

ANACONDA TIMES

MAY 16, 2007

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA

Airborne mission

Soldiers respond to convoy emergencies from high in the sky

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Beat the Heat

Protect your body against the sun during summer months

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DoD announces next Iraq troop rotation

by Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Defense Department officials announced the next 10 Army brigade combat teams to deploy to Iraq to replace units currently operating there.

The announcement affects about 35,000 active-duty troops, who all will deploy between August and the year end to serve as replacement forces for those returning home, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman told reporters.

The units will deploy for up to 15 months.

Whitman emphasized that the announcement is unrelated to the troop surge under way to increase security in and around Baghdad.

“Let me be real clear about this,” he said. This deployment is not a decision with respect to the surge. It is simply identifying the next 10 units that will receive deployment orders and to provide the kind of predictability they need to prepare.

Any decision regarding the surge will be based entirely upon the conditions on the ground, Whitman said.

Army Gen. David Petraeus, commander of Multinational Force Iraq, is expected to assess those conditions later this year and make recommendations regarding the surge to the commander of U.S. Central Command, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, defense secretary and president, Whitman said.

Major Army units receiving deployment orders include:

- 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Hood, Texas;
- 1st, 2nd and 3rd Brigades, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky.;
- 4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Polk, La.;
- 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood;
- 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.;
- 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii;
- 2nd Cavalry Regiment (Stryker), Vilseck, Germany; and
- 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany.

No borders among the Coalition

“We are all here for the same thing, so we have to be united.”

- Romanian Cpl. Mihai Gancea

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Photo by Staff Sgt. Gary Witte
Spc. Matthew Wilson, a crew chief with Company A, 1st Battalion, 131st Aviation Regiment, watches for trouble during a Blackhawk flight from Logistical Support Area Anaconda.



“I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.”

I am Spc. Dylan K. Jeter, from Benton, Ill.

1744th Transportation Company >> force protection

U.S. advisors, IA leaders convene in Taji

by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner

15th Sustainment Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Coalition advisors, senior Iraqi Army leaders and representatives from the Iraqi Ministry of Defense concluded a two-day logistics conference here, April 25.

Commanders and logistical officers from the 6th and 9th Iraqi Army Divisions met with Coalition Military Assistance Training Team members to conduct rehearsals of concept drills for unit transportation, ammunition, life support and maintenance requirements.

According to Danish Navy Rear Adm. Niels Friis, CMATT deputy commanding general, the discussions are based upon a framework of logistical concepts approved March by the Iraqi joint headquarters and the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq.

"We are educating the [Iraqi Army] in what we believe is the best course of action," he said. "But, I must underline strongly, it is [designed for] their solutions; not American or European ones."

At the strategic level, the IA support structure is built upon a national depot system, with regional support units placed in key geographic locations throughout the country. This differs from what U.S. Forces are used to, but it makes good sense, said Brig. Gen. Terry Wolff, CMATT commander.

Originally, the new Iraqi Army stood up ten divisions designed for counter-insurgency. The RSU logistical system allowed for rapid support and sustainment for, essentially, 10 light-infantry divisions.

The goal is to pave the way for Iraqi forces to implement logistical concepts to re-supply and sustain their forces. Currently, many of the maintenance, life support and supply functions for the Iraqi forces are contracted services.

Contracts were designed to bridge the gap, Wolff said. "The Iraqi Army wants to do this themselves, they desire to be self-sufficient. But, it must be done at the right time and can not



An Iraqi logistics officer from the 9th IA division listens to a discussion on fuel support during an April 25 rehearsal of concept drill on Camp Taji. The two-day conference brought coalition trainers together with Iraqi Army officers from the 6th and 9th IA divisions, as well as representatives from the Ministry of Defense.

be done simultaneously; contracting buys them time..."

Participants spent the first day setting the framework of the concept drills. Day two combined coalition experts and Iraqi Ministry representatives to chair scenario based discussions designed to engage Iraqi logisticians.

It (the process) is very much designed about engagement checks; to see if they understand the procedures, Friis said. "This is just the beginning; Iraqi forces logisticians are a new community."

Wolff agrees that the Iraqis' train and re-enforce the policies, concepts and executions of their own supply and requisition for support systems.

"This is a big lesson in adaptation," he said. "They have to be comfortable with their own procedures."

Allowing junior Iraqi officers at the operational level access to strategic commanders is a change from the old, centralized system of command.

CMATT hopes to use this interaction with the Iraqi joint leadership for constructive proposals to implement the supply and sustainment concepts.

"The lower we engage the units, the better understanding of the system," Wolff said. "It is a combined effort; we can not do it for them."

CMATT officials said that while Iraqi forces make improvements on a daily basis, a mature life support system is still one to two years away. However, support planners hope to see many of the life support contracts phase out next year, as the Iraqi army continues to grow and reorganize.

CMATT plans to conduct quarterly logistical concept drills again in August at all of the five RSU locations. Coalition members see these as professional development seminars; the end-state being Iraqi forces maintaining the difficult task of self-sustainment. Although the timeline is measured in months, coalition forces remain committed and optimistic.

"When the Iraqis put their mind to something, there is nothing that they

can not do," Wolff said. "I'm just being flat-out honest."



Maj. George Sanders, CMATT J4 maintenance liaison, listens with an earpiece to an Iraqi officer's comments about sustaining life support systems.

ANACONDA TIMES

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

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

Chief of the Anaconda Consolidated Press Center
Maj. Jay Adams

jay.adams@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

210th MPAD Commander

Maj. Kirk R. Slaughter
kirk.slaughter@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Print OIC

Capt. Perry Jarmon
perry.jarmon@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Print NCOIC

Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell
mark.bell@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Editor

Sgt. KaRonda Fleming
karonda.fleming@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Staff Writers

Staff Sgt. Felix Figueroa
felix.figueroa@iraq.centcom.mil

Staff Sgt. Gary A. Witte
gary.witte@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Sgt. Joel F. Gibson
joel.f.gibson@us.army.mil

Sgt. Kevin McSwain
kevin.mcswain@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Sgt. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown
alexandra.brown@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Sgt. Amanda Solitario
amanda.solitario@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Spc. Karly Cooper
karly.cooper@iraq.centcom.mil

Spc. Kyndal Hernandez
kyndal.hernandez@iraq.centcom.mil

Pfc. Robert Baumgartner

robert.baumgartner@iraq.centcom.mil

Contributing Public Affairs Offices

332 Air Expeditionary Wing
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657th Area Support Group
1/34 Brigade Combat Team
45th Sustainment Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
593rd Corps Support Group
15th Sustainment Brigade

Deployment provides new direction, focus for Anaconda Soldier

by Sgt. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - Two years ago, a wife sat by her husband's side, comforting him. Two years ago, the same woman, a school teacher, had quit her job to cater to her ailing spouse. And nearly two years ago, the woman, an Army Reserve Soldier, lost her spouse of 35 years.

Master Sgt. Brinda Kupiec was at a crossroads in her life after the death of her husband. After spending nearly every day together during the last years of his life, and staying by her husband's side through two bouts of oral cancer, Kupiec wasn't sure where to start picking up the pieces, or how to start a new life alone.

"He went through a lot, but I wasn't ready to give him up," the Lubbock, Texas, native said of her husband. "(But) we're not put here to live forever."

