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Crossed Sabers

Volume I, Issue 17

Telling the MND-Baghdad Story

Monday, July 23, 2007



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Bronco Suzuki, 2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Not in Kansas Anymore

Pfc. Peter Mikolajewski scans his sector during a combined cordon and search operation with 1st Battalion, 4th Bde., 1st Iraqi National Police Div., in the Kamaliya area of Baghdad. Mikolajewski is assigned to Co. B, 2nd Bn., 16th Inf. Regt. The 2-16th Infantry is operating in Baghdad under the 2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

Karkh's First Job Fair

**By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

BAGHDAD - With three young children and a wife, Mahare Mohammed, a part-time mechanic was one of the almost 4,000 applicants seeking an opportunity for employment at the Karkh Chamber of Commerce's first-ever Job Fair held at Zawra Park in the center of the Iraqi capital July 7.

"There's no work at all," Mohammed said. "We are afraid to work. We hear about dead bodies being found all the time."

Even though Mohammed said he and others were afraid to work because of the constant reports of dead bodies found in and around Baghdad, it didn't stop thousands of hopefuls from standing in the 100-plus degree heat and waiting for their turn to speak to the 28 employment groups waiting inside a former restaurant.

From 9 a.m. to noon, more than 1,000 people showed up for the event. In the afternoon, nearly 3,000 more job seekers filled out applications until the Job Fair ended at 3 p.m.

According to Capt. Jason M. Lewis, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st

Cavalry Division's civil affairs officer, the number of applicants was a clear indication of the desperation of the Karkh residents. With almost half of them jobless, it's a percentage that also mirrors Iraq's jobless rate.

With so many unemployed in the area, the "Black Jack" Brigade and the Chamber of Commerce, who they have been working closely with for the past few months, wanted to get together and see what they could do through this Job Fair.

"People are in need - they are desperate for jobs," said Lewis, of Santa Barbara, Calif. "This is just the first step; it's just a flash in the pan. Hopefully, from here we can consolidate a lot of the information we have about people who need jobs and push that down to the local neighborhood councils, and they can become like a de facto employment office."

Of the 28 prospective employers present, most of them were offering labor-type jobs. However, the table for interpreters seemed to draw the most attention.

Outside the restaurant, thousands of applicants tried to find any way of shield-

See **Job Fair** Page 3



Down and Dirty

Cleveland native Pfc. Christopher Rodgers, a mechanic with Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, inspects a humvee as part of weekly preventive maintenance checks and services in a motor pool on Camp Liberty July, 8.

(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Brothers Pin on Captain's Bars Together

By Spc. Shea Butler
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Together since conception, Capts. Jordan and Jonah Burfield were finally separated due to their deployments to Iraq. However, the Army also brought them back together for their promotions to captain at the Al Faw Palace here July, 1.

Jordan is based at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad; Jonah is at Camp Falcon on the Iraqi capital's south side, but thanks to mutual friends and each of their chain-of-commands, the identical twins were able to celebrate this milestone together at Camp Victory, on Baghdad's west side.

The Burfield twins have come a long way from their home in Lacrosse, Wis., since beginning their military careers only eight years ago.

"We were battle buddies in basic training, and the drill sergeants loved that," said Jordan, a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. "I wasn't the best Soldier right away. I was probably the worst private there."

"Jordan lacked discipline in the beginning," said Jonah, who serves with the 47th Ordnance Company, 79th Ordnance Battalion. "I was constantly getting smoked every time he screwed up."

"The drill sergeants tried to get us to hate each other because they wanted us to box each other at the company boxing match," Jonah explained.

"It didn't work, though. We have such a



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Identical twins Capt. Jordan Burfield (left), Co. C, 1st Bn., 227th Avn. Regt., 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., (left) and Capt. Jonah Burfield, 47th Ord. Co., 79th Ord. Bn., were reunited at the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory for their promotions to captain July, 1.

unique bond that it just made us closer," he said

When the boxing match finally came, the two brothers just tapped each other back and forth, refusing to actually come to blows, Jonah said.

Looking back on it, they now argue about who would have actually won the match.

"He is a little bigger than me, but I have more fight in me," Jonah said, measuring his brother with a glance.

"I don't know about that! I think I would

win," Jordan quickly countered.

Back in basic training, Jordan remembered watching his brother being punished for his mistakes and lack of discipline made him get his act together. Jordan finished as the honor graduate for his basic training class.

"Jonah made me a better Soldier because I felt such a deep hurt watching him suffer because of me," Jordan said.

The brothers agree the hardest part of leading nearly identical Army careers is watch-

ing the other one suffer during training. Especially the Special Forces training they went through in California, they said.

"We can't feel each others pain, though it's a common misconception about identical twins," Jonah clarified. "Its just hard watching him go through any hardship."

"We can't read the other one's mind, either," Jordan said. "That's another misconception."

"But when we were kids we tricked every one into thinking we could (read each other's minds)," Jonah said.

"Jordan would tell the other kids a number, then I would put my fingers on his temples and he would flex his temples the number he was thinking," he said.

Jordan enjoyed his time reminiscing with his brother, he said. "I am so thankful we were able to get together for this (their promotion)," he said.

This is the longest period of time they have ever been separated in 26 years. Though stationed in different areas of Baghdad, Jordan, an Apache pilot, often flies over Jonah's area of operation. They say it comforts them both.

"I feel like he is my guardian angel," Jonah said. "I find comfort in knowing he is watching over me, and the rest of the family feels good about it, too."

The brothers were allotted one day together at Camp Victory. They have to go back to work, back to their respective base camps, but Jonah said he will still gaze skyward to see his brother watching over him.

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Spur of the Moment

"What is the significance of spending Independence Day serving in a combat zone?"



Spc. Beckie McCumbers
Headquarters and Headquarters
Company, 4th Infantry Brigade
Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division

"It's just something I'll remember forever. It's going to be one of the most memorable Fourth of July's ever."

