

Marne Focus

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Supporting Soldiers in MND-Center



The 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment Soldiers inspect a vehicle in the Four Corners market district during a cordon and search of the area May 3.

Cav searches Four Corners district

Story and photos by Spc. Ben Hutto
3rd HBCT, PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER — The 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment conducted a cordon and search and an economic assessment of the Four Corners market area southwest of Narhwan Thursday. It was the regiment's first squadron-sized mission since their arrival to Iraq in late March.

"We came here and were looking at ways we could help stimulate the local economy and create job opportunities for the people of this area," said Lt. Col. John Kolasheski, from Knoxville, Tenn., the 3-1 Cavalry commander. "I think it was very successful and we were able to make a statement, 'We are here to help.'"

Squadron members cordoned off the market place at 10:30 a.m. and spent the day talking with local business owners and searching cars for anything suspicious.

"The people had a lot to talk with us about, but their main concern was security," said Capt. Tavares Tukes, from Savannah, Ga., the 3-1 Cavalry adjutant. "We have a massive amount of projects we want to assist the Iraqi government with and we used today to get a gauge of what was most important to the people."

Cavalry Soldiers and the Iraqi National Police conducted random vehicle searches but found nothing suspicious.

"The fact that we didn't find any weapons or explosives was a good sign that the local police force is doing a good job," said Tukes.

See **SEARCH**, page 8



Self-defense

Female self-defense course kicks butt

page 6&7



Dedication

Paratrooper completes 100th patrol

page 8



Your money

SCRA and your rights

page 10



Marking Territory

Pvt. Dewitt B. Woods, petroleum lab specialist, 260th Corps Support Battalion, 82nd Sustainment Brigade, paints the 3rd ID patch at his battalion head quarters. See page 4 for story.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Felix A. Figueroa
82nd Sustainment Bde.



Marne 6 sends...



Commander stresses safety

Cautions against failure to recognize heat, fatigue, other risks

There are lessons in combat that are relevant to everyone here in Task Force Marne and every one of our families and friends at home. Read this carefully because you might just save a life.

Recently, a Soldier here was nearly, seriously injured in a fall from a tower where he was performing his duties. I listened carefully to the division safety officer's account and then we all shared a lesson learned. You can imagine the many ways a simple fall can cause grave consequences.

It's night. There is little visibility. The Soldier takes his focus off of what he is doing for a split second. He loses balance and plummets to the earth below.

Very easily a bone can be broken, a muscle or ligament torn, cuts and bleeding. The recovery time can be significant, often taking a Soldier out of action for long periods of time and placing others with the responsibility of carrying on without help.

Add body armor and a weapon and the consequences are even greater. The added weight can deliver a crushing blow to the human body. Gear meant to protect you suddenly becomes a hammer in a fall. The weapon the Soldier carries, intended for fighting the enemy, becomes a threat to its operator.

Then there is the somber reminder that a similar incident had resulted in a Soldier's death.

I wonder to myself if the young man in this example was familiar with his work environment. Was he experienced? Was he accompanied? Was he fatigued? Did his leaders take time to assess the place where he worked for all potential hazards? And were the risks mitigated?

You have heard the empty wish. "Be safe," someone says. And they mean well but when empty words are uttered by a leader, we have a recipe for disaster. It's time to be very specific and the margins for error are small.

You have all heard me emphasize the importance of engaged leaders. Leaders owe it to every member of the team to take steps to mitigate environmental and occupational risks to safety.

Take a look around. The temperatures are beginning to soar. Folks are sweating. There is fatigue. You might be in unfamiliar territory. The risks are automatically elevated. And this applies here in Iraq and at home in the United States – on duty or off.

In walks a leader. He or she takes time to assess risks. This might even be a collective effort with other members of the team. Risk factors are recognized. Resources and other mitigation techniques are applied. The tragedy that never happened is the reward for good work to the engaged leader.

Take a look around. Fellow members of the team might be readying for well-deserved time off at home. There are good times to be had. There is time lost that needs to be made up. There are thrills that are fleeting and, after all, you only live once. That's right. You only live once.



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch

In walks a leader. He or she takes time to assess risks. The leader, using the proactive approach talks to his Soldier. The leader gains an understanding of planned events. The leader covers all the bases, the what ifs. They talk about the consequences of irresponsible behavior, the rules of the road, and the strategy to get home alive. Once again, the leader has helped prevent a tragedy.

Too often leaders lapse into a zone of complacency. Standards of discipline are unraveled over time. An omission in one area triggers a failure in another and so on until someone gets hurt. It just can not be that way for our Soldiers. They deserve more.

We all have a part to play in safety. It takes courage to step in and say, wait a minute, this just is not right. Let's take a step back and fix this before someone gets hurt by it.

Be engaged as we enter the challenging days and weeks ahead. Approach environmental and occupational hazards with caution and above all else, leaders be engaged.

ROCK OF THE MARNE!