Without a full-time job to occupy her time, Kupiec found it hard to cope without her life-long partner.

"Living in the same house, was kind of hard (when he was gone)," she said. "At home I had the tendency to sit around the house."

With plans to retire from the Army Reserve in September 2006, Kupiec didn't expect to be deployed, and she didn't expect her deployment would help refocus her life—but it did.

"It was always in the back of my mind that I would get deployed," the grandmother of two said. "I never felt any anxiety about coming."

Kupiec originally joined the Air Force in 1972, following her husband who spent two tours in Vietnam. She said she joined because she was ready for a change and also to show her husband support.

When her husband retired in 1976, she got out of the Air Force and never thought she would serve again.

Years later, when Kupiec's daughter was 18 years old and joining the Army Reserve, she convinced her mother to join with her—after a 13-year break in service.

Then, in July 2006, Kupiec received news of her deployment to Iraq just months before she planned to retire. She left the U.S. that same month.



Photo by Sgt. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

Master Sgt. Brinda Kupiec, host national escort noncommissioned officer in charge with the 657th Area Support Group, checks in Iraqi laborers as they are lined up and ready for work May 3.

Kupiec met the unit she would be attached to, the 657th Area Support Group, from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, when she arrived in Kuwait. She said her new unit took her under their wing immediately.

"Everyone in the unit has been instrumental (in my improvement)," Kupiec said. "They've been very accepting. They've been good to me."

With a new mission in Iraq, as the host national escort noncommissioned officer in charge, Kupiec committed herself to her job and soon found that her grief was less severe.

"(The job) keeps me busy," she said. "You don't have time to sit back and feel sorry for yourself. It took me coming over here to realize I have a lot to be thankful for."

Kupiec said she especially enjoys working with the Iraqi laborers who come onto Anaconda every day.

She said she's learned a lot from working with the locals.

"They're humans just like we are," Kupiec said. "They have the same needs and wants, and they love their families so much."

Even though getting the male Iraqi workers to accept a female as the person in charge was a challenge at first, Kupiec said she is now friends with most of the workers, and greets them with a handshake every morning.

"She immediately overcame any preconceived notions," said Staff Sgt. Kris K. Kaopuiki of Honolulu, Hawaii, a host national escort noncommissioned officer who works with Kupiec. "She was always determined to make this work."

Kaopuiki said their job is not an easy one. "Security is foremost," he said.

While their task is to provide jobs for local Iraqi workers, the main priority is the safety of the servicemembers and civilians on Anaconda, Kaopuiki said.

Each morning, Kupiec and her team of Soldiers escort approximately 200 Iraqi work-

ers from an entry control point onto the base. Once they are inside a holding area, Kupiec is in charge of pairing them up with units who need them to accomplish tasks such as digging trenches, stacking sandbags or cleaning buildings.

"This is a fun job," Kupiec said. "Probably one of the most rewarding jobs on this post."

Kupiec said she now feels grateful to the military for providing her with a means to overcome her personal grief. Although Kaopuiki said he thinks she mostly keeps her sadness inside, he said he's noticed a positive change in her since the deployment began.

"I think the Army did me a favor," Kupiec said of her tour.

When her deployment is over, Kupiec said she plans to go back to teaching - a profession she has always loved.

But for now, she will continue to do her job, and while still missing her husband, she is able to move on with a purpose.

On the street with Sgt. KaRonda Fleming

What would you change about the ACU and why?



Pfc. Rob C. Torres

"I would change the pin on badges because they are very uncomfortable to wear."



Spc. George E. Austin, Jr.

"I would make stronger velcro and add durability, because they rip easily."



Spc. Alma D. Olvera

"I would change the cargo pockets because they're used so often and won't stay fastened."



Spc. Michael T. Binns

"I would make them so that they don't rip so easily."

Soldiers keep pressure on al-Qaida

Clearing operations opens doors, new opportunities, safer neighborhood

by Staff Sgt. Antonieta Rico

5-20 Infantry Regiment PAO

BAQOUBA, Iraq – Soldiers with 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, continued their systematic attack on terrorist forces in Baqouba with another clearing operation, April 10.

In this latest effort, Soldiers of 5-20 Inf. Regt., 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Lewis, Wash., spent three days clearing the neighborhood of Buhriz, described by Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Bruce Antonia as “al-Qaida’s battleground.”

When the Stryker battalion first arrived in Baqouba in March, it encountered resistance from the neighborhood’s terrorists in the form of roadside bombs, rocket propelled grenade fire and small arms fire.

During the mission, Soldiers operating alongside Iraqi Security Forces conducted house-to-house searches for terrorists and weapon caches. They learned from residents that many terrorists had fled Buhriz in the face of the advancing battalion.

“We’ve pushed al-Qaida out of here,” said Sgt. Matthew Benzshawel, with 2nd Platoon,

Company A, “We are a pretty lethal force. When terrorists see a battalion’s worth of Strykers coming, (they) usually move out.”

Nonetheless, the battalion reported that coalition forces detained about a dozen suspected terrorists, including one man described by the unit as a “high-level” terrorist.

The battalion also reported that it found and destroyed more than 20 small weapon caches, which included a Dishka machine gun, grenades, mortar rounds, rocket propelled grenade rounds, sniper rifles, AK-47’s and ammunition.

Soldiers from the battalion say they have managed to make the area safer for the local people with their continuous efforts against al-Qaida.

“We’ve denied them the terrain,” said 1st Lt. James Dobis, 2nd Platoon leader, Company A. “They have not been

fighting with anybody, they have not attacked us ... they have not attacked any civilians.”

The assault into Buhriz served as a catalyst

to secure a foothold in the area. Iraqi Security Forces, along with Soldiers from Troop B, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, which is attached to 5-20 Inf. Regt., plan to maintain a permanent presence within the neighborhood by collocating troops at an Iraqi police station in Buhriz and continuing to patrol the area.

Battalion leaders plan to continue their assault on al-Qaida in and around Baqouba.

“We have taken their battleground,” Antonia said, after the operation.

“We are going to keep the pressure on the

enemy. That is the only way to push them out.”

“We have taken their battleground. We are going to keep pressure on the enemy. That is the only way to push them out.”

- Lt. Col. Bruce Antonia

New combat shirt to wear under armor resists flames

by Debi Dawson

Army News Services

FORT BELVOIR, Va. – The Army Program Executive Office Soldier will soon provide an improved Army combat shirt to Soldiers deploying to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The flame-resistant long-sleeved shirt, which retains the moisture-wicking capability, breathability, and durability of other components in the ACU, also has many of its other features, including cargo pockets, infrared identification tabs, and hook-and-loop fasteners for the American flag.

The new shirt has a foliage green torso and sleeves in the universal camouflage pattern, and sports seamless shoulders and side panels for comfort, along with integrated anti-abrasion elbow pads, and a small Army Strong logo centered on the chest.

The high performance shirt, designed to be a base layer, can be worn directly under the Interceptor Body Armor, according to Maj. Clay Williamson, assistant product manager for clothing and individual equipment.

The ACS is made of an anti-microbial cotton and rayon blend fabric treated with a new process that penetrates to the fiber level. It provides fire-resistance for the life of the garment. “It is completely safe, non-toxic, and allows us to treat fibers that were once not treatable,” Maj. Williamson said.

