

ANACONDA TIMES

JUNE 13, 2007

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA

Bringing home to Iraq

Iowa National Guardsmen plant corn, radishes, more

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Better Internet

New communication project will better emails, phone

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U.S. Army Photo

Although they sometimes use a crane, often the workers have to hoist each piece of the tower up and assemble it by hand.

USACE works for reliable power in Aqra

by Julie Cupernall

Gulf Region Central district

AQRA, Iraq - The US Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Division's Gulf Region North district is working to bring more reliable power to 30 thousand Iraqis living in the northern Iraq town of Aqra. Aqra is a rural city about 85 kilometers from the city of Dahuk.

In December 2006, GRN began an \$18.2 million overhead line project to connect the Dahuk electricity substation to the Aqra substation. The 132 kilovolt double circuit line will be strung atop 299 power transmission towers along the mountainous route.

Where the terrain permits the power transmission towers are being erected with the use of a crane. In other locations the assembly is by hand. The towers range between 30 and 40 meters tall and typically take about 345 man-hours to construct.

"It's a terrific example of the work we can do in cooperation with the Iraqi government to bring more reliable power into the area," said Col. Frederick Wolf, GRN commander.

The overhead line project is on track to be completed in July.

The Gulf Region North district was tasked with 1,500 projects in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, at a cost of nearly \$2.6 billion. GRN has completed over 1,100 of those projects.

Texas Guard keeps aircraft in flight

"We focus on what would get somebody hurt, killed, or cause the aircraft to have a problem."

Sgt. James D. Harkey
Bravo Company, 449th Aviation Support Battalion

See Page 8



Photo by Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo

Sgt. Regina L. Hixson, technical inspector, Quality Control Section, Bravo Company 449th Aviation Support Battalion, checks the engines of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during a 100 percent pre-phase inspection here.

"I am a Warrior and a member of a team."

I am Spc. Alan Martinez from Houston, Texas,
840th Deployment and Distribution Support Battalion
>>transportation management coordinator



Leadership 101: instilling legacy of learning

By 1st Lt. Kalen Smith

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – One of the foundations of Army training is leadership, and one officer is making it his priority to build up that foundation in young leaders of all ranks.

Lt. Col. James Sears, battalion commander of the 840th Deployment and Distribution Support Battalion, feels strongly that junior leaders have a lot to learn from their senior leaders, which is why he heads the ROCKS, a mentoring program for Soldiers.

The ROCKS program was founded in 1974 by a group of minority officers who were assigned to the Command and General Staff College in

the '60s at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. They began to meet informally to share information and knowledge with each other.

By circumstance, these same officers ended up in Washington, and continued to mentor each other.

There was such a benefit for them in networking and talking about issues in their own jobs, they decided to start mentoring cadets and other officers as well. Here at LSA Anaconda, it is open to all Soldiers.

According to their mission statement, The ROCKS, Inc. "is a non-profit organization comprised of active, reserve, retired and former commissioned officers and warrant officers of the U.S. Armed Forces, and widows and widowers of deceased members.

"The organization was formed to provide professional development and social interaction to strengthen the officer corps."

"I became a member of the ROCKS several years ago," said Sears, who has been with the organization for years, and in various positions.

"I served as the ROCKS president and senior mentor at Fort Stewart, 3rd Infantry Division. I also served at Leavenworth; we went to a university and mentored some cadets there ... so when I came here, and they were having a Rocks meeting I met Maj. Terry

and we've been running it together."

When Sears arrived here, Maj. Edgar Terry, 657th Area Support Group's liaison officer, was leading the group alone, but Sears now helps him with the task.

Sears said he feels strongly that senior leaders have a responsibility to mentor the younger officers, which includes noncommissioned officers as well. He said often times young leaders don't have the knowledge to deal with issues properly with their chain of command.

"This is needed so much today because of the fact that we are promoting junior leaders a lot faster, due to the needs of the Army," said Sears.

"Senior leaders have got to close that gap between what the juniors don't learn because they've been promoted so fast."

Every meeting focuses on a particular topic, and they are usually held on Sundays, said Sears.

Some topics that have been discussed are organizational relationships and how they work, classes on counseling sessions, mentoring on taking command, how to enforce UCMJ, the Army's current transformation, and the direction

it is taking in the future.

"If you have question and issues that are going unresolved and you don't have a path to resolve them, you don't always have to go to the IG (inspector general), or EO (equal opportunity), or to your congressman," said Sears.

"Sometimes you can seek out other senior leaders here in a non-threatening environment, non-threatening situation, with non-attribution and potentially get your problem worked at the lowest level possible without causing any career suicide, and hurting yourself even further."

He said what normally happens is Soldiers request training and then he looks for a leader to teach a class, or he puts together a class based on research and personal experience.

"The issue that we have is there are so many junior leaders are out there saying they're not being mentored, but yet they are not coming to



(Photo contributed by Capt. Bradley May)

Lt. Col. James Sears, 840th Deployment and Distribution Support Battalion commander, is set to take over "The Rocks" leadership and mentoring program here at LSA Anaconda. The Rocks was founded years ago and is now a nationally recognized organization.

the meeting," said Sears.

"The disconnect between the information being available and being put out, and a lot of those probably needing to hear it and they're not coming out to receive it."

The upcoming meeting June 17 will discuss protocol and uniform wear.

Also, a women's leadership discussion panel will take place June 24 with Col. Megan Tatu, 164th Corps Support Group commander and Col. Christine Gayagas, 13th SC (E) deputy commander, to talk about leadership in a forum that is non-threatening for females.

"If we reach one (Soldier) – mission success," said Sears.

Upcoming Events

Female leadership discussion panel

- Date: 17 June
- Where: Blackjack Education Center
- Time: TBD

The Rocks Meeting: Protocol/Uniform Wear

- Date: 24 June
- Where: DFAC 3
- Time: TBD

For more information, visit The Rocks Web site at <http://www.rocksinc.org/>.

Soldiers of all ranks are invited to attend ROCKS meetings.

ANACONDA TIMES

13th SC(E) Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Michael J. Terry

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Anaconda Times is a command information newspaper in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.

Anaconda Times is published weekly by the Stars and Stripes central office, with a circulation of 5,000 papers.

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332 Air Expeditionary Wing
36th Combat Aviation Brigade
402nd Army Field Support Brigade
411 Engineer Brigade
164th Corps Support Group
657th Area Support Group
1/34 Brigade Combat Team
45th Sustainment Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
593rd Corps Support Group
15th Sustainment Brigade

758th Maintenance is one stop shop

by Staff Sgt. Tony Lindback

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – When referring to disposition, Webster's Dictionary defines the word versatile as embracing a variety of subjects, fields, or skills. If Webster's wanted to simplify that they could have simply written; versatile, see 758th Maintenance Company.

The 758th, an Army Reserve unit from Whitehall, Ohio, has had boots on the ground here since September. The unit is currently the largest maintenance company here and has taken on a multitude of tasks, according to 1st Lt. Laura M. Pawlak, executive officer to the 758th.

"We have people all over the place," said Pawlak. "Our mission is to provide maintenance support, force protection, logistics support and maintenance support teams. We have three MSTs supporting the 82nd Sustainment Brigade and two here. We have another one opening up shop here soon."

Though it has maintenance in the name, the MST has less to do with maintenance as it does making wooden products to customer specifications. Broadening their horizons from mechanics to carpenters, Soldiers like Spc. Nicholas D. Dolder, a member of the 758th working in the 734th MST, have built an overhang to expand usable workspace. Having no prior experience as a carpenter, the Columbus, Ohio, resident, said he is learning another trade that could help him earn a living when he gets home.

Spc. Timothy D. Willard, 758th mechanic, works with Dolder on many of the MST projects. Together they have supported the logistics mission by building shipping crates, storage boxes, shelving units, even lofts for Soldiers to maximize room in living quarters.

"All our MOSs are mechanics. I've never worked as a carpenter.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tony Lindback

Sgt. Andrew M. Stremcha, a mechanic in the 758th Maintenance Company, replaces the windshields on an up-armored humvee May 30, 2007.