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TF Marne Command Info Chief – Sgt. Ben Brody

News Staff

Managing Editor – Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
Editor/Design – Staff Sgt. Samantha M. Stryker
Contributing writers - Staff Sgt. Angela McKenzie, Sgt. Kevin McSwain, Sgt. Benjamin Brody, Spc. Emily Joy Wilsoncroft, Pfc. William Hatton

Contributing Units

3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division
2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)
4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division

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Photo by Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT, 10th MTN. Div. (LI)

Sgt. Jason Lane, right, helps Sgt. Christopher Marsh, both medics with the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, treat a young Iraqi boy's injured hand at a medical operation in the town of Rusdhi Mullah.

Medics give wounded hope, despite nationality

By Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE YUSUFYAH, Iraq — “We’ve never lost a ... U.S. patient here,” said Capt. Christopher Tilton, a physician’s assistant with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

Tilton, optimistically boasts that wounded Soldiers who come to his aid station on Forward Operating Base Yusufiyah have a great chance of surviving.

It’s an impressive claim to be able to make, considering that Yusufiyah has historically been an area where many Soldiers and Iraqi civilians alike are wounded.

Spc. Fernando Gallegos, a native of Torrance, Ca., and a medic also assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, out of Fort Drum, N.Y., said he enjoys the challenges of his job.

“We see a lot of massive trauma here,” Gallegos said. “Gunshot and improvised explosive device wounds, lacerations and heavy bleeding.”

The condition of incoming casualties does not hinder Gallegos’ medical performance.

“I get really calm (when I’m working). Everyone has fear, but I find I think very clearly. Sometimes I do things without even realizing it,” he said.

The work he does as an Army medic will serve him later, he hopes.

“To have experience like this – it makes people who they are and who they will become in the future. I want to be a firefighter when I leave

the Army, and spontaneous treatment of casualties will help out in the emergency medical services aspect of that,” Gallegos.

The battalion medics often conduct medical operations in local villages. They set up litters as examination tables and bring traveling pharmacies to treat local Iraqi citizens for every-

“I think it is safe to say that every other aid station in the brigade combined still hasn’t seen as many patients as we have.”

-- Capt. Christopher Tilton,

physician assistant

thing from minor coughs and colds to serious burns and shrapnel wounds. But the local nationals around the FOB bring their wounded to the aid station, knowing they can receive care that is otherwise nearly impossible anywhere else in the area.

“This brigade is big on conducting (medical operations),” Tilton said. “We do them almost every day. I think it’s safe to say that every other aid station in the brigade combined still hasn’t seen as many patients as we have.”

Most of the patients the medics and providers treat are children younger than 15-years-old, said Tilton.

Sgt. Jason Lane, a native of Austin, Texas, recently treated a two-month-old infant for a stomach virus. The child’s father brought him in late one evening.

“He hadn’t been able to keep food down for about a day,” Lane said. “We gave him baby formula and instructions on how to give it to him and how often. It was more of a tutorial on parenting.”

The Soldiers enjoy helping the Iraqis, but building strong relationships with the Soldiers they work with is essential, said Sgt. Charles Fields, a native of New York, N.Y., because it reduces fear in combat.

“If Soldiers know they have good medics, they’ll take more risks, because they know their medics will take care of them,” he said.

Still, some of the most difficult work is with the Iraqi civilians.

“Terrorists mortared a playground,” said Fields, recalling an incident not long after the brigade arrived in Yusufiyah. “There were a lot of children, and most of them ended up dying. That lasted hours. It was terrible; that was my first time working with children like that. I’d never seen children so badly wounded.”

Now, he said, things have calmed down – at least a little.

“Sometimes we go a week without seeing a trauma, and then we’ll have a week with 20.”

And despite the things they see – which many people would find too disturbing – they manage to find humor.

“They continually keep morale up and do a phenomenal job,” said 1st Lt. Aaron Brooks, a native of Syracuse, N.Y., who serves as the battalion’s medical operations officer. “They’re definitely a huge asset to the brigade, to say the least. They’re amazing.”

Keeping tradition, unit history alive

Soldier shows off artwork, make lasting impression

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Felix A. Figueroa
82nd SB Public Affairs Office

CAMP ADDER –In most places it is a crime to write or draw on the walls, but not in Logistical Support Area Adder. Service members here do so to show their unit pride.

“When you walk into a building, first impressions go a long way and that reflects directly upon the leadership. Having young Soldiers paint murals is my way of teaching them to embrace their past,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight Williams, 260th Corps Support Battalion, 82nd Sustainment Brigade.

Williams joined the Army in 1979 and said he remembers seeing displays of unit pride with plaques, streamers or inspirational words strewn throughout his barracks walls. Many of the paintings depicted attacking panthers or Vietnam era Soldiers in battle.

“A sense of unit pride and tradition is what I hope these young troops walk away with after painting these murals,” Williams said.

Pvt. Dewitt B. Woods, petroleum lab specialist, 260th CSB says he loves it when his command sergeant major gives him the opportunity to showcase his talent.