Sgt. 1st Class Delmar Reed
1st Battalion, 28th
Infantry
Regiment, 4th
Infantry Brigade
Combat Team, 1st
Infantry Division



"I'm serving my country as a Soldier doing what I'm supposed to be doing. Being the 4th of July, being patriotic, you're patriotic anyway on the 4th of July. Being over here on the 4th of July ain't like I'm missing out on something. I can't say like I feel like I'm missing out. I feel like our independence still, no matter what part of the world we're in, our independence means everything, no matter where you're at. At least, that's what it means to me."



"It's showing that we're still fighting for freedom no matter where we are, but we can still celebrate it as well."

Sgt. Joshua Cookson
Headquarters and Headquarters
Company, 4th Infantry Brigade
Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division

"I feel honored to be part of an Army fighting for the freedom being celebrated back in the United States."

Staff Sgt. Nathan Tabor
Company C, 4-1 Brigade Special
Troops Battalion, 1st Infantry
Division

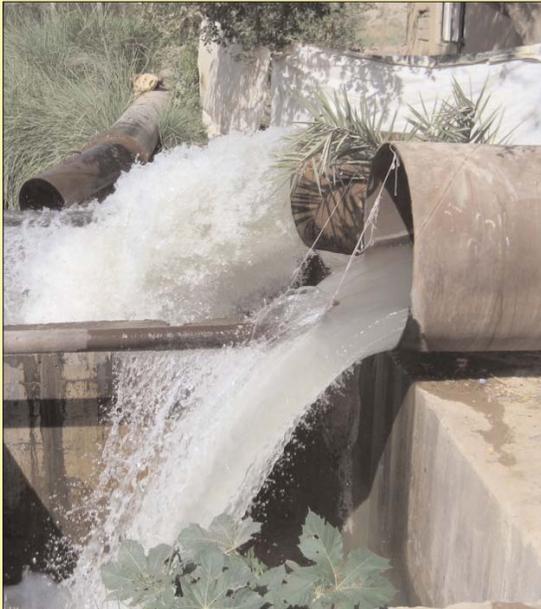


Spc. David Marino
Company C, 4-1 Brigade Special
Troops Battalion, 1st Infantry Division



"It reminds me of how, over 200 years ago, patriots like ourselves fought to secure our own freedom. It reminds me that we are here to help a country and a people come together in a new-found freedom."

Baghdad News Briefs



(U.S. Army photo)

Water flows from a canal pump station near Taji, Iraq July 5 into a canal which is the main source of irrigation water for the Taji area as well as parts of Baghdad's Kadamiyah District.

Iraqis Work to Fix Own Irrigation Water Problem Near Taji

1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Iraqi workers at a canal pump station near Taji, Iraq fixed a generator July 5 which will allow them to continue the flow of water to an irrigation canal whenever the Iraqi national power grid goes down.

The canal is the main source of irrigation water for most of the Taji as well as parts of Baghdad's Kadamiyah District.

Until recently, only two of the pump station generators were working because a fuel pump on the third generator had a faulty fuel pump.

To fix the problem of the broken fuel pump, the pump station manager submitted a request for a new one through the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources. Once the request was approved and funds released, the station manager picked up the part in Baghdad.

As soon as the station manager brought the part back to the pump station, a Ministry of Water Resources mechanic assigned to the station installed the fuel pump.

Now, when the Iraqi national power shuts off, the three generators will supply the power needed to run the pump station's four pumps to keep the water flowing.

"This is a good step toward Iraqis becoming self-reliant and solving their own essential services issues," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, deputy commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, whose brigade is responsible for the area in which the pump station operates.

"Fixing the fuel pump for a generator may seem like a minor accomplishment but its not. Take into consideration that their entire system was dismantled after the ground war, and then we stepped in and served as the primary service provider for the last four years. Getting the local government to exercise its own budget and supply chain has been difficult but this is positive sign that they are capable and moving towards self-reliance," he said.

Troops Find Cache in Mosque

By Maj. Randall Baucom
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Iraqi Army troops searched a mosque in Hor Al Bosh, Iraq after receiving small arms fire from the building July 5, uncovering a cache of small arms and ammunition and detaining one suspect.

During a combined patrol with Coalition Forces, Iraqi troops from 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) spotted someone, who had been firing a weapon, running into the Houda Mosque in Hor Al Bosh. Following the suspect, the Iraqi troops entered and searched the mosque after receiving the permission.

Inside, the Iraqi troops found 100 9mm rounds; seven AK-47 assault rifles, 50 7.62mm rounds, 30 AK-47 magazines, 300 AK-47 rounds and improvised explosive device-making materials. They detained one suspect. An investigation is being conducted to determine who else may be associated with this cache.

As the mosque was being searched, Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment remained outside, providing security. No U.S. personnel entered the mosque during the patrol. The search



(U.S. Army photo)

A cache of small arms and ammunition is laid out for inventory after Iraqi troops made the find in the Houda Mosque in Hor Al Bosh, Iraq.

was completed without incident.

"The Iraqi Army did an excellent job in quickly reacting to the situation and taking weapons off the streets that may have been used to harm innocent civilians, Iraqi security forces and coalition forces," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, deputy commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. "The Iraqi soldiers and our troops worked together to ensure all steps were taken to respect the integrity of the mosque."

Karkh Holds First-Ever Job Fair

Job Fair

From Page 1

ing the unforgiving sun away from them as they filled out their applications.

Since the local Iraqi Security Forces ensured that the event went without incident, the heat was the only thing job seekers had to combat.

By the end of the day, the employers hired approximately 200 people, and although the percentage of jobs was low compared to its number of applicants, Lewis hailed the event a

success.

"I'm very happy [with the turn out]," he said. "Of course, there's a lot of things that could have been done better, but I'm still thankful and happy with what the Chamber of Commerce has done and very proud of them."