The shirt integrates with other flame-resistant components, such as the Army combat pants, to provide head-to-toe protection against burns. The Army combat pants are the same as the ACU pants, except they are made of a flame-resistant material, according to the major. Soldiers’ hands are protected by flame-resistant gloves that have been a part of the Army’s Rapid Fielding Initiative.

This ensemble further complements the Army’s system-of-systems approach to force protection, which integrates layers of protection for Soldiers on the battlefield.

“I want to assure the American public, the Soldiers, and their Families that they have the best equipment when and where they need it. If there were something better, we would buy it; and we’re always looking for something better,” said Brig. Gen. R. Mark Brown, Program Executive Officer Soldier.

Why I Serve: Chaplain seeks ways to help

by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner

15th Sustainment Brigade PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – To the Soldiers of the 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, Chaplain (Capt.) Leo Moras’ trademark smile usually precedes a handshake or an update to the care package pile outside his office.

These are his Soldiers, he says. He trained and deployed with them; anything he can do for them, he will. Be it providing the contents of care packages sent by stateside supporters or just talking briefly with Soldiers daily, Moras energetically looks out for his “Stagecoach” troops.

Service to others has been a constant for Moras, a Catholic priest from Bantwal, India. The oldest of six, few prospects were open to the son of a poor farmer after finishing high school. Entering the priesthood seemed a good fit for a young man determined to help others. It must have run in the family. Moras has two sisters who became catholic nuns.

“My father jokes that is a fifty-fifty contribution; three to the world and three to God,” he laughs.

After gaining a reputation as an outspoken seminarian, a priest once confronted him, asking if he wanted to be a priest or a politician. Moras took the task of building Saint Thomas the Apostle church

in Jaipur, India.

But the creation of a new school, parish, rectory and convent from scratch took its toll on the priest.

“I was a one-man band,” said Moras. “With no one to help, I just got burned out, to the point of collapse.”

Vacation time, a passport and friends in America provided Moras the opportunity to make a break for it. Unbeknownst to family and friends, the Indian priest boarded a plane to Lubbock, Texas.

“No one knew,” he laughed. “Not even my great-uncle, the bishop [of the Indian diocese].”

Upon arriving in the Lone Star state, Moras became a commodity to the catholic community. With the current priest out of commission from hip surgery, Moras took over the parish of Saint John Newman.

A Texan bishop rewarded Moras’ work by giving him his own parish in Snyder, Texas. Once again, he found himself at the head of both a church and a school.

“I was doing the same thing I was doing in India,” said Moras. “I wanted to do something for others outside [of the catholic faith]. I was training people, but I wanted to serve people.”

That strong desire for service lead Moras to the Army and the Chaplain Corps. He secured permission, from both his bishop in India and in Texas, to trade



Chaplain (Capt.) Leo Moras reads from the Holy Bible.

his white clerical collar for the digital pattern of the Army combat uniform.

“Here I am,” he grins. “I am serving Soldiers and am taking care of people all over the world.”

Now on his second deployment to Iraq, Moras makes sure that his Soldiers are “fully-loaded” before departing the wire on missions. He printed and distributed more than 12,000 prayer cards to troops and family members. In keeping with the unique sustainment and logistical missions of the 68th CSSB, Moras came up with the “Convoy Prayer.”

“I’ve come to know the troops and I came to know their mission,” he explained. “Constantly on the road, I know how dangerous it is; how they really rely on the mercy of God.”

Moras now spends his days ministering to the Soldiers of the 68th CSSB, doing what he can to provide comfort and support. In return, he asks for only one thing.

“Now I know the power of prayer,” he smiles. “I don’t ask for big things, I just ask for one ‘Hail Mary’ from everyone I meet.” For Moras, great things always start from humble beginnings.

Combat Stress Control

113th Medical Company (CSC)

829-1402

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

829-1402

Hot, sunny days coming to Balad

by Senior Airman Candace Romano

332nd AEW PAO

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - With temperatures slowly but surely inching their way toward three-digit weather and dust storms sweeping across the base more frequently, the days of summer are almost here.

Extreme conditions give pause for concern, as Balad officials warn of heat injuries prevalent throughout the summer months.

"We've had no reported heat injuries during this rotation so far," said Master Sgt. Tim Cahill, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, ground safety manager. "However, with hot weather coming, it's certainly likely as it gets hotter."

Balad personnel can expect to see temperatures hit 100 degrees regularly by the end of May, with temperatures reaching as high as 120 degrees in the summer months.

"Over the past three years, we've only hit 120 degrees a handful of times here at Balad, but in July and August, we'll regularly see 110 degree-plus weather," said Combat Weather Flight Commander Capt. Jeffrey Gipson with the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron. "Other than rising temperatures, we'll deal with strong dust storms in June and July."

Billowing dust storms travel at high speeds, and can pose a threat to base personnel.

"The most widely recognized



A U.S. Air Force C-130 Hercules assigned to the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here takes off into the sunset. Balad personnel can expect to see temperatures hit 100 degrees regularly by the end of May, with temperatures reaching as high as 120 degrees in the summer months.

weather event for this part of the world is a distinct wall of sand and dust called a 'Haboob,'" said Captain Gipson. "Under the right circumstances, a thunderstorm will kick out one of these 'walls' that can travel at 30 to 70 miles per hour and can carry upwards of 100 miles."

When sandstorms whip through, the key is taking steps to protect oneself.

"It's important to take cover if at all possible, or at least wear your goggles and cover your nose and mouth, if cover isn't available," Cahill said.

While conditions may be trying, there are ways for Balad personnel

to protect themselves against heat cramps, exhaustion and strokes, and to stay cool.

"The best way to prevent heat stress and maintain proper hydration is to drink water constantly throughout the day in small amounts," said Capt. Charles Toth, the Bioenvironmental Engineering flight commander. "It's also a good idea to be cognizant of the current heat category index so you can better prepare yourself as the days get hotter."

The heat category index, calculated by the 332nd Expeditionary Aerospace Medicine Squadron's BE flight to predict outdoor heat stress exposure, is

updated on the Balad intranet page as conditions change.

By recognizing warning signs of dehydration, heat-related injuries can be prevented.

Headaches, dizziness and dry mouth are the first indicators of dehydration, which can progress to nausea, weakness, shortness of breath and muscle cramps, according to the BE flight.

"It's important to stay hydrated and take frequent breaks, especially when doing heavy work, and acclimate yourself slowly to the heat," Toth said.

For the Balad five day forecast, go to the Balad intranet page and click the "Weather" tab.

Within 72 hours of arrival, 'Warthogs' take fight to enemy

by Capt. Ken Hall & Master Sgt. Bryan Ripple

332nd AEW PAO

AL ASAD, Iraq - Within hours of standing up as a fully operational combat flying unit, the group was launching its fierce Thunderbolt IIs into battle.

"You've accomplished your mission in the proud and professional manner that is your legacy as Tuskegee Airmen," said Brig. Gen. Robin Rand, commander of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing's Tuskegee Airmen, under whom the 438th Air Expeditionary Group fights this war from Al Asad in western Al Anbar Province.

"I couldn't be more proud of the men and women of the 74th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron," said Lt. Col. Russ "Oscar" Myers, the squadron commander. "Both those at home and those deployed here have displayed true professionalism and maturity."