“For me, painting provides the much needed escape during deployments. Long after I’m gone, my mark will be here for many to reflect on,” Woods said.

Woods says his grandfather, Roger Woods, Sr., is responsible for passing on the love for art. According to Woods, his grandfather painted murals in his room and carved musical boxes out of discarded scrap wood. He hopes to one day to travel the world with his 2-year-old daughter admiring famous works.

What began as drawing famous cartoon characters evolved into his style depicting gun slinging angels to complicated tribal patterns.

Besides his grandfather’s influence, the 26-year-old Kansas City native attributes the loss of his twin sister and the birth of his daughter as inspiration to his work.

“I just want to positively influence my daughter and share my talent with the world. Maybe she’ll pick up a paint brush,” Woods said.

Another Soldier, Sgt. Maj. David E. Tindall, the senior enlisted advisor of Multinational Corps-Iraq Army Reserve Affairs, recalls art from his era.

“My earliest memories of art or graffiti in the Army were inspirational words on our doorways such as WETSU (We Eat This Stuff Up!),” Tindall said.

Tindall enlisted in 1972 because it was a family tradition. His father, Col. Robert Tindall, (retired) is a WWII era Marine who fought in Iwo Jima.

“I saw styles change from the popular nose art of my father’s era, to theme based emotionally driven art from the guys who served in Vietnam. It provides a positive channel for young troops and reduces vandalism,” Tindall said.

Both sergeants major agree that in a new transformational Army, it is important to keep tradition and organizational history alive.

“The challenge for our new leaders is to pass on such traditions, while maintaining and enforcing standards. Show the world what your unit is all about, and painting it on a wall is definitely a positive approach,” said Tindall.

After the 260th CSB is long gone, Williams says he wants to leave his mark behind to show others “we were here,” he said.



Marne Focus

Photo by Staff Sgt. Felix A. Figueroa
82nd Sustainment Bde.

Pvt. Dewitt B. Woods outlines the 3rd ID patch.

NCOs continue missions virtual battlefield

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Samantha M. Stryker
3rd Inf., Div., PAO

BAGHDAD – The title conjures images of a fearless yet savvy warrior charging into a fight with nothing but victory on his mind - Battle Non-commissioned officer.

But the days when commanders stood on the high ground watching unit guidons maneuver through combat are gone. Now leaders monitor their battle space in operations centers that resemble NASA ground control. He can see his entire battle space on large screens linked by integrated computer systems and communicate with subordinate units by secured telephone, radios or shouting across the room.

No matter how a commander monitors his area of responsibility, one thing will never change. He is supported by noncommissioned officers.

Sgt. 1st Class David Braner, an armor crewman, is one of four battle NCOs for the 3rd Infantry Division, G3 Operations in the division operations center. He works the night shift.

“It is a mentally exhausting job with long hours,” said Braner as he simultaneously updated the information flowing into the DOC on the Command Post of the Future computer system, trained the newest member to the staff and provided the battle officers with updates on events from earlier in the day.

“I receive the reports and determine how to categorize the data,” explained the Charleston S.C., native. “Then that data goes to the battle officer and the chief of operations.”

That data is information about missions, operations or events planned or unplanned in 3rd ID’s area of responsibility or along its boundaries.

Once given the information, the battle officers package and present it to the division commander who relies on the information to be not only accurate and relevant, but timely and brief Braner said.

Why would leaders pull NCOs from the line to sit and shift through mounds of information and make reports? Because it is the experience these NCOs bring to the staff position that makes them the logical choice for the job.

A former deputy chief of the Leaders’ Training Program, Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La., then Capt. Marcus F. de Oliveira, author of ‘What now, Battle captain? The who, what, and how of the job on nobody’s books but found in every unit’s TOC’ wrote:

“Assign a ‘high-speed’ noncommissioned officer as the battle captain, or at least as an assistant. NCOs are among the great underused assets in TOC operations.”

Another NCO whose field experience makes him an asset to the battle staff is Sgt Jordan McCue, an infantry Soldier with Division G3 Op-

erations. He admits he did not know what to expect as a battle NCO.

“Initially the biggest challenge was the change from (being in) a line unit to sitting in front of a computer,” said McCue.

Having worked in the DOC for less than a month, the Oshkosh, Wis., native says he sees firsthand how important the flow of information and good coordination among the division staff directly affects ground forces.

“Working here helps me better understand what happens in the command’s decision-making process, how many people are involved from the top down,” McCue said. “There are a lot more people involved than one would think and they know what they are doing,” he added.

The infantryman said he watches and learns about the challenges faced by the leaders when division assets are redistributed.

“I get to see the multiple factors that the commander must consider that ground Soldiers do not think about, such as weather or the priority of need. I get to see the big picture, every little thing that takes place in the units,” said McCue.

Battle staff positions are filled with Soldiers who must manage the day-to-day operations of corps, division, regiment, group, brigade, battalion and squadron command posts. The command post is usually located in the commander’s headquarters and is established for the planning, monitoring and guiding the execution of the commander’s decisions.