With only 200 new jobs filled, Lewis said it only puts a small "dent" in the unemployment problems in Baghdad's Karkh District.

He said what needs to happen in the long-term is a good system needs to be put in place at local employment offices where people and employers can go to look for, and find, one another.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Approximately 4,000 job seekers waited in line under the hot Iraqi sun and 100-plus-degree temperatures in order to fill out applications with prospective employers at the Karkh Chamber of Commerce Job Fair July 7 in central Baghdad.

Hundreds Reenlist, Become Citizens on Americas Birthday

By Spc. Alexis Harrison
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines took part in the Multi-National Force - Iraq reenlistment, naturalization and Independence Day ceremony here.

More than 600 servicemembers reenlisted and more than 130 became U.S. citizens. Of those who reenlisted and naturalized, several were from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. They took the time not only to reenlist and become citizens of a country they are already defending; they also took the time to ponder just what it means to be from a free country like America.

"It was a great opportunity to be a part of something special," said Temple, Texas, native Sgt. 1st Class Eric Johnson from the 15th Support Battalion, 2nd BCT.

"It was my last reenlistment. I knew I was going to do it sometime during this deployment, but I saw the opportunity come up I thought 'What better way to do my last reenlistment than to do it with a four-star general and on the Fourth of July?'" he said.

Johnson said he reenlisted indefinitely to ensure a retirement from the Army and for the financial security of his family back home in Texas.

He didn't get a huge bonus or promises that his career would get any easier. He knew that a lot of responsibility came with reenlisting indefinitely.

"I didn't get a big bonus," he said. "I didn't do it for the money. I love what I do. I did it just to stay in. I love taking care of soldiers. I'm tired, but I did it for my family."

Another Soldier from the 15th BSB "Gamblers" who reenlisted was Staff Sgt. Joshua Hollowell from Kempner, Texas near Fort Hood.

He shared many of the same reasons for reenlisting indefinitely just as Johnson did.

He knew it was not only for his family, but for honor and a sense of pride that would spill over to his family and his Soldiers.

"I'm a career Soldier," he said. "To reenlist on the Fourth of July just made it



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Hundreds of service members salute while the individual states of America are called out during a ceremony at the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory in western Baghdad for the July 4 holiday

even better. Ever since I was a little kid I wanted to be in the Army. For everything the flag stands for, for my family - I'm proud I got to reenlist on the Fourth of July."

Hollowell has almost 12 years in already and he plans to retire from the service. He said that if it wasn't for his family, he wouldn't be reenlisting.

His wife's father and mother were both service members at one time. He also mentioned how excited he was for his wife to be getting a certificate of appreciation from one of the top-ranking commanders in the military.

During the ceremony, several honored guests were on hand to deliver speeches of gratitude and what it means to be an American service member in a time of war.

The commanding general of the Multi-

National Forces - Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus, gave the oath of enlistment after opening remarks on the war being waged against the anti-Iraqi forces being fought in the region and what it means to be celebrating our own Independence Day while helping others fight for their own independence.

He also gave a moving perspective on the fallen heroes that have served while fighting for democracy in the Middle East.

Pfc. Kellin Varela from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., said that becoming a naturalized citizen of America has been a life-long dream that's finally come true. After she joined the Army, she decided to make that dream come a reality.

Before Varela and the others becoming citizens got to swear in, Sen. John McCain of Arizona, stepped to the lectern and spoke to

the crowd of service members about service to their country and patriotism.

Finally, the deputy director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Jonathan Scharfen, led the inductees through the oath of citizenship and commended them for their service during a time of war.

After the oath, Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, led the newly-anointed citizens through the Pledge of Allegiance.

The president did not attend the ceremony, but he recorded a message for the troops to play toward the end of the ceremony.

The 3rd Infantry Division band played the Armed Forces Medley, signaling the end of the ceremony that many attended to show support of their fellow service members.

Honoring Our Fallen Heroes

Staff Sgt. James Adair, 1-18 IN, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Daniel Agami, 1-4 Cav., 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Bechert Michael, 1-28 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Sgt. David Bentz III, 3-61 Cav., 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Sid Brookshire, 1-8 Cav., 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. William Brown, 1-12 Cav., 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Pfc. Derek Calhoun, 1-64 AR, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Sgt. Joe Charfauros Jr., 1-64 AR, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Spc. Andre Craig Jr., 1-64 AR, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Maj. William Crow Jr., 1-64 AR, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Sgt. Chris Davis, 1-26 IN, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Steven Davis, 1-26 IN, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Anthony Hebert, 1-26 IN, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Cory Hiltz, 1-26 IN, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Spc. Josiah Hollopeter, 6-9 Cav., 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Sgt. Joel House, 1-26 IN, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Darren Hubbell, 2-12 Cav., 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Pfc. Gianni Joyamendoza, 2-12 IN, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Staff Sgt. Shin Kim, 2-69 AR, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Spc. Gene Lamie, 2-69 AR, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Pvt. (2) Thomas Leemuis, 2-69 AR, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
1st Lt. Darryl Linder, 2-8 Cav., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Sgt. Jimmy Malone, 2-8 Cav., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. Michael Martinez, 2-8 Cav., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. Alphonso Montenegro, 2-8 Cav., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Sgt. Michael Moody Jr., 2-227 AV, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div.
Pfc. Daniel Newson, 2-16 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Staff Sgt. Michael Pittman, 1-8 Cav., 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Sgt. Daniel Rordan, 2-16 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Jonathan Rossi, 2-12 IN, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Sgt. Eric Snell, 2-12 IN, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Sgt. Raymond Spencer Jr., 2-12 IN, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Spc. Jeremy Stacey, 2-12 IN, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Spc. Shane Stinson, 2-12 IN, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Jacob Tracy, 1-28 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Jerimah Veitch, 2-12 Cav., 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Pfc. David Wilkey Jr., 2-12 IN, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.
Spc. Leron Wilson, 2-12 Cav., 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Sgt. Ryan Wood, 3-7 Cav., 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Dustin Workman III, 26 BSB, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

Volunteers Turn out in Force in Abu Ghraib

By Staff Sgt. Mary Rose Mittlesteadt
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD - With Al Qaeda operatives plaguing the western Abu Ghraib neighborhood, local tribal leaders and volunteers have taken a step forward in the political process and fight for security.