Since activating, the group has flown some 2,648 flying hours on 820 combat sorties providing CAS in some of the most challenging urban terrain in Iraq, including Fallujah, Ramadi, Baghdad and Baqouba, overcoming communications jams inherent in operations there, and remaining focused, vigilant and effective against a determined enemy, he said.

"The [An Najaf] mission was almost identical to a recent home-station training scenario," said Maj. Clint "Schlager" Eichelberger, who participated in the battle. The major is an A-10 instructor pilot deployed from the 66th Weapons Squadron at the Air Force's famed Weapons School at Nellis AFB, Nev.

The "Warthog," as the Thunderbolt IIs are com-

monly called, are capable of staying in the target area for a longer period of time providing CAS, the major said, but also noted, "there's a huge amount of responsibility de-conflicting where the friendlies and the targets are so we can put the right weapon on the right target at the right time and avoid collateral damage," he said

"I'm fortunate to have gotten the unique opportunity to come over and support the group's standup," Eichelberger said. "I've been able to draw upon previous tactical experience and help my fellow flyers focus on executing safe, smart, tactical close air support."

Ensuring the pilots stay qualified to fly are the squadron's aviation resource managers. "This is my first deployment, and it's nothing like I imagined it would be," said Airman 1st Class Breyon Carter, one of three SARMS in the unit. She and the other two SARMS keep track of the pilots' training, flying hours, combat missions, and help manage the unit's portion of each day's Air Tasking Order ... the document that directs every combat and combat support sortie in the entire CENTCOM area of operations each day.

"I'm very nervous for the pilots when they take off," the 20-year-old Danville, Va., native said. "But when they come back from a successful sortie, I'm proud to know I've played a part in them going out there and getting the job done." Aside from their regular duties, the SARMS manage the flag program where U.S. Flags are flown on combat missions for Al Asad Marines, Sailors, Soldiers and fellow Airmen.

"It's very rewarding to present our fellow war-



Maj. Robert "Notch" MacGregor, assistant director of operations for the 74th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, goes over a pre-flight check of his aircraft as he prepares for a combat mission over Al Anbar Province in western Iraq.

rriors a flag that is essentially a part of history," Myers said.

The Warthog pilots have become combat veterans and close-air-support experts in very short order. "I've flown about 30 combat missions," said Wichita, Kan., native 1st Lt. Chris "Harpoon" Laird. "It's a good feeling being up there, helping out the guys on the ground."

Romanian soldiers bond with Americans, focus on missions

by Staff Sgt. Gary Witte

Anaconda Times Staff

LSA ADDER, Iraq – There are differences in uniform, equipment and language, but to members of the 495th Infantry Battalion and their Coalition partners, the similarities are more important.

The Romanian paratrooper unit patrols certain areas in southern Iraq, provides a quick reaction force for British Explosive Ordnance Disposal units and maintains a safe route for convoys 24 hours a day.

While the soldiers are trained in airborne operations, scuba diving and climbing, they are “just infantry guys” during their missions in Iraq, their commander, Lt. Col. George Constantin said. Their paratrooper status has helped them bond with the 82nd Sustainment Brigade, but overall he sees troops from both armies in the same light.

“I don’t see boundaries between Americans and Romanians,” Constantin said.

Their efforts have gained the respect of many U.S. Soldiers, who provide additional equipment and training to the unit stationed at Logis-

tical Support Area Adder.

Sgt. 1st Class Michael E. Proctor of Jacksonville, Fla., a senior maintenance advisor with the 546th Maintenance Company, said he enjoyed working with the Romanians when he recently taught Humvee maintenance to more than 50 of them.

“I’m pretty impressed with them,” Proctor said, noting the Romanians were eager students who constantly asked questions about the unfamiliar vehicle.

The southeastern European country has participated in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom since their beginnings. Currently, there are nearly 600 Romanian soldiers serving throughout Iraq, with a majority of those at the Tallil base, according to their spokesman, Lt. Dorian Constantin Balan.

The army takes part in numerous training exercises with the American military every year and many of the soldiers know basic or intermediate English, he said. Balan himself learned English through a training program at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

“We have a special partnership with the U.S.,” he said.



Sgt. Ionut Grigore, with the Romanian Army 495th Infantry Battalion, serves as gunner for his Armored Amphibious Vehicle, also known as a TAB-77, while on convoy near LSA Adder.

Although the Romanian men and women serve under British forces at LSA Adder, many Americans have worked to forge connections with the paratrooper unit.

Maj. Lisa Munday, the plans and effects branch chief for the 365th Corps Support Battalion of Hattiesburg, Miss., said she started working with the Romanians to help provide the Humvee training.

She was also looking for ways to improve life on the base, so she organized a soccer tournament among various Coalition Forces, including the U.S. Army, the U.S. Air Force, the Romanian Army, the British Army, the Ugandan Security Forces and the Australian Army.

“Initially, it was going to be just one tournament,” she said.

Instead, the game has become a Sunday ritual at the Romanian camp inside LSA Adder. Variations on physical training uniforms substitute for team colors, with the exception of teams such as the Australians, who brought soccer jerseys with them to Iraq.

Cpl. Mihai Gancea, a Romanian soldier, was preparing for the American-Romanian match, except he was suiting up to play on the United States team. He said he found

Americans to be very friendly and any preconceptions have gone away as he’s gotten to know them.

“We are all here for the same thing, so we have to be united,” Gancea said. “They are the same as us.”

This equality doesn’t extend to everything. He said while the Americans might be victorious if they were playing their version of football, those skills don’t necessarily translate to a mastery of European football.

“I don’t know if they can beat us at soccer,” he said, smiling.

Lt. Delman J. Hafermann of Waverly, Iowa, a liaison officer for 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, was one of the Americans competing on the field. He said he enjoys playing against the Romanians and the good-natured competition works both ways.

“We tell them Americans can beat Romanians any day,” Hafermann said.

This time, however, the Romanians earned a 3-1 victory over their American counterparts. Munday, who took part in a volleyball game with the Romanians the same day, said she enjoys seeing the interaction between the different

See **Romania**, Page 15



Spc. Nelea Catalin uses his binoculars to scan traffic near the Euphrates River bridge near LSA Adder.

U.S., Romanian troops learn life-saving techniques during training class

by Pfc. Robert Baumgartner

82nd Sustainment Brigade PAO

LSA ADDER, Iraq – “He is going to die! Hurry up! Stop that bleeding,” screamed Spc. Amy Kris, a medic with the 82nd Sustainment Brigade.

Cpl. Edward Deacu, a paratrooper with the Romanian Army’s 495th Infantry Battalion, can barely hear her over the din of gunfire and explosions. His hands fumble around inside the medical bag, desperately searching for a tourniquet. He finds it despite the low-light and heavy-smoke, and securely fastens it around the casualty’s leg.

Deacu performed well. But instead of saving a buddy’s life, he earns a passing grade. Deacu and other Romanian paratroopers, along with service members from the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army, are students in the combat life saver course given here by medics of the 82nd Sustainment Brigade.

The course is designed to teach the basics of tactical life savings skills under realistic conditions. Students have to successfully perform emergency trauma care such as inserting airway adjuncts into a mannequin and applying tourniquets to severed limbs.