Battle staff NCOs are skill level three, sergeants first class or higher who have successfully completed either the Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course or the resident Sergeants Major Course.



Sgt. 1st Class David Braner



Sgt. Jordan McCue

Recognizing leadership, promoting leaders

Master Sgt. Cassandra Tribune, division chaplain assistant noncommissioned officer-in-charge, is promoted to sergeant major by Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Task Force Marne and 3rd Infantry Division commander, in front of the task force headquarters, May 1.

Photo by Sgt. Ben Brody
3rd Inf., Div., PAO



Marne Focus

ARM YOURSELF

Self-defense class gives Soldiers another weapon

Story and photos by Sgt. Kevin McSwain
TF Marne Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq —It's dark, you are alone and an attacker jumps from behind a bush.

Some people may fear this scenario, but for some female Soldiers of the Task Force Marne team this is just another training exercise.

In observance of sexual harassment month, Soldiers are trained on how to protect themselves in dangerous situations.

"The class has helped me feel more confident about walking places at night," said Pfc. Jessica Nugent, a transportation movement request manager with 384th Movement Control Team.

Nugent said the instructor taught the class that the best defense is a good offense.

"We are taught moves that help us become the dominant force in the altercation," she said. "We are able to neutralize the attacker and get away to safety."

The class, held every Saturday

until the end of the month, is open to females.

"Our goal is to train these females and eventually integrate them into the Modern Army Combatives class," said Sgt. 1st Class Mike Jones, the Information Operations noncommissioned officer in charge with Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, 3rd Infantry Division.

Jones, who is one of only 83 level IV combatives instructors, said he planned to begin more extensive training soon.

"We hope to have our facility ready by the end of the month," he said. "This (training) with the females gives them a chance to get use to the contact of the training and a strong base of knowledge to build on."

Nugent, who is from Arapahoe, Neb., said that she has learned more than just how to protect herself.

"We have learned to protect ourselves in different situations, but we have also learned how to avoid danger," she said. "We learned to take precautions and use self-defense as a last resort."

Nugent said some of the tips from the class include, always walking with a battle buddy and letting others know where she is going, and when she should return.



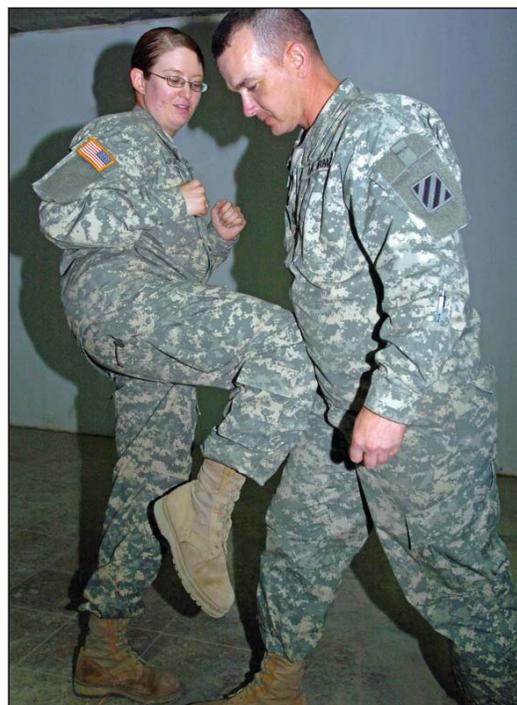
**P f c .
Jessica
Nugent
performs
a back kick on
Sgt. 1st Class Mike
Jones during a private demonstration.
Nugent said the back kick is effective against attackers who are trying to charge from behind. The kick should be aimed at the attacker's chest, the kicking leg should be thrust away from your body for more power as you bend forward to form a T for balance.**



Left: Pfc. Jessica Nugent performs a rising block during a private demonstration. She said the rising block can be used to deflect an attacker's punch. The block is done by using your nondominant hand to deflect the blow. The arm should be held at a 45 degree angle to ensure the attack glances down the arm and allows the attackee the chance to counter.

Below: Nugent performs a tiger claw maneuver on Jones during a private demonstration. Nugent said the tiger claw could be done as a follow-up to the rising block. The move is executed by thrusting the palm of your hand into the chin of the attacker as you curl your fingers to claw at their eyes and face. The move is meant to disorient the attacker and allow you to get away.

Bottom: Nugent performs a knee thrust on Jones. Nugent said the knee thrust can be used after the tiger claw to ensure the attacker is completely disabled. The move is performed by tucking your knee close to your body and thrusting it into the midsection of the attacker.



Paratrooper executes 100th combat patrol

Story and Photos by Sgt. Marcus Butler
4th BCT (A), 25th Inf., Div., PAO

ISKANDARIYAH - A day begins like any other for the Paratroopers of 1st Platoon. But for one, this day breaks the century mark for leaving the safety of the forward operating base on combat patrol missions.