Local sheiks, Iraqi Police officials have teamed up with Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers to recruit 1,900 new Iraqi police officers.

"We have 6,000 people who put their names on the list to volunteer," said Capt. Lawrence Obst, commander of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

The plan for the new officers is to refit three new stations which were undermanned and add two new stations in the area to enhance the security through what is known as the 'Gateway to Baghdad,' Obst said.

The process of getting these new recruits into training, and on the streets securing their neighborhoods starts with an identification screening process. This process is being conducted by Soldiers from 2-5 Cavalry and Ministry of Interior workers.

After the selection process, the best applicants are selected to begin training as Iraqi Police officers.

The recruiting comes shortly after the call from local tribal leaders for reconciliation with Coalition Forces in and the Iraqi government.

"A lot of these people have not been supporting us (the Coalition) over the past four years," said Obst, who has been working closely with sheiks in the area. "Just now, we have been able to sit down and talk with the local leaders on why we are here. At the same time, they are realizing what a bad influence Al Qaeda has been on the area."

Hussein Kadhein Zaydan, an Iraqi Police recruit, said many in the area are tired of the violence brought on by Al

Qaeda operatives.

"We saw oppression and depression and they killed our women and our children and we want to stop them," he said through a translator.

Zaydan added that the only solution to confront Al Qaeda is to participate in the political process, become part of the political reconciliation, and to be legitimized as an Iraqi Police officer.

Obst said he's seen a difference in the neighborhood.

"Attacks have decreased dramatically in my sector," said Obst, a native of Summit, N.J. "They have helped a lot in securing the area already by providing intelligence and providing security around their own homes."

Obst said his area of operations had been a hot-bed of violence, with roads littered with improvised explosive devices.

"There was one day in March, where one patrol hit three IEDs in the same day," he remembered. "In the last month, since we have been working with them, we have had two IEDs in my sector."

When they first arrived in October 2006, Obst said his company had small arms fire attacks nearly every other day. Now, they have had one small arms fire attack in the past month.

"The markets in Nasir Wa Salam, where I operate, were closed when we got here. Now they are open. People are going about their business and constructing houses and the economy is getting started again," Obst continued. "There is a huge improvement for both us and the lives of the Iraqis who live there."

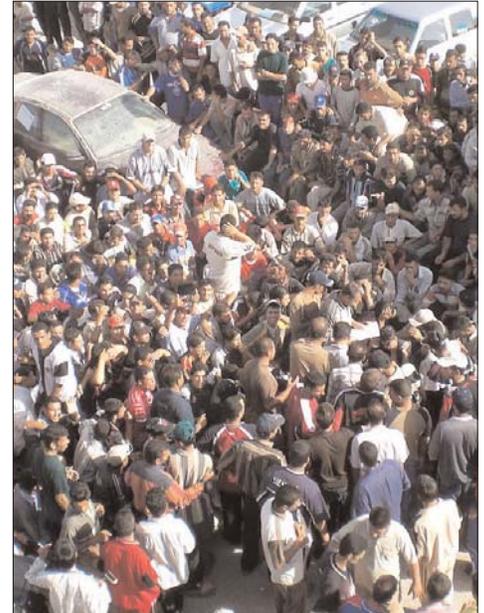
Even with this improvement, Zaydan still knows there is much that needs to be done on the part of the Iraqis themselves in the area.

"We cannot seek the help of the Americans forever. One day, they will leave us and we will be on our own," Zaydan said. "The Americans have helped us, but we need to depend

on ourselves."

Zaydan said that support for his country will endure long after Coalition Forces depart.

"Until we die," he said, "we will defend Iraq."



(U.S. Army photo)

Hundreds of volunteers from area tribes turned out for the screening process to become Iraqi Police candidates in Baghdad's Abu Ghraib neighborhood June 25.

MND-B Soldiers Facilitate Town Hall Meeting in Falahat

1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Multi-National Division-Baghdad troops helped facilitate a town hall meeting in Falahat, Iraq June 29

that included the participation of a large number of area tribal sheiks, concerned citizens and city council members.

Soldiers from Battery D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment observed as

local villagers addressed their concerns and issues to local city government officials.

According to Anchorage, Alaska native Capt. Martin Wohlgemuth, commander of the battery, the village has been making

strides in improving security and the meeting marked a time for villagers to come together and discuss how they wish to move forward with rebuilding their village.

"The tribes basically have been coming together and they kicked Al Qaeda out of their area which was a major victory for the people here. We hope this kind of cooperation continues to spread throughout Iraq," said Wohlgemuth, adding that the people are hoping now to concentrate on essential service projects and things such as creating youth centers for their children.

As reconciliation moves forward in Falahat, villagers suggested that they would like to hold additional meetings with the Sunni and Shia living in neighboring villages to discuss how to keep terrorists out of their neighborhoods.

Other key topics of discussion at the meeting were electricity and fuel, both major concerns to residents. To help curb the cost of fuel, people in the village have been buying it in a collective and distributing it amongst themselves, said Wohlgemuth.

"This is just another good example of people coming together and solving an Iraqi problem with an Iraqi solution," he added.



(U.S. Army photo)

A sheik addresses an issue at a town hall meeting in Falahat, Iraq June 29. During the meeting, sheiks, city council members and concerned citizens discussed a variety of topics in an open forum, including improvements in security, bringing Sunni and Shia from neighboring villages to discuss how to completely rid the area of insurgents and essential services.