Then, every students favorite portion, they stick one another

with intravenous needles and establish a saline lock, which provides for the introduction of fluids back into the body after blood loss or severe dehydration. It is the goal of the class is to instill in the students an ability to instinctively react to combat casualties without freezing up.

“We want give service members the skills necessary to treat their buddies and save lives when something goes wrong. We try to simulate actual combat conditions and make them as stressed as possible,” said Kris, of Porter, IN, one of the CLS instructors.

It is the knowledge and familiarity that the 82nd SB medics have that the Romanian command want their paratroopers to learn. After observing one of the early CLS courses, 1st Lt. Macau Florin, medical platoon commander for the 495th Infantry Battalion (Airborne) realized this was something his troopers needed to experience.

“Our medics do not have the same experience as the Americans, they can learn very well this way,” Florin said.

“The other week we had a vehicle rollover. Some of the soldiers involved were graduates of the [CLS] course, and performed very well,” he added.

The instructors were impressed with the Romanian’s high-

level of motivation, as well as the basic understanding of combat life saving skills.

“The Romanians are pretty knowledgeable. A lot of their protocols are the same as ours. That’s a good thing, because we don’t have the time to get very in depth, they pretty much grasp what we’re teaching them,” said Spc. L.P. Robinson, a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 82nd Sustainment Brigade and one of the course instructors.

“And they were very enthusiastic. They were raring to go right from the beginning. They couldn’t wait to put on their gear and run through the lane,” Robinson said.

While the beginning of the class involves slide presentations, the true test of a student’s knowledge has to come under stress. The week-long course culminates in an exercise with students navigating obstacles, treating casualties in a building filled with smoke while sounds from the movie ‘Saving Private Ryan’ blare through loudspeaker.

“This is much more like what they will encounter outside the wire- the screaming, the confusion, the smoke. So we try to make it as stressful as we can so when they get outside the wire and things start to go downhill, they don’t forget their training under pressure,” Robinson said.

Traditions carry memories as units make mark

by Staff Sgt. Felix A. Figueroa

82nd Sustainment Brigade PAO

LSAADDER, Iraq – In most places it is a crime to write or draw on the walls, but not in Logistical Support Area Adder. Servicemember's here do it to show their unit's 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 CSB, 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 panther's 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 Corps Support Battalion 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 said his grandfather, Roger Woods Sr. is responsible for passing on the love for art. Woods said, his grandfather painted murals in his room and carved musical boxes out of discarded scrap wood. He hopes to one day travel



Pvt. Dewitt B. Woods, 260th CSB, 82nd Sustainment Brigade, paints the 3rd Infantry Division patch and mascot at his battalion headquarters at LSA Adder, Iraq.

See **Tradition**, Page 14

CSM Hill visits LSA Anaconda leaders



Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin L. Hill the new command sergeant major of the Multi-National Force-Iraq, visited Soldiers at LSA Anaconda in April. Hill took charge of command May 5, succeeding Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffery J. Mellinger.

1st Maintenance Company first to deliver the fight

by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell

Anaconda Times Staff

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq

- If it breaks, they tow it, repair it and return it to the fight against terrorists -- on time, every time.

Welders, mechanics and vehicle recovery specialists assigned to 1st Maintenance Company, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, based out of Fort Riley, Kan., work tirelessly supporting two infantry divisions and separate brigades by keeping vehicles on the roads, generators supplying power and stranded combat vehicles out of enemy hands.

With the Baghdad surge of numerous combat brigades to the area, the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) logisticians maintain their mission with no complaints and a positive attitude, said Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Roberts, 27, the recovery team noncommissioned-officer-in-charge.

Roberts' five-Soldier team works nonstop recovering military vehicles on and off forward operating bases near Baghdad.

"We are a small cohesive group of Soldiers who work to accomplish the mission every time," said the Greenville, Tenn., native.

"Despite the high-risk danger, my Soldiers work together to ensure we get the job done," she said.

Roberts measures success not only by number of missions completed, but also the ability to answer the 9-1-1 call for help when Soldiers are on the roads.

"My Soldiers are why we have gone six months and not miss a single mission to help someone," she said.

Using proper pre-combat inspections and risk assessments, Roberts said the recovery team takes pride in their mission and the satisfaction from their customers, knowing they

are able to continue their fight against terrorism and help the Iraqi people get back on their feet.

"They truly love their job assisting others to move forward with their own mission," Roberts said about her Soldiers.

All five Soldiers on the recovery team are light-wheeled vehicle mechanics and Roberts said they are able to diagnose and often able to fix the problem out on the roads allowing the mission to move forward.

When the mechanics in the field are unable to repair the problem, they tow the vehicle back to the direct support maintenance shop, where a small team of skilled mechanics is waiting to tear down the vehicle to its basics to find the solution to a particular problem.

"Our Soldiers have the keen ability to adapt and get things done in a more efficient manner than normal channels," said Chief Warrant Officer Allen Nelms, from Summerville, Ala.

From fabricating new tools, repairing a radiator or removing broken bolts from an engine, Nelms said Soldiers assigned to the maintenance company consistently use innovative thinking and precision decision-making processes to accomplish the mission.

"Removing a broken bolt from an engine block saves an enormous amount of time, because the mechanics don't have to swap an entire engine out and our customers get their vehicle back in a shorter time," Nelms said.

Another mission for the company is repairing essential generators supplying power to communication hubs and air conditioners, which cools the sensitive equipment that provide the edge on the battlefield.



Pvt. Jonathon Loeffler, assigned to the 5th Maintenance Company, 451st CSSB, based at Victory Base Complex, near Baghdad, assists with the removal of a transmission case during a recent job.

Generator mechanic, Pfc. Jason Northcott, 27, from League City, Texas, said the greatest challenge here is being able to troubleshoot an inoperable piece of equipment.

"We get generators that won't even start, and before you can run the diagnostic test you have to figure out how to get the generator started and operational," he said.

Northcott said the mission of supporting the sustainment brigade is exactly why he joined the army more than two years ago.

"I love being able to fix things that are broken, getting them running and being able to call the owner and tell them they can come pick up their generator," he said.

As the mission of the maintenance company increases, more bri-

gades call the Baghdad area home Soldiers like Northcott, Nelms and Roberts will continue to work long hours to allow the combat brigades to take the fight to the terrorists and give the Iraqi people back their country.



Staff Sgt. Todd Wallen (left), listens to Sgt. Dale Kosal and Pfc. Jason Northcott explain the problem with a power relay on a power compressor. All three Soldiers are assigned to the 5th Maintenance Company, 451st CSSB, based at Victory Base Complex, near Baghdad, Iraq.



Staff Sgt. Elizabeth Roberts, operates the crane on a M954E1 wrecker and recovery vehicle recently.

15th SB unit keeps wheels turning in Baghdad

by Sgt. Amanda Solitario

Anaconda Times Staff

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – When servicemembers leave the base, they want the assurance that their vehicle is going to get them to their destination and not falter on the streets of Iraq.

Not only will vehicle maintenance issues put the breaks on missions, but it also compromises the safety of troops out on the road, said Staff Sgt. Matthew Hendrix, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the maintenance team.

Working hard to avoid these potential perils, the Soldiers of the 598th Maintenance Company, 68th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, keep wheels turning and missions rolling in the Baghdad area.

Operating like dedicated doctors on their patients, these mechanics perform surgeries of their own to put vehicles back in commission and on the front lines.