Spc. Brian Amis, Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, a native of Tampa, Fla., put on his gear and climbed into the turret of a Humvee ready

to execute his 100th mission for the day.

"I remember the first time I left for a mission and having that feeling of not knowing what to expect," said Amis. "Now a few missions later, I see the reality of our job out here. Bad things are going to happen no matter what."

Amis said he joined the Army right out of high school at the age of 19 as an infantryman because he wanted to serve his country and better himself.

"The guys that I work with are a great group," said Amis. "Everyone pulls their weight and no one ever drags behind. I wouldn't change them for the world.

"Amis is a squared away Paratrooper," said Spc. Cameron Williams, Oklahoma City native, a team leader for Amis and his three-year friend.

"Amis pulls more weight than any other Soldier that I have ever seen."

"His attitude is always positive and he is always looking for ways to better himself and others," said Williams. "With his happy-go-lucky attitude he is always in a good mood and never has anything negative to say."

For his 100th combat patrol, Amis served as a gunner with the M240B medium machine gun weapon system. However, that is not his only job. On any given day his role, as well as the role of any other platoon member may change.

"I am not always a gunner," said Amis.

"Some days I am a driver and then other days I am the one dismantling the humvee."

On the numerous patrols leading up to this milestone, Amis has received his fair share of enemy contact. During previous missions, 1st Platoon, Co. C, has encountered improvised explosive devices, small-arms firefights and indirect fire attacks from mortars.

"Amis is a very good Paratrooper who is motivated and always ready for the fight," said 1st Lt. Craig Markiewicz, 1st platoon leader, Co. C and Valley, Wash., native.

"His determination along with his fun loving attitude is what makes him an excellent Paratrooper," said Staff Sgt. Lance Amsden, 1st platoon, Co. C, platoon sergeant.

Now three years after joining the Army, in Iraq for 15 months, Amis knows this is where he is supposed to be.

"I would not change my job for anything in the world," said Amis. "Being an 11B (infantryman) gives me a sense of pride and purpose that I can't find anywhere else."



Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler
4th BCT(A) 25th Inf., Div., PAO

Spc. Brian Amis, 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division stares down the scope of a 240B medium machine gun to provide security for his fellow Paratroopers May 3 in the town of Hamiyah, Iraq.

from SEARCH, page 1

Kolasheski was equally happy with the INP performance.

"A huge part of this operation involved the Iraqi police and the National Iraqi police," said Kolasheski. "I think it was reflective of their ability. They can reach out and help their own people a heck of a lot faster than we are able to."

The cavalry unit secured the Four Corners market district, of Narhwan and Salaman Pak region's economic hubs, locked it down in a matter of minutes.

"I think that this shows the insurgent element what we are capable of," Tukes said, "By shutting down such a big area that quickly, we demonstrated to them that we can stop their entire operation in a short amount of time."

While the display showed 3-1 Cavalry's ability to perform, they were conscious not to disrupt the average citizens' daily lives anymore than needed.

"The challenge was to ensure the populace understood that we were doing it for their safety and security," said Tukes. "It can be a very fine line, but I think we accomplished that with the police. People were very accommodating. They allowed us to search with no problems. We were invited into several homes and shops. So that is a good sign."

"Our guys were very professional and did a good job of executing their duties," said Tukes.

The squadron will work hard to keep a good rapport with the citizens that frequent the Four Corners and plan on monitoring the area frequently with their Iraqi partners, according to Tukes.

"I think the operation was a good way to start operations in the Four Corners area," said Tukes.



Staff Sgt. Benjamin Thurman and Capt. Tavares Tukes search a home in the Four Corners market district.



A 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment Soldier talks with local shopkeepers in the Four Corners district.

Photos by Spc. Ben Hutto
3rd HBCT, PAO

If you want to know what a Soldier is really thinking, ask.

In their own words

Here are some thoughts from Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, out of Kelly Hill at Fort Benning, Ga., who recently arrived in theater. For more than a few, this is their second and third Iraq deployment.

Rifleman, Spc. Lance Palen, of Oak Creek, Wis., who, at the age of 22, is already a veteran of war against terrorism. His unit arrived in early March. A Soldier with 2nd Platoon, Company A, Palen recalls his last deployment compared to this time in country.

I was with 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment in '04 to '05 in Baqubah," he said. "This time, it is a lot less violent; the enemy is not as outwardly aggressive, than the last time. Now they are paying more attention to our tactics and using more roadside bombs with bigger blasts; and snipers seemed to be used more. The last couple of days have been quiet (in Salman Pak).

"This time we are not in containerized housing units, we are in 25-man tents, and there are no phones where we are at this time. But the mail arrives a lot quicker and I do not have to eat just MREs." When his unit was notified that they were part of the 'surge,' they were also told they would serve up to 18 months instead of the regular 12-month tour in Iraq.

"We were pushed out early, four months early, after just having completed training at (the National Training Center) in February of this year.