We were given this mission and our NCOIC has a construction company at home. He's taught us a lot," said Dolder.

The unit still has many mechanics turning wrenches. Sgt. 1st Class Roger G. Roe, is just one of those ensuring vehicles coming through the shop are fully mission capable. Roe is a quality assurance/quality control supervisor for the vehicle maintenance shop.

"This is our bread and butter," said Roe. "We support more than just what's here on the base, we also provide support to anyone coming through here."

Roe said a lot of what the shop works on are the new armored security vehicles, light medium tactical

vehicles, heavy expanded mobility tactical trucks, five tons and humvees. He also said they do a lot of work on damaged vehicles.

Damaged vehicles, however, sometimes need more than a couple replaced parts and a tune up. When metal work or metal fabrication is needed, the 758th also operates a shop called Skunk Werks.

If the shops' name sounds familiar it may be because it was spotlighted on the television show *Monster Garage*. Host Jesse James, came to LSA Anaconda to build a unique project, though it was a different unit working in the shop at that time.

Skunk Werks has fabricated additional armor, fuel can racks, brackets

and other items for vehicles rolling through the shop. The Soldiers there have also handmade other items like odd shaped jack stands for the hull of the ASV to increase their own safety when working on vehicles.

Vehicles are not the only items the unit maintains. Pawlak said they also have people located throughout the installation, and on other installations as well, maintaining small arms, outdoor light sets, and other equipment.

In just under 10 months of operations here, three 758th Soldiers have completed about 4,000 work orders. The level of maintenance varies, said Pawlak. They have done things as simple as assist people set head space and timing, and they

have gone as far as replacing parts on weapons to ensure they were operational. "Whatever the Soldiers need," said Pawlak.

In effort to build a more self-reliant Iraq, the 758th is also training Iraqis on how to maintain their own weapons. Pawlak said,

"We have two guys in Rustamya doing the contracting officer technical representative mission. Basically they are advising, teaching and supervising Iraqi maintenance procedures, ordering parts, inventories and monitoring fraud, waste and abuse.

In Caldwell we have another two Soldiers also doing COTR and two

See **Wrench**, Page 7

Iraq's busiest trauma center gets face lift

by Norris Jones

Gulf Region Central district

Baghdad, Iraq – It's the U.S. military's busiest trauma center in the world.

Ibn Sina Hospital, built in 1964 and located in Baghdad's International Zone, has been operated by the U.S. Army since October 2003.

It has handled more than 13,000 emergency room visits, air evacuated over 10,000 patients, taken over 60,000 x-rays, accomplished 14,500 surgical hours, and given over 33,000 units of blood.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is overseeing a \$21.3 million Operations and Maintenance contract that includes funds for the repair and improvement of the 43-year-old structure.

"Currently we're renovating its laboratory area with new floors, counters and cabinets," says Dennis Graham, the USACE project engineer. "To date over 165,000 lab tests have been conducted there and these improvements will enhance the turn-around time."

He also noted renovations were continuing on the wards and living units as they strive to improve the quality of life for the wounded soldiers and staff. "We constantly are trying to make things better." The hospital is currently manned by the 28th Combat Support Hospital from Ft. Bragg, NC.

"When a fallen soldier comes through the hospital doors, they have a 96 percent chance of survival," Graham is proud to point out.

The Army obviously has some of

"We constantly try to make things better."

Dennis Graham
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

the best doctors and nurses anywhere, he continued. "This facility truly is a 'House of Angels.'"

Graham has helped oversee a variety of renovations there since first reporting to Iraq in March 2005. Those projects include the construction of an outpatient clinic, a dental clinic, blood bank, "Return to Duty" barracks, a chapel, new central suction system, new oxygen storage building, and CT scanner placement.

"It's been an honor to be part of this effort," he concluded.



U.S. Army Photo

New flooring is installed by Iraqi workers at Ibn Sina Hospital.

Combat Stress Control

113th Medical Company (CSC)

433-2402

Individual counseling by appointment or walk-in

Command referrals

Services for combat and operationally stressed soldiers

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

MONDAY TO SATURDAY

3:30 TO 4 P.M.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

10 TO 11 A.M.

HOME FRONT ISSUES

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

5 TO 6 P.M.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

ANGER MANAGEMENT

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

ANXIETY AWARENESS

WEDNESDAY

3 TO 3:30 P.M.

SATURDAY

10:30 TO 11 A.M.

SLEEP HYGIENE

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

6 TO 6:30 P.M.

GOAL SETTING

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

DEPRESSION AWARENESS

WEDNESDAY

2 TO 3 P.M.

SATURDAY

10 TO 10:30 A.M.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

10 TO 11 A.M.

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

WEDNESDAY

9 TO 11 A.M.

for more information, email:

melissa.kale@us.army.mil

433-2402

Base communication upgrade

by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – A major portion of a project that will make phone and e-mail service here faster and more reliable will be completed mid-June.

In the next few months, users will benefit from the labor of cable systems installers and maintainers, selected from camps throughout Iraq for their expertise and previous success on complex projects.

The mission is no simple task, according to Staff Sgt. Jason Starr, from Denton, Texas, a project action officer here with the 335th Theater Signal Command.

A leading defense contractor estimated the project, which required replacement of cable with properly installed fiber optics, would cost nearly \$2 million. In little more than 60 days, Sgt. Brian Harrington, Spc. James Jackson, both from the 518th Signal Company (Tactical Installation and Networking), and crew, are set to complete a major portion of the project at a mere fraction of what the contractor said it would cost.

“It’s like going from dial-up to cable modem speed,” said Jackson, a Camp Speicher based Soldier from Georgiana, Ala. He and Harrington spent hours underground pulling cables and fusing fibers as thin as strands of hair.

The mission also included taking tactically installed systems of exposed cables peeking through holes and slithering across walls and floors, and transforming them into commercialized systems enclosed and hidden away like those in modern office buildings.

According to Harrington, also based at Camp Speicher, the new cables will eliminate slow, fuzzy service. Nearly 12,000 users of voice over internet protocol, de-



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Fiber optic cables pictured here (encased in black containers) are used by U.S. Army cable systems installer and maintainer Sgt. Brian Harrington, 518th Signal Company (Tactical Installation and Networking) to make telecommunications possible here.

fense switched network, secret internet protocol router network, non-classified internet protocol router, and the Internet will see improvement.

A graduate of several advanced telecommunications schools, Harrington, from Antioch, Calif., said he takes a great deal of pride in the work he does.

“I want to make sure the job is done right because I know Soldiers are depending on me,” he said.

State-of-the-art, robust products were used for the mission, said Starr, but without the Soldiers’ tireless dedication and know-how, all the money spent on the equipment would be worthless.

Users can expect improved service in July and significant improvement in late November.



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Sgt. Brian Harrington, 518th Signal Company, crawls out of a manhole where he and other cable systems installers and maintainers installed fiber optic cables. Harrington spent hours underground, pulling cables and fusing fibers of optically-

Ky. NG Soldiers aid fellow convoy during 45-minute firefight

by Spc. Dustin Perry

1/34th BCT Public Affairs

BALAD, Iraq – Several Kentucky Army National Guard Soldiers became involved in an early-morning small-arms firefight against enemy forces while on a convoy March 21 enroute to Baghdad International Airport.

Soldiers with the Benton, Ky.-based Company C, 2nd Battalion, 123rd Armor Regiment’s “Wildcat 11” Convoy Escort Team fired thousands of rounds of ammunition during the 45-minute encounter, said Sgt. 1st Class Jason S. Brown, convoy commander. No injuries were reported, he said.

The CET began its mission the night before at Camp Anaconda. It had only been on the road a short time when Brown heard over the radio that two Minnesota-based 1st Brigade

Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division CETs ahead of him were receiving small-arms fire.

“At this point, I had to make the choice of whether or not to stop or keep going,” said Brown, a transportation supervisor from Louisville, Ky.

