platoons may have as many as 40 Soldiers. But, since the 3-29 is a field artillery unit, they don't have as many medics allotted to them even though the unit has daily patrol missions.

"We're always switching medics around to cover what is most important," Russell said.

Delaney added that their flexibility allows them to cover so many missions with such few bodies.

"We do alright," he said. "Our guys are young, but they have a mature outlook and realize the importance of what they are doing."

Although sick calls and missions outside the wire keep the platoon's Soldiers hopping, there is always time for training. This is crucial due to the constant indirect fire threat.

"When you do encounter a situation and your nerves are all shattered and everything is in chaos, you have to be able to react without having to think," Folts said. "It (should) all come naturally."

It's late morning, but the temperatures are already blazing. This is not an unlikely battlefield scenario for northern Iraq.

"We try to make it (training) fun. It's not a real high-stress thing. There's not somebody yelling in their face," Folts said. "We practice on a regular basis what the basic scenarios are, and that's where the critiquing comes in. It's a matter of confidence building."

The medics also function as trainers. They must ensure the task force's combat lifesavers

are certified to perform medical tasks and that their equipment and supplies are current and functional.

"We have to refresh the whole battalion... and I have to coordinate with the first sergeants to get all the classes together," said Spc. Brian Koerner, the platoon's treatment team leader. "I make sure all of the Soldiers' first aid equipment is up to speed."

Koerner said the battalion's preparedness has paid off during the summer months. With temperatures often more than 120 degrees, the task force has been spared most major heat-related injuries.

"We are keeping the Soldiers well educated on hot weather and everybody is staying well hydrated and nourished," Koerner said. "We try to work with the patrol leaders to make sure the Soldiers aren't overworked during the day."

The medics have dealt with a variety of ailments during their tour here. First, it was upper respiratory infections, later many Soldiers battled gastritis as they acclimated to a different diet. Strep throat was also another health challenge.

"Strep throat puts you out for a while," Koerner said. "You're down and you have a fever and you're losing fluids."

Koerner exudes a quiet confidence that typifies the platoon. He said the medics believe in their mission, in their leadership and in themselves.

"We are fully functional," Koerner said. "We can treat everything that comes up in here. We're definitely more than ready."

Army medics Spc. Joseph Garrison, right, gives oxygen to a mock patient during medical training. Also shown is Spc. Kyle Climo. Both are members of the Task Force Pacesetter's medical platoon. (Photo by Spc. Lee Elder, 133d Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



# A motley crew creates "Alternate Soul"

by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski  
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

In a small containerized housing unit fortified with blast barriers in the middle of Forward Operating Base Warhorse is where "Alternate Soul" was born.

Five Soldiers got together, all from different parts of the country stateside, and all with slightly different preferences of music.

Throw in a hectic work schedule in the middle of a combat zone and the result is an authentic sound that the name hits right on the head.

Sgt. Anthony Smith, a tow missile technician with the 64th Brigade Support Battalion and the bands lead guitarist explains, "Alternate Soul has an Alternative Rock background with Soul overlaid on top of it."

The bands favorites range from Alternative Rock's Linkin Park to R&B's Lloyd and even country music's Rascal

Flats.

Pfc. Jerrado Bryant, a Bradley mechanic with the Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers, covers the R&B vocals.

"I have been singing since I was nine, I grew up in a church as a Pastor's son," said Bryant who is from Pensacola, Fla. Bryant. Bryant trades off lead vocals with Spc. Daniel Franz of the BSB when the band plays more alternative sounding songs.

Franz works as a vehicle mechanic and provides convoy security for Company B when needed. He also adds a little humor to the group.

"I have never sung before, but I have done one tour in a cold shower," joked Franz who hails from Brussels, Wisc.

The newest addition to the band is Spc. Franklin Belvin also with HHT, 3rd

HBCT, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers. Belvin is a wheeled vehicle mechanic and bassist for the band.

"The band covers the best of both worlds. We have one vocalist that can sing the R&B side and one that can sing the Alternative side," said the Hampton, Va. native.

Laying down the beats for Alternate Soul is its drummer Spc. Benjamin Callis who is also a wheeled vehicle mechanic with HHT.

"It gets me away from everything else and I kind of disappear into the music," said Callis who is from Indianapolis.

Guard duty, convoy security and vehicle maintenance in a combat zone doesn't stop these guys from getting together to refine their new sound.