“Our job here, as close as I can put it, is we are firefighters,” said Spc. Mark Hammack, a power generation repairer with the 598th Main. Co. “We put out fires on vehicles with maintenance issues.”

The Maintenance Support Team, comprised of Soldiers from the active duty Fort Benning, Ga. Unit, provides direct support level maintenance to servicemembers in the Baghdad area. Hendrix, from Fort Myers, Fla., said support at this level involves complex vehicle repairs that individual units cannot take care of themselves.

The MST certainly has their regular customers, but with all the convoys passing through Baghdad, they see new faces everyday, said Sgt. Derrick Inabinet, a shop foreman with the 598th from Casey, S.C.



Pfc. Brandon D. Henley, an all wheeled vehicle mechanic with the 598th Maintenance Company checks to make sure everything is working with the engine of a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck M984 Wrecker.

“Anybody that comes around, we help them out,” he said.

Hendrix said the unit has even expanded their services to Iraqi soldiers and the Military Transition Teams that work with them, so long as the MST has the parts on hand.

He said the MITT usually has very little maintenance support and are appreciative of the help.

At times, the Soldiers in the 598th meet their customers halfway performing mini house calls. The unit has a seven-man team always on call and ready to fly directly to the aid of a

servicemember with a vehicle in need of repair.

Since their arrival in mid-February, the team has answered that call five times to various areas of the country, Inabinet said.

Grabbing their toolboxes and hygiene kits, they jump into a chopper and go. The crew said they stay there until the mission is finished.

“We get on a Blackhawk or a plane, fly out, and whatever the mission is, we get it completed,” Inabinet said. “It is a different experience. You really don’t know what to expect. All

you know is that you have a mission to accomplish.”

While some of the unit is away, back at the yard teams plug through all the jobs until the motor pool is empty. With unconventional hours, the Soldiers often find themselves working straight through the night.

“We fight fires all day until the fires are out,” Hammack, from Borden, Ind., said.

He said different jobs have a different precedence level, which dictates how quickly something must get done. Prioritizing is especially impor-

tant when there are several vehicles in the yard and only a small team to tackle the workload.

Hammack said there is never a shortage of work for the MST, and they have completed hundreds of jobs since their arrival.

“In the three short months we’ve been here, I’ve worked on more equipment than I have in my whole career,” he said.

The MST takes their mission very seriously, Hendrix said. The Soldiers are always ready to shift into high gear and get the job done. Ignoring the heat and fatigue, the mechanics keep turning the wrench, because they know someone is counting on them for that piece of equipment.

“The way we try to put it in our heads is that if we can’t be out there fighting battles everyday, at least we are helping the guys who are,” Hammack said. “If we can’t keep them rolling the overall battle will never be won.”

Hendrix said the sense of true accomplishment comes when a Soldier tells him and his team thank you for their work.

“It is good to know that what we do here makes a difference and that it means something,” he said.

With the recent three-month extension of some troops, the MST said they are not sure if it applies to them, but they will keep a positive attitude all the same. They have a job to do that affects the welfare of thousands of servicemembers, Hammack said.

“We all joined the military for the same reasons, and we all know the mission is always changing,” he said.



From underneath a Humvee, Spc. Earl Rice, an all wheeled vehicle mechanic with the 598th Maintenance Company from Fort Benning, Ga., works to get the vehicle in great shape for a Soldier at Camp Striker.

May 16

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

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

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

Spades & Ping Pong
8:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.
H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East 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

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

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

Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m. West MWR

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

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

May 17

Console Game Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

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

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

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

Dodgeball League
8 p.m., Circuit Gym

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

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

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

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

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

Spin Center
6 a.m., H6 Fitness Center

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

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

Intermediate Swim Lessons
6 p.m., Indoor Pool

May 18

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

Scrabble Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Chess Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

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

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

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., West Fitness Center

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

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

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

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

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

May 19

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

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

Salsa Dance Class
7 p.m., East MWR

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

Wrestling
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

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

Pilates
11 a.m., West Fitness Center

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

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

May 20

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

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

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

Poker
7 p.m., East MWR

Poetry Night
7 p.m., East MWR

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

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

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

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

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

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

Abs Salute
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

May 21

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West MWR

Poetry Jam
8 p.m., West MWR

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

Karaoke
8 p.m., East MWR

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

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

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

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

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

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

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

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

Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

May 22

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West MWR

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

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

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

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

Aikido
10 am to noon, East Fitness
Center

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

Combative Training
8:30 p.m., 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

May 23

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

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

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

Spades & Ping Pong
8:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.
H6 MWR

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

Aikido
5 p.m., East Fitness Center

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

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Do you have a story idea?

Contact the Anaconda Times

anacondatimes@balad.iraq.centcom.mil

Shout outs from home

Glen Webb, Jr.
Hey babe,
We love you and miss you!
Can't wait to have you back home!
Love, Stephanie, Courtney, Kenzie, Kaitlyn and Kenna

John J. Elam
Hello,
We just wanted to say thanks for all that you are doing. I'm sure that you're looking forward to your time home for Kelly's graduation. Your family definitely has a lot going on and you are constantly in our prayers. Take care!

Nathan Dameron
Hey big guy! We are looking forward to seeing you very soon! I love you! Mother

Jonathan Terry
Hey Jonathan!!!!
I just wanted to thank you for what you are doing, and tell you how extremely proud I am of you!! I tell my girls a t about you, and how you are a soldier just like the men they show on TV.
I think about you every day, and pray for you every night. Come home safe, and we love you.
Daphne, Mark, Kelly and Piper

Henry Torres
HI!!!! See you soon uncle!

Juan Cruz
I <3 U
Miss u lots!!!!

rebecca mockelman
Hi queen Becky, we miss your bright and shining smile, be safe, we love you , your family

Brian Zimmerman
Babe thank you soo much for what your doing and all you ahve done!! Cant wait to see again!!
Adam Grads pre-school May 24th!!babe once

again THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO AND CANT WAIT TO SEE YOU!! LOVE ALWAYS AND FOREVER YOUR WIFE AND BEST FRIEND!

Melanie Bohn
We all love you and miss you! Come home soon!

Mark Rice
I miss you so much. You're always in my heart. Stay strong and keep the faith! "Be strong in the Lord, and in His mighty power." Ehesians 6:10

Robert Hartzog
The countdown is on until you come back home! Your girls cannot wait to have you back home. We are very proud of you. We love you!

Nicholas Castellane
Nick Castellane, Hey baby! I miss you and I am so proud of you. You are my everything. Stay safe and happy! Remember these days apart only make us stronger. "I'll love you more with every breath, truly, madly, deeply!" We miss and love you. Love always, April and Munchie

Vincent Dvorak
Greetings from Colorado. We are very proud of you and pray for your safety every day. We look forward to when you are back home with your family. We love you, Diana, Monte, Shelby, Ryan

Jason Lockett
Hello my wonderful and handsome son in love Im so proud of you.Im requesting that your picture be put by the word man in the dictionary. Your mother in love.

Adam Ballard
Hi Daddy -

Can't wait for you to come home!
Love you
Anastasia

Thomas Calzado
From all at home we will like to wish you a Happy Birthday and many more to come. Hope you have a great day. We love you and miss you very very much.