Most small-arms fire encounters only last a few minutes, Brown said, so he thought the fighting would be done by the time he reached the other two convoys. He pushed his own crew ahead anyway, wanting to offer any assistance that might be needed. As they continued on their route, the 1/34th BCT CETs contacted them to say the firefight was still ongoing. Brown’s scout gunner said he could see exchanges of red tracer rounds up ahead and relayed the information back to the rest of the crew.

“I told my scout gunner to open up on the enemy,” said Brown. “I then called my other vehicles [and told

them] to move up into good firing positions.”

Fighting continued for about 25 minutes, with gunners in each of Wildcat 11’s vehicles laying down barrages of fire. An air strike was called in, but enemy fire ceased and the threat was neutralized before aircraft arrived.

“I told my scout gunner to open up on the enemy.”

Sgt. 1st Class Jason Brown
1st BCT, 34th ID

“I was so amazed at how my team was able to react to the situation without being told what to do,” said Brown, 36.

Cpl. Derek Tharp, a 32-year-old

crew remote-operated weapon system gunner from Danville, Ky., was in one of the first vehicles in his CET to reach the scene. Tharp could hear several types of weapons being fired at his truck once it reached its fighting position, but “the most distinct was that of AK-47s,” he said.

It was Tharp’s first firefight after recently joining Wildcat 11. Prior to that, he had served in the company’s command post on base completing tasks including monitoring radio traffic.

“I thought I would be more nervous than anything, but once we were engaging Anti-Iraqi forces I was so focused on eliminating their threat that I didn’t even think twice about it,” said Tharp, a sort supervisor at UPS. “One of our sister units had been engaged in the same location the previous night and three Soldiers were badly injured. It wasn’t going to happen again.”

Soldier saves countless lives while relaxing

by Sgt. Michael Connors

Anaconda Times Staff

LSAANACONDA, Iraq—An Army public affairs officer has become the top donor of blood platelets here, meeting a critical need for trauma patients.

Maj. Joseph Snel of the 411th Engineer Brigade here, a reserve unit headquartered in New Windsor, N.Y., has donated platelets 17 times in the past five months for a total of 25 separate products, said Air Force Maj. David Kuch, officer in charge of platelet apheresis, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group. According to Kuch, only one product is normally given per donor each visit, but because Snel's platelet count is so high, he is sometimes able to give two products per visit.

"I can't imagine how many lives you've saved because your platelets have gone into a lot of Soldiers and Marines," Kuch said to Snel during Snel's most recent visit to the apheresis element June 1. Kuch added that Snel is currently the top donor of platelets here. Blood platelets initiate blood clots that help to stop bleeding in casualties who have had massive blood loss.

The donation process, known as platelet apheresis, is painless according to Snel, a West Point, N.Y., resident. A needle is inserted into a vein in the arm, and blood is cycled through a machine that extracts the platelets and then returns the blood back into the body. Kuch emphasized there is normally no red blood cell loss in the process.

Regular blood donations can be used instead of platelets, but one platelet donation is the equivalent of six blood donations, said Kuch.

Additionally, a platelet donor can donate again after 72 hours, whereas blood donors must wait two months between donations.

Typically the platelet collection process takes one and a half hours. The apheresis element, located in the Air Force Theater Hospital, is air conditioned, and donors may relax, watch a movie, and enjoy complimentary food and beverages. The element has a TV and its own DVD library, or donors may bring their own DVDs.

Donating has always been in Snel's blood, so to speak. He started donating blood in high school and throughout college and has become a three-gallon donor. He continued donating blood in adulthood but had some problems once he started traveling to foreign countries for military duty.

Traveling to foreign countries often disqualifies people from donating blood, oftentimes for a year or more. When Snel found out he was eligible for platelet donation here, he jumped at the opportunity.

"Soldiers and Marines make such an effort that this is my part," said



Courtesy of Maj. Joseph Snel

Maj. Joseph Snel, public affairs officer, 411th Engineer Brigade, gives a blood platelet donation in at the Air Force Theater Hospital. The 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group runs the apheresis element where the platelets are collected.

"I can't imagine how many lives you've saved..."

Maj. David Kuch, USAF
332nd EMG

Snel, who's on his second tour in Iraq. "I'm doing this out of respect for those who are paying the price every day."

Snel heard about platelet collection because it was added to Brig. Gen. Michael Silva's general's challenge by Snel's noncommissioned officer in charge.

The goal for the brigade is to donate a total of 250 platelet products by the end of their deployment. The other components of their general's challenge are total push-ups, sit-ups, miles run, and miles biked.

The members of the 411th who have donated have increased the donation pool. However, a main focus of the collection center is to recruit more servicemembers for a bigger donating pool, said Kuch.

"The bigger pool we build, the less pressure on people like Maj. Snel," added Kuch.

Kuch also said if they can build up excess donations they would like to distribute them to other medical facilities in Iraq.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Garcia, NCOIC of apheresis donor operations, 332nd EMDG, summed up what Snel has meant to the collection



Photo by Sgt. Michael Connors

Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Garcia, noncommissioned officer in charge of apheresis donor operations, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, holds a blood platelet product June 1.

center.

"He's outstanding," said Garcia. "I wish we had a whole lot more like him. Most people come every two, three months. He comes in weekly. If we had people donate half as much as him we'd be set for the entire area of responsibility."

To make a platelet donation, pro-

spective donors must first complete a 15-minute screening in which a blood sample is taken. Once the blood is analyzed and the person is approved, he or she will be contacted to schedule a collection time.

If you would like to take a break from regular duty, relax in an air-conditioned environment, watch a movie,

and save lives in the process, stop by the apheresis element in the Air Force Theater Hospital or call ahead at DSN 443-6549.

Donors will get a certificate that may be used for promotion points. They will also earn a t-shirt for two products and an Armed Services Blood Program coin for five products,

Neb. LRSD racks up impressive numbers

by Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Schultz

1-167 RSTA

CAMP ANACONDA, Iraq – Nebraska National Guard's long range surveillance Soldiers excelled in missions normally handled by active duty infantry units.

The Crete, Neb.-based Company D, 134th Infantry Long Range Surveillance Detachment has performed exceptionally well the last 14 months as the Quick Reaction Force here.

The detachment is part of the Lincoln, Neb.-based 1st Squadron, 167th Cavalry Regiment, that completed more than 1,700 missions, responded to more than 350 significant acts, (including small arms fire attacks, indirect fire attacks, and sniper attacks), apprehended insurgents, and responded to downed aircraft.

The detachment is one of only 11 in the Army adapted to using humvees instead of fighting on foot. Normally, LRS units are Airborne Infantry units that are capable of operating for more than 90 days behind enemy lines.

This unit has maintained an average of 97 percent full mission capability with its humvees and driven more than 138,000 accident-free miles.

"We had to integrate our light in-



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Patrick Sitter

Sgt. Steven Brewer, 134th Infantry Long Range Surveillance Detachment, (left) and Army Soldiers from an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team analyze a crater from an improvised explosive device blast near LSA Anaconda, Iraq.

fantry mindset to guarding static positions and providing security for convoys," said Capt. Kyle Hildebrand, unit commander.

The unit has executed dismounted missions that focused on roadside bombs. Hildebrand said one team reduced the number of attacks by 75 percent in their first three weeks of patrolling.

"I'm proud that our Soldiers were able to use their Ranger and long

range surveillance skills on some missions," he said.

Another team significantly reduced indirect fire attacks against the base. "We used a small team to reduce the mortar attacks from an area by almost 95 percent," said Hildebrand.

"We pride ourselves on our ability to go smaller and infiltrate locations that others might not approach unless they were in armored vehicles," he said.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Schultz

Staff Sgt. Jonathan Panipinto, 134th Infantry Long Range Surveillance Detachment, 1/34 Brigade Combat Team, (left) works with 1st Lt. Thomas Traylor during dismounted security operations in Hatamia, Iraq, while Spc. Shane Shandera provides over watch security from the turret of his humvee.