Ironhorse Brigade Reaches Big 700th Reenlistment

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- The 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division marked its 700th reenlistment during their current Operation Iraqi Freedom rotation here July Fourth with the reenlistment of Spc. Jason Fuduloff, a unit supply specialist from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment.

Fuduloff, a native of Dayton, Ohio, joined the Army in 2000 and went to basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C. The supply specialist has served a previous 15-month tour in Korea with the 6th Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment as well as tours of duty at Fort Leonardwood, Mo., Fort Lee, Va. and Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md.

His latest reenlistment was for four years and he received a \$13,000 cash bonus.

"I always knew that I would be a career Soldier and reenlisting on the Fourth of July has made this a very special day for me," said Fuduloff, who explained the reasons for his deciding to raise his right hand for a third time. "Being in a combat zone has been meaningful too, it's an honor being here and being able to show my support and dedication to the cause."

With seven years active duty under his belt, Fuduloff hopes to eventually retire from the Army after a 20-year career and to attain the rank of first sergeant or sergeant major.

While in the Army, Fuduloff plans on continuing his education and pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal jus-



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs)

Dayton, Ohio native, Spc. Jason Fuduloff, a unit supply specialist from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, reenlists July Fourth on Camp Taji, Iraq as Temple, Texas native 1st Lt. Bill Negron, Fuduloff's platoon leader, gives him the oath of enlistment. The reenlistment marked the 700th time during this deployment that a 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team Soldier has reenlisted.

tice.

For now, Fuduloff is spending his first deployment to Iraq ordering supplies for his unit and stocking the unit supply room, ensuring that Soldiers in his unit have the tools they need to do their day to day jobs.

"I love my job," said Fuduloff. "I like being there for the Soldiers to help them in

accomplishing their missions."

1st Lt. Bill Negron, Fuduloff's platoon leader, praised his Soldier's decision to reenlist and his performance for the nearly eight months that the unit has been deployed.

"This is truly a testament to him and my hat goes off to him and anyone of you other guys who decide to reenlist out here," said

Negron during Fuduloff's reenlistment ceremony. "He takes personal pride in everything that he does. He's an excellent Soldier whose work ethic is second to none. He puts a 100 percent effort into everything that he does."

When he returns home from this deployment, Fuduloff plans on using some of his reenlistment bonus as a down payment on a car while investing the rest. School, he says, will also be another of his top priorities.

"When I come back to the states, I plan on getting all the education that I can to make a good future for myself," he said.

As of Fuduloff's reenlistment, the Ironhorse Brigade has handed out more than \$7 million in cash bonuses to reenlisting troopers.

Sgt. 1st Class Humberto Flores, 1st BCT senior career counselor and a native of Laredo, Texas, explained what the milestone of having reached 700 reenlistments means to the Ironhorse Brigade and why the brigade has been successful when it comes to retention.

"This has been a monumental achievement for the brigade and it speaks volumes about the Soldiers who are out here making sacrifices for their country. It's good to know that these Soldiers are willing to stand up, defend their nation and pay the cost for freedom," said Flores. "It's all about the leadership who are out here taking care of the Soldiers everyday and Soldiers trusting in their leadership in everything they do and believing in them."

Garryowen Keeps Vigil at Outpost on Independence Day

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq - As the United States celebrates its Independence Day, Soldiers from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment continue working, standing guard and going



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Cpl. Charles Breeding (left), a medic, attached to Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment and Spc. James Murdough, a scout for Troop C, build a book shelf to place in an operations center on Coalition Outpost X-Ray, Iraq July 3.

on patrols staged from Coalition Outpost X-Ray near Taji, Iraq.

Instead of fireworks and family picnics, these troops are focusing on their missions to clear the area of insurgent threats and just living from one day to the next at the outpost, according to Yucaipa, Calif. native Capt. David Fulton, Troop C commander.

"As far as getting to celebrate the holiday, we don't have that luxury," Fulton added. "We're doing a real-world mission and it's not going to pause or stop, so we're just going to continue doing what we're doing."

For Soldiers who operate out of the outpost, being here for the holiday has its own meaning for them.

"Our role on this July Fourth is helping the people of Iraq earn independence from tyranny and people who suppress them," said Cpl. Charles Breeding, a medic for Headquarters Trp. who is attached to Trp. C.

"I have a job to do and I signed a paper to serve, and I'm also following in the footsteps of my father, who during his 20 years of service spent a lot of Fourth of Julys away from home too, but when he went on (rest and relaxation) during the Vietnam War it was spent in-country. So, at least we have the chance to spend our leave at home," he said.

Soldiers live for weeks at a time at COP X-Ray with only a few days in their rotations set aside for them to return to Camp Taji, the troops' basecamp, to do laundry, go to finance, go to the post exchange to pick up a few toiletry items and do other errands.

Although life at the outpost is not exactly like living at a four-star hotel, things are much better here than they were just a month and a half ago when the outpost was first established, according to Fulton.

"We've been working really hard to make this like home,

before we got here there were no showers, no hot meals, no electricity and no air conditioning and we were doing real Army living for a while here," said Fulton.

Thanks to Army engineers and other support troops from the Garryowen squadron's Troop "Darkhorse" Forward Support Company working with Troop C, within a few weeks, the COP had showers, air conditioners, four to six-man rooms with real walls and ceilings, real bunks, a mobile field kitchen trailer from which hot meals are served, a well-staffed aid station for medical services, internet access and phone lines, allowing the Soldiers to call home.

"This has been scout construction at its finest," said Fulton, joking and noting that his troops are mainly scouts.

"It's been really amazing, there's been limited complaining and a lot of hard work," Fulton said, also adding that his troops spend a lot of time in the surrounding village meeting the people and building trust on their daily missions.