The band already has 12 of its own songs and has all the ambition to stay together and cut a record once they get back to Fort Carson, Colo.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

"Alternate Soul" is composed of five Soldier/musicians that met at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Iraq. (Left to right) Pfc. Jerrado Bryant vocals, Spc Benjamin Callis, drums; Sgt. Anthony Smith, guitarist; Spc. Franklin Belvin, bassist; Spc. Daniel Franz (inset) vocals.

# Medic ignores own pain to provide aid for fellow Soldiers

by Pfc. Paul J. Harris  
IBC Staff Writer

July 14 was the day Hell paid Pvt. Eleazar Garcia, combat medic, a visit. While on patrol, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle he and his squad mates were riding in hit an anti-tank mine.

The Bradley's fuel line ruptured, hitting Garcia in the face and pouring fuel on his legs, which ignited. The Bradley filled with smoke and rendered Garcia temporarily blind. Jumping out the hatch of the burning Bradley, Garcia said his head was ringing like church bells and his eyes were burning, but he knew what he must do.

"As soon as I got my vision back I saw my sergeant fall off the Bradley, he was in flames," said Garcia, who is assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment attached to 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers.

"My pants were on fire, but I was like (expletive) my legs for right now," Garcia said. "I went to help my sergeant."

Fortunately, the mine exploded near a canal and Garcia rushed to put his sergeant into its water. He then striped off his still burning pants before going back to the Bradley to help the others. Even though he too was burned, the most important thing to Garcia at the time was make sure all three of his squad mates were all right.

The two other Soldiers in the Bradley also suffered burns from the explosion and needed immediate medical attention. Garcia was able to move a second Soldier to the canal and extinguish the flames with water before the MEDEVAC helicopter arrived.

As he was helping the third Soldier, the Bradley fire was starting to over heat the ammunition, which was beginning to explode. Garcia paid no attention to the rounds cooking off as he climbed the embankment to get to the third Soldier.

Garcia looks back at this moment and chuckles a bit because he was naked from the waist down, running to find his squad mate while dodging rounds from the burning Bradley.

During this time the MEDEVAC arrived and a still half-naked Garcia helped load all three patients into the helicopters before he himself was medically evacuated to Logistical Support Area Anaconda. At the LSAA he was treated for burns and smoke inhalation and six hours later found himself on a flight to Germany.

Garcia said he was upset on the flight over because he was listed as a litter patient and unable to get up and go talk to his squad mates. Sadly, after arriving in Germany one of the Soldiers Garcia tried so hard to save, passed away.

With the loss of one Soldier and two others suffering, one with second and third degree burns over 60 percent of his body, Garcia found it difficult to visit his squad mates - to see them in so much pain. It was a constant reminder of the hellish day they spent together, he said.

Not wanting to stay in Germany, he gave everyone around and connected to him two choices.

"He told them in Germany either you send me to Brook Army Medical Center (in San Antonio, Texas) or to my squadron, because I do not want to stay here anymore," said



Photo by Pfc. Paul J. Harris

**Pvt. Eleazar Garcia, receives the Army Commendation Medal for Valor from Lt. Col. Arthur Kandarian, commander, 1st Sqdn., 32nd CAV, during an award ceremony August 1 at Forward Operating Base Normandy, near Muqdadiya, Iraq.**

Garcia's section leader and treatment NCO Staff Sgt. Robert Loring. After ten days in Germany, Garcia was sent back to his unit in Iraq.

"He came back ready to go," Loring said. "He wants to go out on the line, but we're holding him back. We almost lost him once, he has done his time."

Garcia and the rest of 1-32 CAV are due to return to the U.S. soon. He said he's looking forward to taking some time off to go back to his hometown of Harlingen, Texas to visit with friends, family and taking a trip to San Antonio to see his two squad mates who are now recovering at Brook Army Medical Center.

In the meantime, Garcia calls his parents frequently to let them know he is OK, and to tell them about the medal he received. Even now, he says when he calls home his mother worries and often scolds him.

"You better not be doing anything crazy! And I am like, chill out mom," Garcia said.

For his actions on that day, Garcia was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for Valor during an award ceremony August 1 at Forward Operating Base Normandy near Muqdadiya, Iraq. The day of the ceremony Garcia had mixed emotions about receiving notoriety for his actions.