Minnesota Soldiers build school, business in southern Iraq

by Spc. Brian D. Jesness

13th SC(E) PAO

BALAD, Iraq – Minnesota Army National Guard Soldiers opened a new school and a truck stop, including a restaurant, May 10 in the village of Um Eneej in southern Iraq.

"The village elders told us a school was the most important thing they needed, said Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Sarvi, 1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion field civil military operations officer sergeant. "They said 'we need our children to be educated because that is the future.'"

1st Lt. Josh Fjelstad, 1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion field civil military operations officer, said, "As of now less than 10 percent of the village is educated,"

Fjelstad and Sarvi of Watertown, Minn., worked with local elders for more than six months to build a relationship with the village and create projects to better the community and enhance the local economy.

"We insisted the contractor hire local help," said Sarvi. "He had to hire at least 10 [local] workers and he hired 20."

The school is capable of



Photo by Spc. Brian D. Jesness

Spc. Nathan Reynolds of 1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion hands out bags of school supplies to children of the new Coalition Forces built school in Um Eneej, Iraq. The supplies were donated by Community Connection of Sauk Center, Minn.

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Wrench, from Page 3

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(Above) Staff Sgt. Steve D. Whalbring, a maintenance technician with the 758th Maintenance Company, uses a fork truck to load crated antennas onto the back of a light medium tactical vehicle. (Right) Sgt. Jonathan D. Zimmerman, welds a piece together as he fabricates a pack sling to aid in removing engines from armored security vehicles. (Center) Master Sgt. Stewart L. Phelan, in the Skunk Werks shop, heats up a piece of metal so he can shape it into a bracket. (Lower left) Spc. Nicholas D. Dolder, uses an air nailer to put together a shipping crate for antennas.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Tony Lindback

Airlift key to mission success in theater

Courtesy Air Force News

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFPN) -- Coalition airpower supported coalition ground forces in Iraq and the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in the following operations June 2, according to Combined Air and Space Operations Center officials here.

In Afghanistan, Air Force F-15E Strike Eagles conducted shows of force dispensing multiple flares over Mowshkheyl. The joint terminal attack controller reported the shows of force served their specific purpose of deterring enemy activity. The F-15Es also watched for suspicious activities in the area.

In Gereshk, Royal Air Force GR-9 Harriers watched over coalition convoys and supported ground forces advancing on an insurgent compound in the area.

An A-10 Thunderbolt II provided a show of force with flares to keep a coalition convoy from being attacked in Orgun-E. There were no attacks reported after the show of force. A-10s also monitored a coalition convoy stopped by an improvised explosive device. The A-10s escorted the convoy to their forward operating base.

Other A-10s strafed an enemy observation point with multiple cannon rounds in Asmar. The location was used for a mortar attack on a convoy

earlier. A coalition helicopter also helped in the attack. The attack was reported successful. An Air Force B-1B Lancer monitored the A-10s attack on the observation point.

A B-1B also performed a show of presence with multiple flares to disperse a crowd in Asadabad. The JTAC reported the crowd separated after the show of presence.

In total, 37 close-air-support missions were flown in support of the ISAF and Afghan security forces, reconstruction activities and route patrols.

Nine Air Force intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, or ISR, aircraft flew missions in support of operations in Afghanistan. Additionally, two RAF fighter aircraft performed tactical reconnaissance.

In Iraq, an A-10 conducted a show of force expelling multiple flares. The A-10 also provided overwatch looking for suspicious activity.

Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcons provided overwatch and monitored suspicious activity. Then one of the F-16s helped an Army AH-64 Apache lock on to insurgents hiding in a stadium in Baghdad. The F-16 pinpointed the target -- then the Apache hit it with a Hellfire missile. The target was reported as destroyed. The F-16 pilots also watched over a raid in the area.

Also in Baghdad, F-16s provided armed overwatch for a vehicle struck by an IED.



U.S. Air Force Photo

Two C-130 Hercules aircraft spin up for a mission June 2 at a base in Southwest Asia. Coalition C-130s and C-17 Globemaster IIIs flew 145 airlift sorties June 2 and delivered more than one million pounds of cargo. Airlift provided intra-theater heavy airlift support, helping to sustain operations throughout Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa.

Other F-16s watched over coalition routes and looked for IEDs in Muqdadiyah and Balad.

In total, coalition aircraft flew 62 close-air-support missions for Operation Iraqi Freedom. These missions supported coalition ground forces, protected key infrastructure, provided overwatch for reconstruction activities and helped to deter and disrupt terrorist activities.

Seventeen Air Force, Navy and Royal Australian Air Force ISR air-

craft flew missions in support of operations in Iraq. Additionally, five Air Force and RAF fighter aircraft performed tactical reconnaissance.

Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft and C-17 Globemaster IIIs provided intra-theater heavy airlift support, helping to sustain operations throughout Afghanistan, Iraq and the Horn of Africa.

Approximately 145 airlift sorties were flown, 534 tons of cargo was delivered, and approximately 2,755

passengers were transported. This included approximately 7,065 pounds of troop supplies airdropped in Afghanistan.

Coalition C-130 crews from Australia flew in support of operations in Afghanistan or Iraq.

On June 1, Air Force, RAF, French air force and Republic of Singapore air force tankers flew 45 sorties and off-loaded approximately 2.8 million pounds of fuel to 234 receiving aircraft.

High in sky: Texas NG kee

Photo and Story by Sgt. Carlos Lazo

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Servicemembers know the importance of preventive maintenance checks and services. Proper PMCS not only extends the service life of equipment, but ensures the equipment is in proper operating order.

The 449th Aviation Support Battalion, a Texas National Guard unit, does its part by keeping all the rotary aircraft here operational and at peak operational capability.

Every aircraft goes through repair phases, depending on the type of aircraft and how many flying hours the aircraft has logged.

The AH-64 Apaches come in after 250 hours, CH-47 Chinooks after 200 hours and UH-60 Blackhawks after 350 hours, said Sgt. James D. Harkey, UH-60 Technical Inspector, Bravo Company, 449th ASB. After so many flight hours, aircraft are brought in and go through phase maintenance interval one, he said.

This is where any problems the aircraft has are dealt with and all components are checked for service-

ability, said the Cabot, Ark. native.

There is a difference between the PMI one conducted in theatre and back home.

“Back home ... You fix the little things that you notice that won't necessarily endanger the mission, but does make the aircraft look better, more cosmetics,” said Harkey.

“Here, there is more pressure to find the things that are wrong that you can't see that are mission critical,” Harkey said. “We focus on what would get somebody hurt, killed, or cause the aircraft to have a problem.”

Another difference is the environment, said Harkey. The environment is harsher on the components, causing more erosion than back home.

Every part of this maintenance is important, throughout the whole procedure. Ensuring all the parts are serviceable in order to ensure success, especially the time between overhaul components that can only fly so many hours.

“We focus on what would get somebody hurt, killed, or cause the aircraft to have a problem.”

Sgt. James D. Harkey
Bravo Company, 449th ASB

TBO components have a limited service life once installed in an aircraft, Harkey said. Condition change items, those items that need to be replaced because of the current condition, along with the TBO's, are all part of the PMI, said Harkey. Depending on the type of aircraft, the PMI can take from a little less than a week to just under three weeks.

“When they come in, they'll (UH-60) be here 15 days,” said Sgt.

1st Class Chris S. Hamby, shop platoon sergeant, Bravo Company, 449th ASB.

“Apache's when they come in, they try to turn them around in five days, 250 hours is not as near as evasive as Blackhawk's (flight time) can be,” said Hamby. “Chinook is about 20.”

“That's the standard, we always beat the standard,” said the Little Rock, Ark., native.

There is a fair share of hands-on work, but plenty of paperwork as well, said Harkey.

“If the paperwork is wrong, the aircraft can't move out,” said Hamby. “It's not done until the paperwork's fixed.”

All the birds are tested prior to returning them to their units.