"I do not mind," Palen said. "Deployments are the best part of the Army. We get away from the boring garrison activities. Being here longer helps us know what is routine and what is not out here. We have time to train and get physically fit.

"I like the idea of a full year back. I have time to get settled and breathe and get the proper training before deploying. Palen recently re-enlisted.

"I was supposed to ETS 30 days after we got back from NTC. I was stop-lossed. After weighing my options, I re-enlisted."

Nineteen-year-old Pfc. Michael Fellows is a squad designated marksman, and a native of Chubbuck, Idaho. When fellows was told that the unit was to be part of the troop 'surge' he was 'pretty pissed-off'.

"I had made plans to visit someone. My birthday is May 29, and the reality of it is I will be 21-years-old when I get home."

Like many young would-be heroes, Fellows looks for his moment of glory.

"I am here doing my job; providing security for the people Iraq and coalition forces. I understand that you cannot fight an IED



Spc. Lance Palen

or vehicle-born IED. When something does happen, I have not been there. I hear firefights. But if I cannot earn my combat infantry badge while I am out here, I am not doing my job."

Fellows does not see insurgents as the greatest threat to Iraq.

He does not see the need for units to serve 15-month tours, because he sees firsthand how Iraqi security forces are ready to take the lead.

"The deployments need to be changed back to 12 months because living and working with Iraq security forces, I can see their potential. I can see them taking over my job of providing security," Fellows said.

Living conditions have not been what fellows was told by veterans.

"I was told that we would have gyms, phones and computers to contact our friends and families back home. All we do is eat MREs when we are off the forward operating base."

For

Hawthorne, Ca., native, Pfc. Cody C. Bailey, this is his first tour in Iraq. The 21-year-old Bradley Fighting Vehicle driver was not surprised by the news of an early and extended deployment.

"I knew we would deploy. I did not like how they just changed the date because I lost an airborne school slot. I just like knowing ahead of time to be ready and take care of stuff. So I like the idea of 12 months."

Listening to veterans and what he saw in the news, Bailey's admits he had very different impressions of Iraq.

"I thought this place would be crazy."

"I had some hint that we may work with Iraq's National Police or the Iraqi Police, but I did not know that we would be living with them. But it is an opportunity to get to know more about the Iraqi people, the language and some cultural differences."

The cultural differences were a shock to the Californian.

Bailey said, exasperated, "One of the biggest challenges for me is tolerance for the culture. I think it is sad and frustrating to see the conditions the children have to endure. We take everything for granted. Here they do not have clean water, there is trash everywhere and there are no schools."

The infantryman quickly regrouped, and with resolve, stated for the first time he felt he had a purpose in this country.

"When I saw the kids waving, I knew why I was here. We can't change the way insurgents fight, using IEDs, suicide vest IEDs and children. But we can help rebuild schools and clean up the trash. Helping them with better living conditions, making life better – that makes me feel good," he said.

He agrees with others that the Iraqi security forces have potential to take over the security responsibilities for their country.

"I can see the potential for the government in Iraq," he said.

What is Bailey hoping to accomplish in his first tour to Iraq?

"I know I took part in a war where we helped to reform a government and a way of life."



Pfc. Cody C. Bailey



Pfc. Michael Fellows

Getting interest relief during deployment

Story by Spc. Chris McCann
2nd BCT, 10th MTN Div.

So how can a Soldier save the money from a tax-free, incentive-laden deployment like Iraq or Afghanistan?

"Apply for the Servicemember's Civil Relief Act," said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Harvey of Binghamton, N.Y., the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division human resources and finance noncommissioned officer in charge.

"Any credit from before joining the military can carry no more than six percent interest - often a huge drop. And what many Soldiers don't know is that often, major lenders will even honor the Act in regards to debt incurred while in the military. Major credit cards, lienholders on vehicles, mortgages, and other large-scale credit agencies will assist military personnel by lowering interest. Even federal student loans, which are low-interest to begin with, will defer payment until after military service."

"The benefit is that you can make payments, but you don't have to," said Harvey.

"Anything you can't get the interest lowered on, calculate the highest-interest debts and pay those off first, so that you stop accruing that interest."

Soldiers, not knowing their rights, may be continuing to pay bills for American cell phones they are not using, for example.

"They can still request relief," Harvey advised. "Companies will often give credit backdated to the time of deployment."

Harvey said he learned of this policy when he applied for relief of a debt - and the company backdated the payments, giving him not only a zero balance, but even an \$800 credit to his name.

The legal office can also help with advising Soldiers of their financial rights under the SCRA, and aid in drafting request letters, Harvey said.

"Send the request anyway," he advised. "The worst they can say is no, and all it takes is a letter, and maybe a copy of your (temporary change of station) orders."

The military also provides for almost all of a Soldiers' needs, he said. Eating at the dining facility rather than Pizza Hut or Burger King can save a bundle over the course of a year. Harvey also suggested enrolling in programs such as AnySoldier.com and Operation AC, which send care

packages to deployed service members. Frequently, the Soldier who gets a package doesn't want or need everything in it and will give it away or trade it to others. DVDs can be borrowed from friends and returned; candy and snacks come in care packages; the Army supply system can procure almost any militarily necessary item, and the dining facility provides meals.