"Living in the area, where we work, makes for better relationships with the people who we're getting to know everyday," he said.

"We try to walk everywhere and interact as much as possible with the local populace," said Fulton.

"You have to be on the ground, doing dismounted patrols or else you aren't going to get very far in building relationships with the people, especially if you're just riding around in a humvee or Bradley (Fighting Vehicle)," he said.

Having the outpost also makes it easier for the troops to conduct their patrols in the area.

"We're a lot closer now, so living here makes it a lot easier for us to get into our sector very quickly," said Fulton. "Before, we had to drive all the way into the area from Camp Taji which took a lot more time."

Falahat Returning to Normal as Childrens' Laughter Fills Air

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FALAHAT, Iraq - The sounds of laughing girls and boys could be heard as Soldiers from Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment brought the children here a day of fun through painting, as well as other activities July 7.

The Soldiers handed out paint brushes and paint and watched as the children painted pictures and their names on concrete barriers. They also played with the children, kicking soccer balls to them. When the painting was done, the troops gave the children toys and candy.

In addition to the children, the Soldiers from the troop continued building relationships with parents and other adults in the village—a place that was once plagued by daily violence.

Things in the village have changed, thanks to area sheiks gathering together with their people and the local government to end sectarian violence and promote reconciliation in this town which just a month ago was shaken by constant improvised explosive device attacks and gunfire, according to Capt. Martin Wohlgemuth, the troop commander and a native of Anchorage, Ala.

Now, mainly quiet, thanks in part to a neighborhood watch made up of local concerned citizens which informs on insurgents, reports terrorist acts and notifies Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces if caches are found, the village is beginning to come back to life, said Wohlgemuth, and the fun day was a good sign that soon the focus on security can move more towards reconstruction efforts and projects.

"This has been something we've been hoping to do since we got here, turning from more of a security operations role to helping the people which is great news," said Wohlgemuth. "Today, we are giving the children and their parents a day that they can enjoy together, that allows for them a time to have fun and some normalcy in their lives."

"It also allows us the chance to get out on the street to get to know the locals better and talk to each other," Wohlgemuth added.

Interacting with children in a setting that was once wrought with violence has been an interesting experience for the Soldiers, who have been performing cordon and searches

and other major operations in the area for the past seven months.

"This is unique, and it's really quite different than when we first started coming down here," said Spc. Matthew Dixon, a forward observer with the troop who hails from Pottstown, Pa. "You can definitely see a change in the neighborhood—adult males are not afraid to come out of their houses and you see kids playing outside. It's becoming like any typical neighborhood again."

"I feel really good about it, because you can actually see the results, before it didn't feel like anything was happening and there was no proof that anything would ever change," added Dixon. "Now you actually see people waving and smiling at you."

Soldiers explained what it means to have villagers here taking on their own fight against the insurgency.

"They're taking ownership in taking back the streets here," said 1st Lt. Mike Blake, a platoon leader from Baltimore, whose troops work out of an outpost in the village.

"It's not much different than what happens in the states when gangs try to come into an area and take over, the people get fed up with it and fight them—that's exactly what the people here are doing against the insurgents," said Staff Sgt. Danny Garner, a squad leader who claims Cherokee, Ala., and Longbeach, Calif., as his hometowns. "It was not something we came up with, but it was the people who came to us and said they were fed up with the violence. I remember seeing a brother of a man who was killed by insurgents crying and saying that he was ready to fight the insurgents right now."

In recent weeks, locals working in Falahat's neighborhood watch program have led the troop to several weapons caches and improvised explosive device materials. They have also reported on insurgents lurking in their neighborhoods.

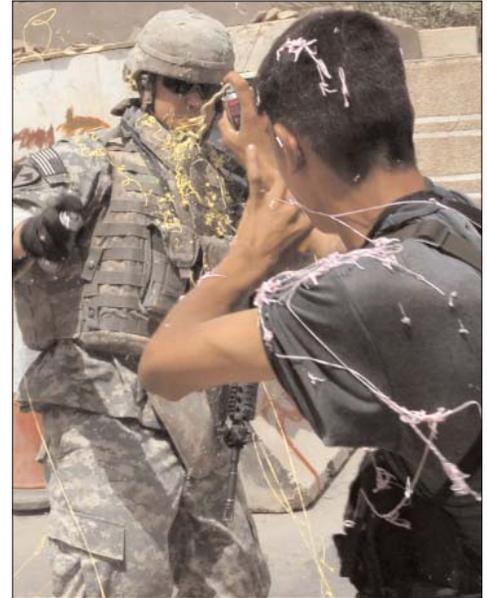
"The people here are the ones who knew who the foreign fighters were in their neighborhoods and they have helped rid the area of those foreign fighters," said Blake.

"This has been a great step forward, seeing this community stand up, and this is truly a blessing," injected Garner.

Also at the request of the villagers, Troop D Soldiers set up an outpost in the village to assist with security when necessary.

One of the next steps to getting the village back to normalcy will be working short term projects in conjunction with the local Iraqi government to get the people back to work.

"We will be working with them on projects that will pay them and employ them," said Wohlgemuth. "Some of the proj-



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

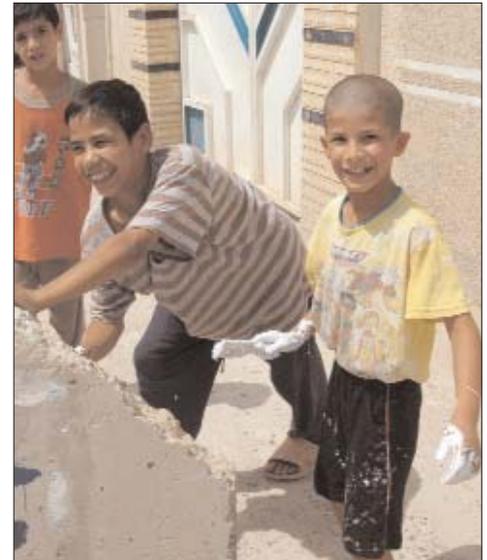
As children laughed and played, an Iraqi man (right) and Elmira, N.Y., native Spc. Robert Siegel, a tanker for Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, shared in the spirit, spraying each other with confetti in Falahat, Iraq July 7 during a "fun day" arranged by the troop for the children of the village.

ects will be similar to the Conservation Corps back in the 1920s and 1930s in which people were hired to clean canals and pick up garbage." In addition, said Wohlgemuth, the village will soon be moving ahead with some projects to refurbish schools, fix water mains and electrical lines—things that, until now, could not be given a green light due to security concerns.