“It's called a MOC, which is a maintenance operations check, where we run the aircraft, we check

all the systems on it, all the components, make sure it works properly,” said Harkey. “Then we fly it with test pilots.”

The aircraft is flown for a couple of hours, with in-flight checks, to verify that when the aircraft is given back to the unit it is as safe as possible, Harkey said.

With the workload these aircraft go through, they usually don't spend that much time out of the shop.

“A couple of them come through here ... about every two or three months,” said Hamby.

“When they come to us, they're broke,” he added. “We fix them and send them back.”



ps helos mission capable



Air operations center opens at Tyndall

by Master Sgt. Linda E. Welz

1st Air Force Public Affairs

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. (AFP) -- First Air Force celebrated the opening of the 601st Air and Space Operations Center here June 1 with a ceremony and tour of the 37,000-square-foot, \$30 million combat center.

First Air Force, which also serves under the North American Aerospace Defense Command as the continental U.S. NORAD Region, provides air security and air sovereignty defense for the continental United States.

Airmen at the new AOC plan, direct and assess air and space operations for NORAD and the United States Northern Command.

Conceived in the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, the state-of-the-art AOC further enables 1st Air Force Airmen to protect America's airspace from attack as well as coordinate life-saving relief during natural and man-made disasters.

Debra Burlingame, co-founder of 9/11 Families for a Safe and Strong America, and director of the World Trade Center Memorial Foundation, served as the ceremony's keynote speaker. Her brother, Charles Burlingame III, a retired military aviator, was the pilot of American Airlines Flight 77 that was hijacked by terrorists and flown into the Pentagon.

Burlingame said when times are difficult, Americans pull together as a nation toward a common goal.

"We are a country of achievers who dream big and fight hard to the end," said Burlingame. "We love to win (and) this spectacular new facility is here because people will never again let a tragedy like 9/11 happen; not on our watch."

As the newest combat center in the war on terrorism, the AOC operations floor employs a high-tech, two-story, 16-screen data wall in a media-based theater reminiscent of a space-age control center.

America's AOC employs the Theater Battle Management Core Systems that the joint forces air component commander uses to task and re-task theater assets by providing real-time



U.S. Air Force Photo

Guests look on as a video presentation is displayed on the \$3.5 million data wall during the dedication of new 601st Air and Space Operations Center June 1 at Tyndall Air Force Base, Fla. Airmen at the new center will help protect America's airspace from attack as well as coordinate life-saving relief during natural and man-made disasters.

feeds to pilots, navigators and air battle managers, allowing them to make better-informed decisions.

It also employs, through its Western and Northeastern Defense Sectors, the Battle Control System-Fixed program, to collect input from a network of radars to alert operators of airborne activity in continental U.S. air space.

BCS-F provides key technology

for the protection of the sovereign airspace over the continental U.S., Canada and surrounding waters.

Gen. Ronald Keys, the Air Combat Command commander, spoke of the many sorties, evacuations, rescues, firefighting missions and other missions that the command had completed since the 2001 terrorist attack.

He called the opening of the new AOC a red-letter day.

"We stand here on the first day of hurricane season knowing well that these Florida Air National Guard warriors are on the job," said Keys.

"Americans can sleep well knowing their Air Force is awake and engaged here at America's AOC."

Maj. Gen. Hank Morrow, the 1st AF commander, called the AOC opening another step in the continuing mission to keep America safe.

"As we continue to hone America's technological edge we are able to strengthen our homeland defenses and bring military and civilian authorities together under one roof," he said.

"Our team is an operational example of how our total force is engaged to keep our skies safe."

Iowa Guardsman continues to excel, receives recognition

by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood

1/34th BCT Public Affairs

CAMP AL ASAD, Iraq – An Iowa National Guardsman, already the most decorated Soldier in the Waterloo, Iowa-based 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, was named Camp Al Asad's 'Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter' April 5, and the Battalion's 'Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter' March 19.

Case in point: Sgt. Ryan Shaw's actions Sept. 30 in the Al Anbar province as a Humvee truck commander.

When insurgents fired on his Humvee, Shaw said he located them by the bullets peppering his Humvee's hood and windshield. He ordered his driver to maneuver to an over watch position.

While under fire, Shaw dismounted and returned fire over

the hood of the vehicle. After the engagement, he called for an air medical evacuation for wounded Soldiers and two wounded insurgents.

"I did what I had to do. I think that any Soldier would do the same," said Shaw of Norwalk, Iowa.

"Life is worth living, defending and fighting for. And that's really all I did. I work in the company of heroes and in a profession that attracts heroes."

For his actions, he earned an Army Commendation Medal with Valor. Shaw received his first Purple Heart on Aug. 27 after suffering minor lacerations to his left arm when his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb.

He also received his second Purple Heart Dec. 6 after suffering minor lacerations to his leg from another roadside bomb.

You can build it, DPW can help

by Staff Sgt. Tony Lindback

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Handy-men, hobbyists and Soldiers with cramped living and workspaces rejoice. There's a place where ideas become reality.

Servicemembers here have found the Department of Public Works self-help yard when they have had ideas to build things and only lacked the materials and tools to build to their heart's desire. The DPW self-help yard can provide lumber, power tools, hand tools, nails, screws, paint, paint supplies and advice for all the do-it-yourselfers who come in.

Currently the self-help yard is run by an Army Reserve unit from Fort Shafter, Hawaii, the 657th Area Support Group. Staff Sgt. Mario A. Dacuycuy, a Honolulu native, is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the tool and paint room.

Dacuycuy said he has seen people making things as functional as stands for individual body armor, stilts for

beds to allow storage room underneath, shelving units and entertainment stands. Not all creations have been for function though, Dacuycuy said.

"There was an Air Force captain who was coming in here for a while," said Dacuycuy. "He was working on a hand carving of a lion. It was amazing when he got done with it."

Other projects that have been completed in the self-help yard have included shadow boxes, coin racks and mementos like painted t-barrier replicas.

Guam native, Staff Sgt. Abel K. Huihui, another 657th ASG Soldier working in the yard, said the only requirements Soldiers really need to know are wearing safety goggles is a must, and know how to use power tools. Issued eye protection meets the requirement in the yard.

With Soldiers, experienced local nationals, power tools, lumber and gravel at the DPW self-help yard here to help, creation is only limited by imagination.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tony Lindback

Staff Sgt. John J. Gumataotao, 657th Area Support Group, 9th Regional Readiness Command, shows off his self made shadow box built to remember his tour in Iraq spent here.

Enforcing speed: new device makes easy to track offenders

by Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq– In May, the Provost Marshall's Office here began using a new device to enforce the speed limit on the various roads here. This new system does a better job than its predecessor and it comes with all the bells and whistles.

The Pro Laser III systems were calibrated in April and put into service in May, said Air Force Staff Sgt. Edward B. Mann, desk sergeant and patrolman, 322nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, attached to the Provost Marshall's Office here.

The system self-calibrates and gives the user a trouble report when there is a problem, said Mann.

"So it's always accurate," he added.

The old system was restrictive because the user could only track the first vehicle in a sequence. The new system is more accurate and fair because it lets the user choose

which vehicle to track, such as the second of three cars, instead of just the first one, Mann said.

Not only can the new device track the speed of vehicles as they approach the patrol car, but track them as they pass the patrol car as well, Mann said.

"People think, 'Once I'm past the patrol car, I'm safe,'" said Mann. "That's not a fact."

"Even if somebody would have a laser detector out here, it's pretty much impossible to detect this because it's a pinpointing system," said Mann. "It doesn't constantly emit anything."

Radar detectors are prohibited here, said Mann.

It has a weather option, allowing it to track a vehicle's speed even on foggy or smoky days, by shooting a lower density laser, Mann said. The new system is also water resistant, allowing the patrolman to maneuver outside the vehicle.

"I don't have to be tied to my vehicle," said Mann. "I can have my partner stand somewhere on the road, run radar, and I can be down the road

waving people out of traffic."