"I felt weird," Garcia said. "I was trying to help my guys, not get a medal."

Though Garcia might have been uneasy at accepting a medal, others in the audience were proud for him including his first sergeant, 1st Sgt. Kevin Statam.

"He was hurt. He was wounded. And he put that to the side and went and helped his guys out," Statam said. "In my eyes that makes him a hero."

# FAR # 9

**Far # 9 Burn or shred everything that has writing on it. Don't make e-mail that enemy's friend. Remember, OPSEC!**

Last month during a raid of a suspected anti-Iraqi forces location, coalition forces discovered some startling evidence. In the mix of AIF propaganda CDs, IED making materials, and a weapons cache, were real home addresses to CF officers and Soldiers. How these addresses found their way to that location is a mystery, but we can all gather on our own the possible and probable method.

All of our Forward Operating Bases have local nationals who work and live with us. These LNs blend in to the background and enjoy the feeling of our friendship. They greet us during the day; they eat meals with us; and even share the same work space. The problem comes when we become comfortable with our LNs.

To see LNs taking out the trash is not uncommon, nor is it uncommon to see LNs carrying papers or folders. We have come to trust that they are simply doing the right thing. We would never suspect that they're actually our enemy collecting information for their enemy organization in disguise.

While we would like to put our 100 percent trust in our LNs, the bottom line is that we cannot. Like any spy, they are the last people you suspect. That is why it's so important to burn or shred everything that has writing on it. When you get mail from home, cut the address off the box and burn or shred it. When you print off e-mails for hard copy use, don't print off any thing that is secret or could assist the enemy in their objective. Lastly, remember OPSEC!

# Random Thoughts

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

*Commentary by Chaplain (Maj.) Rory Rodriguez  
3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery*

I wish to be personal with you in this article that I will write in hopes to pass on to you my reader the absolute joy that I am experiencing because of the value of relationships that I have discovered. At this period of my life, I am more convinced than ever that relationships are a key to having fulfillment in ones life. I wish that I would have understood this powerful lesson sooner in my life. In meeting and talking with Soldiers each day I usually get around to talk to them about their personal relationships either here or back home. I do this because relationships have a way of affecting ones heart or spirit – both positively and negatively. Let me share some recommendations to you:



1. Take time to begin a new relationship. Doing this will make you "come out of your shell" so to speak. It is vitally important to start new relationships because it has such a positive impact.
  2. Take time to cultivate current relationships. This is highly important for those who are married and have children.
- Cultivating relationships will bring great dividends with your family.

In beginning and developing relationships be consistent, caring and giving of yourself. In doing this, you will also discover the joy of having relationships.

## Photo share -- show off your view of Iraq here



Photo by Spc. Michael Cox

Taken from his CHU at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, the photo shows the sun at sunset. With palm trees in the background, you would never think it was taken in Iraq.

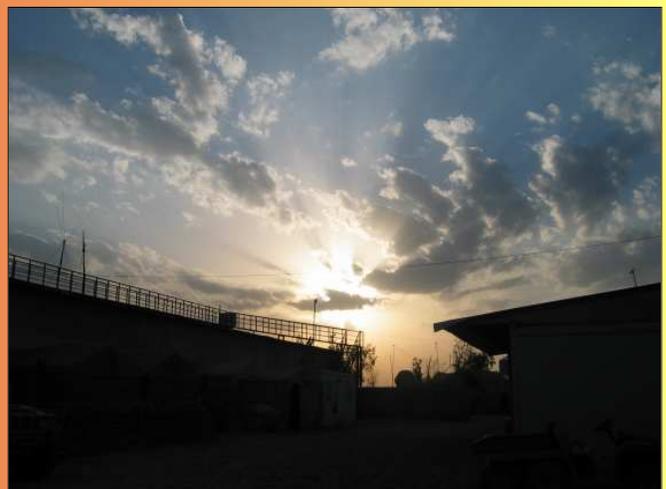


Photo by Staff Sgt. Sheryl L. Lawry

Keeping with the sunset theme... this photos was taken outside of the Public Affairs office at Forward Operating Base Warhorse just before sunset.

To see your photos here, e-mail them to: [zachary.mott@us.army.mil](mailto:zachary.mott@us.army.mil). Photos can be anything from a promotion to everyday life on the FOB. Please include as much information about the pictures as possible.