"There are so many things going on now in the village that it's simply amazing," added Wohlgemuth.



Children paint a concrete barrier in the village of Falahat, Iraq July 7 during a "fun day" sponsored by Soldiers from Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment.



Local Iraqi boys laugh and smile while painting a concrete barrier in Falahat, Iraq July 7 during a "fun day" in the village sponsored by Soldiers from Troop D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment. The children painted whatever they wanted on the barriers with most of the children choosing to paint their names.

Fifteen Soldiers Selected to Participate in "Black Jack Idol"

By Sgt. Robert Yde
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq - Like many people, Maj. Michael Duck has an addiction. His vice is shared by millions of people throughout the world, a fact that is easily confirmed by the high ratings that their obsessions provide to television stations on a nightly basis.

"I'm a fan of reality TV," Duck said, admitting to his guilty pleasure.

According to Duck, the chief of operations for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, one show in particular, "American Idol," is a favorite of his, and he recently came up with the idea of replicating the premise of the show in Baghdad.

Throughout June, Soldiers have been encouraged to try out the brigade's version of the hit show, which is being dubbed, "Black Jack Idol."

"We devised this competition after 'American Idol,' and we thought we'd do something for the Soldiers and their morale," the Fort Lauderdale, Fla. native explained. "We worked on this to try to come up with something for them, and that's basically how we got it started."

Just like the real "American Idol," a weekly competition during which contestants vying for a recording contract, sing and either move to the next round or are eliminated based on their performance, Black Jack Idol started off with several weeks of auditions.

The auditions were held twice a week and alternated between FOB Prosperity and FOB Union III, and as with American Idol, Soldiers performed in front of a three-judge panel.

Acting as the judges were Duck, 2nd Lt. Ruben Acosta, the brigade's assistant personnel officer and Maj. Stephanie Sanderson, the brigade's judge advocate.

"I'm looking for confidence, a nice full voice, someone who is outgoing and can perform in front of people and show their talents," Acosta said of the criteria he expects potential contestants to meet.

Acosta, who is originally from San Antonio, said he was



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Pfc. Alphonso Izzard, with Company A, 15th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, sings during auditions for "Black Jack Idol" at Forward Operating Base Prosperity June 5 in central Baghdad.

invited to be a judge after Duck learned that he previously spent five years as a high school band director in Texas.

During the auditions, contestants were able to sing whatever they wanted, with the only stipulation being that the performance had to be accappella, a fact that Acosta said he took into consideration.

"It's kind of nerve wracking because there's no music behind them," he explained. "A lot of people are used to singing in a vehicle or in the privacy of their room. Now they have to come out here and sing with no background music or anything,

and that's really tough; so you always give them the benefit of the doubt."

Once the actual competition starts however, the contestants will be backed by music provided from a karaoke machine, and each week a different genre of music will be featured, forcing them to demonstrate their vocal diversity, or lack thereof.

"We're going to pick the tone and genre of music during the competition. So each week is going to be a different person or different type of music their going to have to sing," Duck said.

While the Soldiers who auditioned said they obviously love music, their experiences performing varied.

"I've sang in church, and I've played in bands," said Pfc. Daniel Jens, a Milwaukee native with Company B, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment. "I've played in front of a few people and up to 5,000 people."

Jens performed Edwin McCain's "A Prayer to St. Peter," because he said it allowed him to show off his vocal range, and he appreciates the song's message.

"It's about Soldiers and St. Peter letting the Soldiers into heaven regardless of what they did on earth," he explained.

Jens said he didn't do much to prepare for the audition because he sings all the time anyway.

"I love performing, and I've got a lot of friends and family and people who I've met playing that like hearing me," he added.

Going into the auditions the judges said that they didn't have a certain number of contestants in mind for the competition and have settled on 15 Soldiers to participate in the eight-week competition, which they are planning to begin around July 21.

As contestants are eliminated, and they get closer to the finals, Duck said they hope to have the 1st Cavalry Division's band to provide the music for the singers, which he said will give the competition more of a live concert feel.

He also said that a grand prize has not been decided on, but right now he is expecting the winner to receive a sound system and a four-day pass to Qatar.

Regardless of the prize, though, Sanderson said that the competition is all about letting the Soldiers showcase their talents in front of the peers and have fun doing it.

"I enjoy anything that makes the Soldiers happy," she said.

Rhode Island Visits Iraq

Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., visits with San Diego native Capt. John Verdugo and Torrence, Calif., native Spc. Stephen Freeman from the 4th Squadron, 9th Cav. Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., during his visit to Forward Operating Base Prosperity in central Baghdad July 8. Reed, a former Army captain and U.S. Military Academy graduate, was in Baghdad to get a first-hand update on operations in the area.



(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Waterdogs Learn New Trick at Warhorse

By Pfc. Ben Fox
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAQOUBA, Iraq - Waterdogs - the term refers to a group of Soldiers formally known as water purification specialists. On many military posts in Iraq, though, water and other needs are contracted out to civilians,

leaving these masters of water purification to find other jobs.

On Forward Operating Base Warhorse, near Baqouba, Iraq, these Soldiers work with a liquid almost completely opposite of water - fuel.