Even with all the bells and whistles, it is still only a measuring device; the user makes the decision to use it by determining if the vehicle in question is exceeding the posted speed limit, Mann said.

Everybody is trained on it; to ensure there is always someone on duty that knows how to use the new system, said Mann. Before new personnel start working, they receive training on the new system to make sure everybody is familiar with it, he added.

In the little amount of time the new device has been used, there has been a decrease in the number of vehicles pulled over, said Mann.

"We understand that people run convoys off base. They own the road off base, but once they come on base there's a safety program," said Mann.

Safety is the primary reason this system is in play, said Mann.

"We're not out here to get people, we're out here to show our presence and to say 'hey, slow down,'" said Mann. "Just watch your speed, be safe out there."



Photos by Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo

Air Force Staff Sgt. Edward B. Mann, desk sergeant and patrolman, 322nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron attached to the Provost Marshall's Office here, utilizes the new speed device, the Pro Laser III, outside his vehicle. The new device has been in use since May here and is more accurate than its predecessor. (Left) Air Force Staff Sgt. Edward B. Mann, takes a closer look at the reading on his new speed device, the Pro Laser III, outside his vehicle. The new device has been in use since May.



Iraqi, Coalition Forces Open Municipal Center in Ramadi

by Spc. Ricardo Branch

1/3 BCT- Public Affairs

RAMADI, Iraq – Iraqi officials and military service members gathered at the Joint Coordination Center for the grand opening of the municipal center, May 28, here.

The opening of the municipal center provided a new place of business for the many departments working to restore basic services to the people of the city.

“Today and with God’s blessing, we open the office building of the municipal services for the city of Ramadi,” said Mayor Latif Iyada.

“Now the service departments have a place from where they can conduct business for the people of Ramadi.”

Some of the service providers that will be working in the new municipal center are the departments of sewage, water, health, public works, electricity and education.

“We pray to God that he bless all those who are in the service of the city of Ramadi and its people,” Iyada said.

“With this building, everyone will be able to work together for the people as we work to rebuild Ramadi.”

Present for the occasion was the 1st Brigade Combat Team Commander Col. John Charlton, whose unit helped direct some of the construction assets for the building.

“This is a great day for Ramadi,” he said. “This little building is going to play a big role in bringing the city back to life and returning things to normal for the people of Ramadi.”



Photo by Spc. Ricardo Branch

Ramadi mayor Latif Iyada speaks to the crowd while cutting a ribbon with 1st Brigade Combat Team Commander Col. John Charlton at the new municipal center.

Although the Iraqi police laid the foundation for the city to get back on its feet, Charlton believes it will be the government’s job to move from security to reconstruction.

“I really think it will be the city government that takes the city forward,” Charlton said.

“The terrorists would like to control everything; they want no government in Ramadi. By you

coming together and restarting the government for the city, you are showing that you will not be intimidated by terrorists.”

He said that now with dedicated Iraqi personnel working for the welfare of the city, the 1st Brigade Combat Team will assist them in supportive roles, just like they do with the Iraqi police.

“As you know, we have teams with all the police units and all

the military units to help and work with them, and we’ll have the same concept with the city government,” Charlton said.

“We’ll have a lot of dedicated Soldiers, Marines and civilians working with the city government everyday to help restore life to the city once again.”

With the direct relationship Iraqis share with the coalition forces working in their sector, Charlton is

very optimistic and sees lots of hope now for the people of Ramadi following the ceremony.

“I know that this close partnership is going to produce the same kind of results with the city government as it did with the Iraqi police and military,” he said.

“Together we’re going to move Ramadi forward and rebuild this great city.”

School, from Page 6

BALAD, Iraq – Minnesota Army National Guard Soldiers opened a new school and a truck stop, including a restaurant, May 10 in the village of Um Eneej in southern Iraq.

“The village elders told us a school was the most important thing they needed, said Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Sarvi, 1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion field civil military operations officer sergeant. “They said ‘we need our children to be educated because that is the future.’”

1st Lt. Josh Fjelstad, 1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion field civil military operations officer, said, “As of now less than 10 percent of the village is educated.”

Fjelstad and Sarvi of Watertown, Minn., worked with local elders for more than six months to build a relationship

with the village and create projects to better the community and enhance the local economy.

“We insisted the contractor hire local help,” said Sarvi. “He had to hire at least 10 [local] workers and he hired 20.”

The school is capable of educating 300 to 500 children daily. Before, these children had no other local alternative. The village hasn’t had a serviceable school since before 2003.

In addition to the school, Fjelstad and Sarvi wanted to make the local highway safer and provide an ongoing source of income for the village. So the truck stop was designed to accommodate the 100 to 200 truck drivers passing by Um Eneej daily on their way between Basra and Baghdad.

“For years (the village) had little source of income,” said Sarvi.

The truck drivers also often parked their trucks on the road at night near the Um Eneej Iraqi highway patrol station for security.



Photo by Spc. Brian D. Jesness

1st Lt. Robert Grutsch (left) and Maj. Martin Sayre of 1-34 Brigade Troops Battalion hand out boxes of school supplies to children of the new Coalition Forces built school in Um Eneej, Iraq.

Guardsmen bring a bit of Iowa to Iraq

by Sgt. Michael Connors

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – When an Iowa Guard unit is transplanted to Iraq, do not expect them to leave their corn behind.

“It’s an agricultural fact that Iowa yields more corn than any other state,” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Donohue, a transportation management coordinator with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Iowa National Guard. So it was only natural when members of the unit decided to see how their famed corn and other crops would fare here.

Three Soldiers from the 1034th spearheaded the garden, which was planted mid-April around the edges of their adjacent housing units in housing area H-7. In addition to sweet corn (peaches and cream variety), they planted sunflowers, radishes, cucumbers, peas, cilantro and parsley. Donohue teamed with Sgt. 1st Class John Hedman and Staff Sgt. Ronald Bygness to establish the garden.

Donohue, a St. Mary’s, Iowa resident, said that in Iowa the planting season starts in the beginning of May, but he opted to start earlier here because of the extreme conditions.

“I felt like it was time with the season changing to start a garden,” he said. “Bygness was sent some sunflower seeds, so I said, ‘what the hay, I’ll have my folks send me some seeds,’ . . . bring a little bit of Iowa to Iraq.”

The radishes are ripe and many have already been picked and eaten, and the other crops are in various stages of growth, said Donohue. He reports that the radishes did extremely well, as they thrive in any type of soil. They turned out spicier than the radishes back home, probably due to the hotter, drier climate, he said.

The cucumbers are doing well and have just produced their flower.



Photo by Sgt. Michael Connors

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Donohue, transportation management coordinator Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Iowa National Guard, next to his Iowa sweet corn plant which has developed tassels at a very early stage compared to its growth cycle in Iowa.

The peas, on the other hand, couldn’t handle the extreme climate, Donohue said. Over half of them didn’t make it, and the other half, which received Miracle Grow, are struggling.

Seeing the difference in how the Iowa sweet corn has grown here has been an interesting factor for Donohue and his fellow unit members.

“It was actually comical to see a corn stalk that tasseled at knee high,” said Donohue. In Iowa, corn usually tassels at four feet high.

The tassel is the male flowering at the top of the stem, which pollinates the plant so that ears of corn will develop.

Donohue believes lack of nutrients

in the soil here may have caused the corn to mature early. He says the corn stalks look aesthetically healthy, but because of their early maturation he’s expecting low or no yield, and at best the plant may develop small ears.

“The plant’s more focused on sustaining the life of the stalk before producing ears,” added Donohue.

Corn or no corn, Sgt. Eliasia Deojay, a fellow unit member and neighbor of the gardeners, has enjoyed the garden.

“I’m pretty excited for the sunflowers to pop up,” said Deojay, a Huxley, Iowa resident. “I look out my door each morning to see if they’ve flowered. It’s nice to see plants rather than staring at trailers and sandbags.”