Alan Schmitt
Alan, we miss you and think you're the greatest! Come home safely real soon.

Shawn Madden
My Brother... My Brother... You are missed horribly!!! Come home soon!! Sis

Robert Bischof
WE LOVE AND MISS YOU VERY MUCH !!! CANT WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE HERE.. MOMMA

John J. Elam
Hey, Jeff! Hope things are going as well as possible. We (Ed, actually) finally ventilated the electric room door! How many years has it been???? Stay well, we miss you!
JB

John J. Elam
Know you're busy building a country. Just wanted to say a quick hello--can't believe it's a year since you left. Stay safe--Patty

Cleezy, Joe, Greg, Wayne, Bubba, Nick, Haynie, Danny, John, and Josh
Tighten up Cleezy! Joe, I know it's hard but try not to hurt him. Just thinking about you fellas. Be safe as you can. See ya soon!

Evan Carter
Hey Evan, Here's to you Sport!!!! Love ya,

miss ya and can't wait to see you when you get home!!!

Mark Mendiola
hi daddy how are you ? we love you love Michael Mendiola

Mark Mendiola
Hafa Adai Mark Mendiola, We love and miss you lots. Take care and be safe over there. We'll be waiting for your safe return. We love you!! Geraldine, Markie & Michael

José E. Díaz,
Just To Tell You That "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter". Just Kidding, We are Still Here Waiting for You with All Our Hearts. We Will Always Love You, Kelly Ann, Jonathan, Jay Jay and BEBE.

Matthew Talafuse
Matt, come home soon! Parent's aging quickly, can't seem to keep them in line without you! LOL! Love Ya! Getting anxious for you to come back home! Your Older,Wiser Sister!

Vincent Savala
We are almost there sweetie!!! Hang in there and we are all anxious to see you when you get home...I love you!!!!

Alan Schmitt
Hey there. We are all thinking about you and grateful for risking your life for all of us. Take care and see you soon. Love, Penny

John J. Elam
Jeff,
We are thinking of you often and hoping that you will return home safely. Enjoy your leave and make the most of your time at home with the family. Hope to hear from you soon!
Denise, Jim, Kevin, Brad, and Erin



SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

(Schedule is subject to change)

Wednesday, May 16
5 p.m. Astronaut Farmer (PG)
8 p.m. Spider Man 3 (PG-13)

Thursday, May 17
5 p.m. Ghost Rider (PG-13)
8 p.m. Reno 911: Miami (R)

Friday, May 18
2 p.m. Dead Silence (R)
5 p.m. Ghost Rider (PG-13)
8:30 p.m. Lucky You (PG-13)

Saturday, May 19
2 p.m. I Think I Love My Wife (R)
5 p.m. Lucky You (PG-13)
8 p.m. Premonition (PG-13)

Sunday, May 20
2 p.m. Lucky You (PG-13)
5 p.m. Premonition (PG-13)
8 p.m. Ghost Rider (PG-13)

Monday, May 21
5 p.m. I Think I Love My Wife (R)
8 p.m. Dead Silence (R)

Tuesday, May 22
5 p.m. Ghost Rider (PG-13)
8 p.m. Lucky You (PG-13)

Jenny, the Military Spouse



Pvt. Murphy's Law



Back of the Formation



'Rest Assured' Soldiers turn idea into historic celebrations

by Sgt. Allison Urbatsch

593rd CSG PAO

AL ASAD, Iraq – The month of March is nationally recognized as Women's History Month. The public celebration of women's history began in 1978 as "Women's History Week" in Sonoma County, Calif. In 1987, Congress expanded the celebration to a month, and March was declared Women's History Month.

Each year servicemembers, both forward deployed and stateside, go to great lengths to show their appreciation for the accomplishments women have made throughout history and this year was no exception.

The 593rd Corps Support Group (CSG) "Rest Assured," 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Soldiers spearheaded two monumental and unforgettable events in recognition of Women's History Month that provided hundreds of Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines a well deserved respite from the harsh reality of combat.

This enormous undertaking began as a simple idea discussed over a dinner meal during a cold January night in Western Iraq. In particular, Staff Sgt. Nickiesha Millwood, from Spring Valley, N.Y., Sgt. Holly Stephani, from Shelton, Washington, and Cpl. Susie Lopez, from Santa Rita, Guam, turned this simple idea into two unforgettable first-rate and hugely successful events.

The first event was Al Asad Air Base's first Women's History Month 5K run, March 25. Despite blustery conditions and the imminent threat of rain, more than one hundred runners and walkers came out in support of this extremely well organized and flawlessly executed event.

After the run, servicemembers and civilian contractors were offered a gratifying breakfast to enjoy while observing the awards ceremony for the first, second and third place winners.

In the male category, the first place winner was Sgt. 1st Class Johan Ponder, from Durham, N.C., with a time of 19:46. Second place was taken by Lance Cpl. Simon Miller, from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina with a time of 19:57, and third place was awarded



Staff Sgt. Nickiesha Millwood (left), Sgt. Raffinee Forrest, Spc. Teraney Fowler and Spc. Sheritta Turner after completing their step routine at the Women's History Month Talent Show in Al Asad.

to Spc. Vidal Guaza, from Plano, Texas, with a time of 20:18.

In the female category, Sgt. Holly Stephani, assigned to Headquarters Headquarters Company, 593rd CSG, 13th SC (E) took first place with a time of 20:30. Coming in second place was 2nd Lt. Jamie Brant, of Cumberland, Md with a time of 21:25, and Maj. Christine Stahl, from Augusta, Ga. took third place with a time of 23:30.

The Women's History Month Talent Show was March 31. This extraordinary feat, also a first on Al Asad Air Base, drew hundreds of exuberant supporters in support of this festive and extremely entertaining show.

The free-spirited Capt. Antoinette Pulley, Commander of the 497th Transportation Company, captivated the lively audience as the "mistress of ceremonies." The central theme of the talent show was to pay honor and respect to the indispensable role that women have played in forging our free and democratic society.

The history of women in the military was eloquently read by Sgt. Sherry Thornton of the 593rd CSG and Staff Sgt. Karen Fields, from Cleveland, Ohio, expertly recounted the role of women in sports. The role

of women in politics was presented by Spc. Kimberly Hall, from the 497th TC and Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Parker, from the 593rd CSG, charismatically stressed the uncontestable influence of women in entertainment.

The entire event was very educa-

tional and fun-filled. Each presentation was followed by talents and acts performed by our great servicemembers. The performers were selected from various units across Al Asad Air Base and represented every branch of service.

First place trophies were awarded

for dancing, singing, and musical categories. The "Sista Steppin" Squad members are Sgt. Raffinee Forrest, from Rockford, Illinois; Spc. Sherita Turner, from Fresno, California; Spc. Teraney Fowler, from Clarksville, Tennessee, and Staff Sgt. Nickiesha Millwood won for the best dance group. Lance Cpl. Gary McCormick, from Atlanta, Ga. won for the best musical composition.

Pfc. Deandre Walton, from Shaker Heights, Ohio, and Sgt. Trey Luther, from Arcadia, Fla., won for best singers. Jessica Salinas, manager of the Al Asad MWR said, "due to its overwhelming popularity, the talent show was considered to be one of the finest MWR events ever held at Al Asad."