"That way you don't have to spend your money at the Post Exchange," said Harvey. "I will never buy another personal hygiene item over here. Even shower shoes."

While he cautioned against being greedy, the savings cannot be argued with.

'Financial reward' is a four-part series by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn., Div.

WEBSITES FOR TROOPS;

AdoptaSoldier.com is supported by veterans organizations.

Americasupportsyou.mil is a Department of Defense program.

AdoptaUSSoldier.org was founded by a mother of a Soldier who is currently on his second tour in Iraq.

Operationadoptasoldier.com originated at Mt. McGregor Correctional Facility in Wilton, N.Y.

AdoptaPlatoon.org is a non-profit organization since 1998, managed by Moms.

Soldiers angles.com is another Mother sponsored program serving the military since 2003.

Soldiers save money when returning to active duty

The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act of 2003, formerly known as the Soldiers' and Sailors' Civil Relief Act of 1940, is a federal law that gives all military members some important rights as they enter active duty. It covers such issues as rental agreements, security deposits, prepaid rent, eviction, installment contracts, credit card interest rates, mortgage interest rates, mortgage foreclosure, civil judicial proceedings, and income tax payments. It also provides many important protections to military members while on active duty.

The SCRA protects active duty military members and reservists or members of the National Guard called to active duty. The protection begins on the date active duty orders are received and, in limited situations, dependents of military members (e.g., certain eviction actions).

To receive protection under some parts of the SCRA, the member must be prepared to show that military service has had a "material effect" on the legal or financial matter involved. Protection under the SCRA must be requested during the member's military duty or within 30 to 180 days after military service ends, depending on the protection being requested.

In many situations, the SCRA protections are not automatic. For example, to obtain a reduction of your pre-active duty mortgage or credit

card interest rates, you should send your lender or creditor a written request and a copy of your mobilization orders.

Legal advice is available. If you think that you have rights under the SCRA that may have been violated, or that you are entitled to be shielded from a legal proceeding or financial obligation by the SCRA protections, you should discuss the matter with a legal assistance attorney or a civilian lawyer as soon as possible.

The Six Percent Rule

One of the most widely known benefits under the SCRA is the ability to reduce pre-service consumer debt and mortgage interest rates to six percent under certain circumstances.

How does the six percent interest rule work?

Consider this example: Three months ago Mr. Smith and his wife bought a car for \$13,000, paying \$1,000 down and financing \$12,000 at nine percent interest.

Last week, Mr. Smith was called to active duty as Staff Sgt. Smith. Before entering active duty he earned \$42,000 per year. As a staff sergeant he now earns almost \$27,000. Because of the SCRA, Smith may ask the car financing company to lower the interest rate to six percent while he is on active duty. The mili-

tary service has materially affected his ability to pay since he is earning less money on active duty than before.

Smith should inform the finance company of his situation in writing with a copy of the orders to active duty attached, and request immediate confirmation that they have lowered his interest rate to six percent under the SCRA.

The finance company must adjust the interest down to six percent unless it goes to court.

In court, the finance company, not Smith, would have to prove that his ability to pay the loan has not been materially affected by his military service.

The three percent difference is forgiven or excused, and Smith need not pay that amount. He does need to continue making the monthly payments of principal and interest at six percent to avoid his account being considered delinquent. Continuing payments should also avoid any adverse credit reports from the finance company.

What if instead of buying the car before he came on active duty, Smith left his car at home for his wife and purchased a used car at his duty station. To do so, he borrowed \$4,000 at nine percent interest. Since Smith took this debt after entering active duty the SCRA six percent interest limit does not apply. Information provided by www.jagcnet.army.mil.

Celebrating our heritage, recognizing leadership qualities

A speech by Chaplain Danile Kang for Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2007

The first Asian Pacific American Heritage Week was celebrated in May 1979.

In 1992, the week was expanded to a month-long recognition when President George Bush, Sr., signed the law permanently designating May of each year as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

In many years American society was called as a "melting pot," however, that term has been changed and nowadays people describe American society as a "salad bowl."

In a bowl of freshly tossed salad, all the ingredients are mixed together. Yet they never lose their shape, form or identity.

Together, however, the ingredients make up a unity. In a sense, all the ingredients of a salad contribute to the finished product.

From this point of view, America is very much like a salad bowl where individual ethnic groups blend together, yet maintain their cultural uniqueness.

That is why we celebrate our heritage and uniqueness tonight because we bring our uniqueness to our society.

The theme of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month of this year is "Pursuing Excellence through Leadership."

The question is what kind of leadership achieves excellence?

There was a man name Joseph. He was from Israel but lived in Egypt. He started as a servant of a house of the captain of the guard of Egyptian King Pharaoh.