The sunflower stalks are currently six feet tall and are ready to flower any day now. They are flourishing here because they are commonly grown in this area, said Donohue. At this stage they can support themselves now and no longer require watering.

All the plants required watering twice a day in the beginning, once in the evening and once in the morning. Now after taking root and growing, the plants typically only need watering once a day. Donohue recommends using puddle water, rain water or any other water that is untreated. He said the plants didn’t do well when he tried to use purified bottled water.

Other lessons learned include starting the garden even earlier in the season. If he had to do it again, due to the extreme climate here, Donohue said he would have started the garden at the end of March or the beginning of April as opposed to mid-April. His advice is to water the heck out of the plants in the beginning and to use some Miracle Grow or other plant food because he feels, “The soil is nowhere near as fertile here as it is in Iowa.”

If you would like to grow your own

garden, you don’t have to wait until the spring. In fact, Donohue feels that a fall garden would do quite well here and said that corn would probably do better in the fall, as he thinks the fall is the normal growing season for corn in Iraq. Donohue suggests planting a fall garden in the second or third week of October.

The pleasure for Donohue and others in the unit goes beyond yielding produce from the garden, though.

“It’s overwhelming to look at something you look forward to every year at home and getting to see it here,” said Donohue. “It’s gratifying when you put something in the ground in a foreign country and see it grow.”

Deojay has been moved by the garden as well.

“I’m impressed. If they told me they were going to plant a garden I probably would have laughed and said, ‘good luck,’” said Deojay. “I wouldn’t have expected it to grow here because of the climate.”

Even with the fledgling corn, it goes to show that more is possible here than some might think.



Photo by Sgt. Michael Connors

Sgt. Eliasia Deojay, transportation management coordinator, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, Iowa National Guard, shows off radishes growing in the garden outside her housing unit.

On the street with Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

“What is the best advice your dad has given you?”



Spc. Tracy Cavaness

“Don’t mistake a person’s kindness for weakness.”



Pvt. Lucas Cummings

“To always be proud of my Native American heritage.”



Sgt. Carlos Rosas

“Be patient and understanding.”



Pfc. Joseph Weidholz

“Be the best man you can be.”

Shout outs from home

Rey Guzman
Hope you are back soon to have moments like this. We love you and missed you a lot. Cuidate mucho mi amor.
Claudia Guzman

Andrew Carrillo
Love and miss ya! Can't wait 'til you're home!
Sis

Everett Chadwick
Wicker, we love and miss ya! Greetings from your proud family back home in Nebraska!
Vicki Billings

Ashley McClammy
We are so proud of the job you and your buddies are doing. You are all in our hearts and prayers everyday. You are the strength our country is so proud of!!! Hooah!!! Love, your cousins, The Wellman Bunch

Casey Reynoldson
Hey, Uncle Casey. We miss you lots and look forward to you coming home soon. Drink milk!
Carter Guthrie

OUR AMERICAN HEROS
You're in our constant thoughts. Be Safe and Come Home Soon!
Thank you for all you do!!!!
Debbie Hambrick

Albert Nelson
"Just hold me!"
Blake Greene

Daniel Lindsey
Hey babe. We miss you so much can't wait until you're home to see our kids again, especially Michael. He is getting so big!
We love you.
Tiff, Olivia, Nate, and Michael.

Felix Ortega
Hey honey our four babies are waiting with love for you!!
Myrna Ortega

Matthew Talafuse
Hey babe! I just wanted to let you know that I love you! I am so excited to see you soon! You're down to double digits! Stay safe and God bless!!
Joanna

Zachary Maner
I love you Dad. I loved my Birthday Flowers too.
Emily Maner

Michael Fosness
I can't believe the time is finally coming! You will be home soon, and we will all be here waiting patiently! We love you so much, and until we see you again, we will continue to be praying for you and thinking of you always!
Love, Sis

Casey Wayne Franks
We're proud of you. We love you! Hope to see you soon.
Shirley P. Franks

Chadd Tillman
Hey stud muffin :)
I'm thinking about you every second. Not too much longer until you get to come HOME! I'm so very proud of you. I have no doubt you've accomplished much good & have been a great leader. I'm always praying. Now hurry up and come MARRY ME already!!!!!! I love you Chadd.
All my heart,
Meghon Bryant

Lorie Javier
Your mother and grandmother and I want to say hello and take care of yourself and your men. We all miss you so very much and cannot wait until you come home.
Gerald Javier

Chuck Cunningham
Baby, I Love You and I will be so glad to have you home. I miss you so much. You are the Greatest and I am so proud of you. Love, Patti

Brian Rozzano
Hi honey keep up the good work we love and miss you!!!
Love,
Tabatha

Tony Mills
Hi Honey! The kids and I miss you very much and are counting down the days till you come home. We're so proud of you. You're our HERO!!!
Love,
Deanna, Parker, Macie and Ryan

James Sarem
Hi Baby, just wanted to send you a quick note to let you know how much I love you and miss you, and that I can't wait for you to come home. You're my world sweetheart, take care and be safe ok? I love you to the moon!
Ellen Sarem

Miller
I just want you to know I am so proud of you!! I have seen great changes in you and I can't wait to have you home. Not too much longer sweetheart!! I miss you and love you so much.
Keep smiling!!
Love, Shannon

Nick Welch
Hey there Superman!!! We miss you and we're all waiting for you to come home to us!! Stay safe! We love you!!!
Heather, Kat, Mary & James

Chris Stanfill
Hey baby! I miss you and I love you so much. Stay safe everyday and get yourself back home to me. Everyone here misses you and is thinking of you. I love you...
April Marie

Robert Lawton
Dear Dada:
Mama says you will be home soon, I cannot wait it's been so many moons!
When you left I was just a baby, but now I'm turning into a little lady.
I can walk and talk and dance and sing, some days I think I can do most anything.
I like babies and Elmo, the park and the swing, but it is YOU I want more than anything.
We really want you to come home soon; Mama has painted almost every room!
The neighbors say she has been strong, but now this deployment is getting too long.
We dream of the day when you will hold us tight. Hang in there Dada, your Freedom Bird will soon take flight!
Love the Wee Bug Ava!

Will Pace
Hey bud, hope all is going well. Remember, "keep your head down, and your angel in your pocket."
Love you, Donna Olson

Andrew Carrillo
Hey Andrew, how are you doing? I am thinking about you all the time. I keep you in my prayers daily. May God keep you safe under his wings.
Love you, Patricia



(Schedule is subject to change)

SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

Wednesday, June 13
5 p.m. Reign Over Me (R)
8 p.m. Mr. Brooks (R)

Thursday, June 14
5 p.m. Mr. Brooks (R)
8 p.m. Shooter (R)

Friday, June 15
2 p.m. Firehouse Dog (PG)
5 p.m. Meet the Robinsons (G)
8:30 p.m. Ocean's 13 (PG-13)

Saturday, June 16
2 p.m. Reign Over Me (R)
5 p.m. Ocean's 13 (PG-13)
8 p.m. Firehouse Dog (PG)

Sunday, June 17
2 p.m. Ocean's 13 (PG-13)
5 p.m. Reign Over Me (R)
8 p.m. The Reaping (R)

Monday, June 18
5 p.m. The Reaping (R)
8 p.m. Ocean's 13 (PG-13)

Tuesday, June 19
5 p.m. Are We Done Yet (PG)
8 p.m. Firehouse Dog (PG)

<http://jennyspouse.com>

Jenny, the Military Spouse

<http://www.pvtmurphy.com>

Pvt. Murphy's Law

Back of the Formation

June 13

Spades & Ping Pong
2 a.m. and 8 p.m., H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

9-Ball Tourney
3 p.m. and 8 p.m.,
East MWR

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aikido
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Hawaiian Dance Practice
6 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

8-Ball Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Floor Hockey
8 to 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Salsa Dance Class
8:30 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m. West MWR

June 14

9-Ball Tourney
2 a.m. and 8 p.m., H6 MWR

Spin Center
6 a.m., H6 Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do 1
8 - 9 a.m., East Fitness Center