The remarkable success of the events held by the 593rd CSG emphatically illustrated that with careful planning, and a lot of hard work, a few dedicated servicemembers can provide an entire day of fun and education for everyone.

The 593rd CSG will spearhead future events in the months to come. The next event will be the Asian Pacific Heritage Month base-wide presentation, which will be overseen by Cpl. Susie Lopez and Staff Sgt. Nickiesha Millwood.



Ready, Get Set, GO. All the participants of the 593rd 5K run take off at the sound of the horn.

Tradition

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the world with his two-year-old daughter admiring famous works.

What began as drawing famous cartoon character's evolved into his own 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 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, senior enlisted advisor, MNC-I 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, 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," Tindall said.

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

Romania

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countries.

Munday, who is from Fuquay-Varina, N.C., said her new friends have refused to teach her any Romanian, because they want to practice their English. She also noted their discipline, stating they do physical training five times a week.

"They have such huge hearts. They'll do anything for you," Munday said. "If we stay in our little cliques, we miss a chance to get to know each other."

The Romanians have had several chances to learn from U.S. troops. Many participated in a Combat Lifesaver course taught by the 82nd Sustainment Brigade in February and there are plans to conduct a joint mass casualty exercise in the near future.

"It is very important that we do these exercises together," Lt. Macau Florin, commander of the Romanian medical platoon, said. "We cannot afford mistakes in this."

There are a few other differences. While the names attached to some military camps can be obscure, it's pretty clear where the namesake of the 495th encampment comes from. The large bat painted on the concrete wall outside the camp is one clue.

"They call it Camp Dracula to scare the enemy," Balan, the spokesman, said with a smile.

The Romanians are also involved in their own civil affairs projects, including the planned rebuilding of a nearby Iraqi school, he said.

They also face their own dangers. Recently, members of an American convoy helped alert the soldiers stationed at a checkpoint about a suspicious vehicle in the area, Lt. Benone Bodoc, a Romanian platoon commander, said. The vehicle was later prevented from approaching the



Sgt. Gabriel Costache makes a move in a game against Staff Sgt. Marian Chiriac while on break from their security duties. Both men are members of the Romanian Army 495th Infantry Battalion.

checkpoint.

"They are always willing to help us," Bodoc said of the U.S. convoys.

The Romanians constantly scan the area and the traffic for trouble. They also stay alert for dangers, including improvised explosive devices, during their own convoys.

"We have to know it's a war and we have to pay attention to everything; not just one thing," Cpl. Mihai Gancea said while on security duty.

The 495th arrived in February, just a month after their military did away with their draft, Romanian officials said. All the soldiers currently

here volunteered to come to Iraq. The Romanian commander said each will do their best to accomplish their mission.

"We are honored to be shoulder-to-shoulder with the American Army and we want to be all the time in the same situation," Constantin said. "Our place is here with NATO soldiers."

Correction

Staff Reports

In May 9th's edition of the Anaconda Times, the article entitled 'Medical Logisticians train Iraqi soldiers' inaccurately stated that currently, there is not a system in place for Iraqi medical logistics. However, Iraq does have a system in place.

The program, which was held here at Logistical Support Area Anaconda in April was designed to enhance Iraq's Ministry of Defense's medical support system.

Five Iraqi soldiers learned many things during the week long class, to include managing their warehouse in Taji, completing various inventory checklists of medical supplies and correcting any errors that may arise with the inventories.



Master Sgt. Robert Motoaca with the Romanian Army of the 495th Infantry Battalion, drives an Armored Amphibious Vehicle, also known as a TAB-77.

593rd Corps Support Group transforms in the combat zone

by Staff Sgt. Gary Witte

Anaconda Times Staff

AL ASAD, Iraq – Soldiers in the newly designated 593rd Sustainment Brigade now wear their pride on their sleeve following a recent ceremony here.

The May 1 event marked the change of the unit from its former designation as a corps support group. As a sustainment brigade, it will be a larger organization, which means more responsibility for its commander, Col. Richard B. Burns of Hampton, Va.

“This was a long, hard process,” Burns said after the ceremony. “To be able to do this while at war is unique and a challenge.”

The transformation also means the brigade and its subordinate units can wear their own patch, a blue and white barrel-shaped image with three red-tipped spears, five stars and a mountain in the background.

The mountain is Mount Rainier, located at the unit’s home station in Fort Lewis, Wash. The stars represent the five campaigns the 593rd has participated in, including World War II, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Somalia and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The three spears, matching the tra-

ditional colors of Army support, stand for combat readiness and the three core branches of logistics – ordnance, quartermaster and transportation, officials said.

Several Soldiers expressed appreciation for the design of the new patch. Staff Sgt. Adrian Rankin from Collins, Miss., a platoon sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, said it has more personal meaning for Soldiers than the Forces Command patch they previously wore.

“I think it’s a pretty good change,” Rankin said.

The sustainment brigade is one of the last units to undergo this change, which is part of the Army’s overall reorganization, said the 593rd Command Sgt. Maj. Robert D. Haymans.

The transformation was initially delayed because of the unit’s deployment to Operation Iraqi Freedom in June, but the command decided once they arrived at Al Asad, they would be able to continue the process.

“We figured we had the time here to do it,” Haymans said, giving credit to the work done by staff members.

“They’ve gone at it full speed.”

As a corps support group, the 593rd had five battalions under a headquarters of more than 100 people, Haymans said. As a sustainment brigade, its headquarters will almost triple in size and will have up to seven battalions units under it, he added.

Haymans said while the structure is different, it will not mean a change in the mission, which includes overseeing Army logistics services for all of western Iraq.

The deputy commander directed Capt. Kevin Smith of Pawling, N.Y., the chief of operations and brigade chemical officer, to come up with an initial design for the new patch. Smith said the original was the same colors and had both the five stars and the mountain.

At that point, the patch went through 30 different versions, with the input of various staff members included in the process. At times, multiple versions of the new patch were presented to the entire staff, who then offered suggestions and opinions on the designs.

“They all had their own part in it, and I think that’s important,” Smith said, noting he was to be included.

The U.S. Army Institute for Heraldry provided some minor changes, including changing what was arrows into spears, Smith noted. The pattern of the spears has its own significance, since the pattern they form can represent the “I” and “X” for the Roman numeral nine.

So if you bring these symbols together – five stars, the spears form a nine and there are three of them – 593.

“After 63 years, we now have our own patch that will live for many



Col. Richard B. Burns, commander of the 593rd Sustainment Brigade, speaks during the May 1 transformation ceremony. He is wearing the new patch representing the unit.

generations to come,” Burns said during his speech at the ceremony. “Be proud of your unit, your teammates and what we accomplish daily. This patch is your patch and it represents our standards of excellence that we produce everyday.”

Burns said since its mission started, the 593rd has

traveled more than 5 million miles on the road and conducted more than 1,700 combat logistics patrols.

As the administrative process of the transformation is complete, many changes have already started for the 593rd, including the addition of units under its command, Burns said. The projected date for overall completion of the transformation is scheduled for April.



593rd Sustainment Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Robert D. Haymans (left) and Commander Col. Richard B. Burns (right) unveil the new unit colors.



Sgt. Allison Urbatsch of Rock Spring, Wyo. takes part in the color guard for the 593rd Sustainment Brigade May 1 transformation ceremony. She is wearing the new unit patch.