He brought great leadership to that house while he honored and carried his own heritage proudly. He achieved and displayed faithful service to his master. His excellence of leadership was well known to his master and others.

Therefore, his master put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned.

Joseph achieved excellence through his servant-leadership. He kept his integrity and served his master and others.

Later on, this same man, Joseph became a great leader of nation Egypt. He was appointed the second-in-command. Pharaoh put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.

Although he came from different cultural background than Egyptians, his excellence displayed in his leadership, he kept his identity and he didn't forget where he came from.

I believe his sense of his own heritage and culture gave him wisdom and strength to pursuit excellence in his leadership in Egypt.

The leadership that Joseph displayed was based on two things. First, it was from his knowledge of his own heritage. He didn't lose his identity and he knew where he came from.

Second, it was from his servant-leadership. What I mean by servant-leadership is to be faithful with a few things or small things.

Joseph began to display his leadership as a servant of just one house. He was faithful to small thing.

You may a just leader of your section with two people. You may a leader of whole platoon.

It doesn't matter because leadership is not all about a rank. You could achieve a great leadership by just doing a right thing. By following simple rules and showing integrity to your peer and leaders, you display your leadership whether people see it or not at that time.

The 34th Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki didn't begin his carrier as General.

He began as a butter bar, 2nd lieutenant but he was faithful to small thing and a few things as a lieutenant.

Within a few months of his graduation in 1965 from the West Point, he was a second lieutenant on his way to Vietnam to serve as an artillery forward observer.

On a second combat tour he commanded a tank squadron. During those Vietnam tours he was wounded three times and displayed enough courage and leadership to earn the devotion of his men.



Chaplain Daniel Kang

I believe you are a great asset for America, you bring your excellence of your heritage more importantly you bring excellent leadership to our military and our nation.

We have celebrated Asia and Pacific heritage for a couple of decade now and this will continue to next generations.

Our children and children's of their children will inherit our heritage and bring harmony to this great nation. We need to teach and pass down our heritage to next generation not only celebrate once a year.

We will pursue excellence through leadership.

A leader who know s where he/she came from and continues to pass down his/her heritage to their next generation.

A leader who is faithful to small things and take it seriously don't matter how small it might be.

We, as an Asian Pacific American, let us pursue excellence in this leadership in order to bring unity and harmony to our great nation.

Let us proudly carry our heritage.

Those of you from different cultural background than Asian and Pacific heritage I also challenged you to share your heritage with other and learn from each other so we will bring harmony and excellence to our organization and nation.

Always thinking about Soldiers, an old poem with the refrain "I've got your back" seemed like ...

Comforting words for our Soldiers on the Battlefield

I Got Your Back

I am a small and precious child, my dad's been sent to fight...
The only place I'll see his face, is in my dreams at night.
He will be gone too many days for my young mind to keep track.
I may be sad, but I am proud. My daddy's got your back.

I am a caring mother. My son has gone to war...
My mind is filled with worries that I have never known before.
Every day I try to keep my thoughts from turning black.
I may be scared, but I am proud. My son has got your back.

I am a strong and loving wife, with a husband who had to go.
There are times I'm terrified in a way most never know.
I bite my lip, and force a smile as I watch my husband pack...
My heart may break, but I am proud. My husband's got your back...

I am a Soldier... Serving proudly, standing tall.
I fight for freedom, yours and mine by answering this call.
I do my job while knowing, the thanks it sometimes lacks.
Say a prayer that I'll come home.

It's me who's got your back.

This poem was sent to Mame Soldiers by Robin of the Landings Coastal Military Family Relief Fund.

MWR Schedule

Special Events

Daily Schedule

Camp Striker

- Monday:** May 14th – Spades Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
May 21st – Dominoes Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
May 28th- Spades Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
- Tuesday:** May 15th- Ping Pong Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
May 22nd- Spades Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-S
May 29th- Ping Pong Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
- Wednesday:** May 16th- Chess Tournament @ 1930 MWR-S
May 23rd- Chess Tournament @ 1930 MWR-S
May 30th- Chess Tournament @ 1930 MWR-S
- Thursday:** May 10th- Texas Hold'em @ 1930 on MWR-S
May 17th- Texas Hold'em @ 1930 on MWR-N
May 24th- Texas Hold'em @ 1930 on MWR- N
May 31st- Texas Hold'em @ 1930 on MWR-N
- Friday:** May 11th – Football Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
May 18th- R&B Night on MWR-S
May 25th- Football Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
- Saturday:** May 12th- 5K Fun Run @ 0700 on MWR-S
May 19th- Pool Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
May 26th – 10K Fun Run @ 0700 on MWR-S
May 19th- Pool Tournament @ 1930 on MWR-N
May 26th – 10K Fun Run @ 0700 on MWR-S

Combatives Training

Camp Striker

Combative training is gearing up.
Classes will begin in May.
Stay tuned for more information.



“ I like long walks especially when they are taken by people who annoy me. ”

-- Noel Coward

Marine Focus