Aikido
10:00 a.m. to noon., East Fitness
Center

Korean Martial Arts
4:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Intermediate Swim Lessons
6 p.m., Indoor Pool

ANACONDA ACTIVITIES

Your one-stop connection to activities around LSA Anaconda
to add your activity to the event calendar, email anaconda.times@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Country/Western Dance Class
7 p.m., East MWR

Tae Kwon Do 2
7 - 8:30 p.m., East Fitness
Center

Pilates
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Water Aerobics
7:45 p.m., Indoor Pool

Console Game Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Dodgeball League
8 p.m., Circuit Gym

Karaoke Night
8:30 p.m., H6 MWR

June 15

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., West Fitness Center

Friday Night Spikes
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Hip-Hop Dance Class
7-11 p.m., East MWR

Self Defense Class
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Hip-Hop Coffee Shop
8 p.m., West MWR

Scrabble Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Chess Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

R&B Music Night
9:30 p.m., H6 MWR

June 16

Pilates
11 a.m., West Fitness Center

Boxing
3 to 4:30 p.m., West Fitness
Center

Aikido
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Salsa Dance Class
7 p.m., East MWR

Tae Kwon Do 2
7 - 8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Country/Western Dance Class
8 p.m., West MWR

Texas Hold'em
8 p.m., West MWR

Bingo Night
8:30 p.m., H6 MWR

Wrestling
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

June 17

Spin Class
1:30 a.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aikido
10 a.m. to noon, East Fitness
Center

Magic, The Gathering
11 a.m., West MWR

Boxing
3 to 4:30 p.m., West Fitness
Center

Poker
7 p.m., East MWR

Poetry Night
7 p.m., East MWR

Swing Dance
7:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Gaston's Self Defense
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

Spades, Dominoes & R&B
8 p.m., West MWR

Abs Salute
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Salsa Dance Class
8:30 p.m., H6 Recreation

June 18

Texas Hold'em
2 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.
H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do
8 to 9:30 a.m., East Fitness
Center

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Boxing
7:30 to 9 p.m., East Fitness
Center

Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

9-Ball Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Karaoke
8 p.m., East MWR

Poetry Jam
8 p.m., West MWR

Floor Hockey
8 - 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

June 19

8-Ball Tourney
2 a.m. and 8:30 p.m.
H6 MWR

Aikido
10 am to noon, East Fitness

Center
Spin Class
3:30 and 8:30 p.m., H6 Fitness
Center

Korean Martial Arts
4:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Kung Fu
7 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do 2
7p.m. - 8:30 p.m., East Fitness
Center

Pilates
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Foosball/Ping Pong
8 p.m., West MWR

Combative Training
8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

June 20

Spades & Ping Pong
2 a.m. and 8 p.m., H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

9-Ball Tourney
3 p.m. and 8 p.m.,
East MWR

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aikido
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

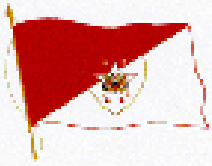
Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

8-Ball Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Floor Hockey
8 to 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Do you have a story idea?

Contact the Anaconda Times
anaconda.times@balad.iraq.centcom.mil



2007 Army Birthday Message

Meeting in Philadelphia 232 years ago, the Second Continental Congress created the United States Army. A short thirteen months later, this same Congress drafted and signed the Declaration of Independence. It was clear to our founding fathers that security, especially security guaranteed by a strong and capable Army, was a precondition for successful democracy and freedom.

Like that extraordinary time in America's fledgling democratic history, this remains true today. The Army's role in securing freedom remains paramount.

As we proudly celebrate the United States Army's 232nd Birthday on 14 June 2007, and do so in the midst of a long and challenging war, it is useful to remind ourselves that the Army has always existed to field forces for victory.

From the Battle of Yorktown to Belleau Wood, from D-Day to the Chosin Reservoir, from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan, Soldiers have demonstrated unmatched courage, dedication, and willingness to sacrifice to accomplish any mission. They have served our country with incredible honor and distinction. They understood, as few others have, that our Constitution and the freedom it guarantees are worth fighting for. They have sacrificed their personal comfort and safety to answer a higher calling--service in the cause of freedom, both at home and abroad.

Today's Soldiers symbolize the nobility of selfless service. Today's Soldiers are motivated by an unwavering belief that they will be victorious on the field of battle, because we have fought this way since 1775 and always will. Today's Soldiers are imbued with the Army Values and live the Warrior Ethos:

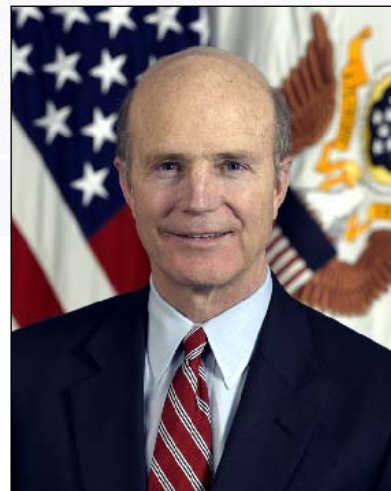
- I will always place the mission first.
- I will never accept defeat.
- I will never quit.
- I will never leave a fallen comrade.

While the Army has much work ahead of us, it has much to be proud of and to celebrate. God bless each and every one of you and your families, and God bless America. Army Strong!

Kenneth O. Preston
Sergeant Major of the Army

George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Pete Geren
Acting Secretary of the Army



Army to Celebrate 232nd Birthday

By Tony O'Bryant

Army News Service

WASHINGTON- Installations and commands all over the world will celebrate the Army's 232nd birthday June 14.

With the theme "Call to Duty - Boots on the Ground - Army Strong," the celebration honors Soldiers answering the call to duty during one of the most dangerous periods in history.

"Today's Soldiers symbolize the nobility of selfless service," said Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, reflecting the Army's heritage. "Today's Soldiers are motivated by an unwavering belief that they will be victorious on the field of battle, because we have fought this way since 1775 and always will."

Special birthday events will begin on June 9 and run through the following week, with a cake-cutting ceremony at Walter Reed Army Medical Center June 12 and a Twilight Tattoo June 13 at the Washington Monument.

Major League Baseball will pay tribute to the men and women in uniform by hosting birthday activities during several of its games.

A veteran of the war on terror will throw out the first pitch of a Florida Marlins vs. Kansas City Royals game at Dolphin Stadium in Kansas City June 16. New recruits will also be inducted into the Army during a pre-game ceremony.

Similar events are scheduled for a Tampa Bay Devil Rays' home game June 13, and a member of the Army Ground Forces Band will lead "Take me out to the ball game" during an Atlanta Braves game June 10.

The Army's precision parachute demonstration team, the Golden Knights, will jump June 14 into Camden Yards, where a Soldier will throw the first pitch of an inter-league game between the Washington Nationals and the Baltimore Orioles.

Lt. Gen. John Brown III will host U.S. Army Pacific's Birthday Ball in Waikiki on June 9. The U.S. Army Band's Strolling Strings will perform during the event to an expected crowd of nearly a thousand Soldiers and civilians.

On June 14, Acting Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. and SMA Preston will participate in the annual wreath laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknowns.

Thousands of Soldiers will also gather that day for a cake-cutting ceremony at the Pentagon. The cake's recipe calls for 540 eggs, 100 pounds of flour, 30 pounds of butter, 30 gallons of milk and 30 pounds of sugar. Weighing in at more than 250 pounds and standing 8.5 feet high, the cake takes one week to create.

Department of Army-level birthday events will continue June 15 with a Birthday Run that starts at Fort Myer, Va., and culminate with the Army Birthday Ball on June 16 in Washington, D.C.

"The U.S. Army is a brotherhood of warrior leaders dedicated to the cause of freedom. To me, celebrating the Army's Birthday is celebrating my freedom and brotherhood," said Capt. Chris Joyner, North Carolina National Guard public affairs officer.

A full list of Army birthday events and birthday messages from Army leaders are available at www.army.mil/birthday/232.