"Back in the rear we started doing the fuel," said Pvt. Michael Pungsujarit, a water-

dog with the 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

"We didn't know if we were going to have a water mission or not," said Sgt. Isaiah Pesce, Pungsujarit's section NCO.

With the training his platoon received back at home, little additional training was needed when they deployed, said Pungsujarit. His platoon consists of both fuel and water specialists.

"I got it down pretty quickly in around one to two weeks," he said. "Besides that, it's not hard at all to do cross training.

"It's pretty easy, I guess, to me," Pungsujarit said. "I don't know about other people.

"We cross trained just to better ourselves," said Pungsujarit.

"It gave us an advantage instead of having to learn all fresh out here," said Pesce. "I wish we could do the actual water job, but we don't have a water mission out here," he said.

"We aren't doing any water anyway, so it's good to help out and know more," said Pungsujarit. "Since there's no water we might as well just switch to fuel."

One of the most difficult parts of the job is knowing how to take care of hazardous materials, he said.

"We just have to worry about the fuel spills... and how to clean that up," said Pungsujarit.

A common saying in Pungsujarit's platoon is that "fuel and water don't mix," but he said that the statement isn't true.

"All of us get along," said Pungsujarit. "We are like family I guess."

"There is no rivalry or anything," he

said.

"Everyone does a good job," said Pesce. "They all get along and stuff."

There are three main aspects of fuel distribution: bulk fuel distribution, convoy, and the fuel and ammunition resupply point (FARP) where helicopters are refueled.

Pungsujarit started out at the bulk fuel distribution.

"After that I came directly to the FARP," he said. "I haven't had a chance to go on a convoy, but I think that is going to change.

"I enjoy the FARP because I have worked here a long time and I know it very well," he said. "I know how to handle situations that if anything goes wrong I can fix it quickly."

Pungsujarit said he also enjoys the FARP because he has never worked with helicopters before.

"Over here was when they first taught me how to fill up the birds," said Pungsujarit.

"I was kind of excited the first time because I had never filled up helicopters before," he said. "I had never been close to helicopters before."

Pungsujarit also said that the waterdogs are making a significant contribution to the unit.

"Without us I think they (fuelers) would be undermanned," said Pungsujarit. "We help out the platoon, and basically, the brigade.

"They would have to do a lot more work, but since the waterdogs are helping out, I think it's good for them, too," he said.

"I feel good that I am helping out, even if it is just a little," said Pungsujarit.



(Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

Spc. Ismael Gonzalez, a water purification specialist (waterdog) with 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, turns a wheel to allow fuel to flow from a fuel tanker to collapsible fuel tank at Forward Operating Base Normandy near Muqadadiya, Iraq, June 29

Gina Whitney's 'Bootleggers' Rock Baqouba

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAQOUBA, Iraq -- With the sun setting in the distance behind Forward Operating Base Warhorse, located outside Baqouba, Iraq, Gina Whitney and the Bootleggers, a country band located in the United States, took the stage in the Wood Dining Facility to rock the Soldiers of the 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, July 5.

With this being her third time overseas in a war zone, Whitney, formally traveling under the name Gina Notrica, said her mission was still the same - to entertain the Soldiers, give them a piece of home and to include them as much as possible into her performances.

"Every night, I try to find someone to sing 'Sweet Home Alabama,'" said Whitney. "It's an important part [of our show] to have the Soldiers involved. That's why I'm here, to raise morale and take them away from their setting out here... and to help them to have fun."

Whitney's mission is to also share a special song with the Soldiers. A track entitled, "Time to Go," off her next album, called "High Heels in a War Zone," is a song about her father, who is an Army and Korean War veteran.

"My dad was in North Korea when he received word that my mom, who was pregnant at the time, was having complications with my [unborn] sister," she said. "The guys in his unit pulled together the money to send him home to be with my mother. Three days later, his whole unit was killed in an attack.

"Though 'Time to Go,' is about my father, I would like to

dedicate that song to the Soldiers," Whitney continued. While the Grey Wolf executive officer, Maj. Robert "Bubba" Cain, sang the lead to "Sweet Home Alabama," Spc. Andrea Guara, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, and a native of Dallas, Texas, was also asked to come up to the stage to sing with Whitney, an experience which was both exciting and nerve wracking, said Guara.

"[Whitney] was singing some really good music and I got excited and started singing back," said the excited Guara.

"Then Gina started singing 'Redneck Woman' by Gretchen Wilson," she continued. "If you are a female from Texas, you have to know that song.

"I was sitting in the crowd, singing along and Gina pointed me out to come sing with her," Guara said with a huge smile on her face. "I was really scared and really nervous, but it was a lot of fun."

Guara's experience was just what Whitney was hoping for - a fun time with a chance to escape, Whitney said.

"It takes you out of a war zone state-of-mind and makes you happy," Guara said.

"The whole experience made my day," Guara concluded. "It was a lot of fun."

But Whitney wants to make sure the Soldiers know the pleasure was all hers.

"This means so much to me to be here and to perform for all the Soldiers," said Whitney. "I've played in bars and corporate events, and I'm very blessed to be doing this for a living, but this is the most rewarding thing I've ever done."

As the concert drew to a close, the Bootleggers packed up

their gear and headed out to catch another flight to another destination in Iraq.

"It can be grueling to perform nine shows in nine days, but I can sleep when I get home," Whitney said with a big laugh. "But this is worth it; this means the world to me.



(Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Country group, Gina Whitney and the Bootleggers, sing a few songs for the Soldiers of the 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., on Forward Operating Base Warhorse, in Baqouba, Iraq, July 5.

Air Cav Pilots Complete Daring Rescue

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The AH-64D Apache is an imposing, lethal weapon that rarely leaves terrorist activity unpunished. But, for a couple of 3rd Infantry Division pilots who were forced to land in Baghdad recently, an Apache from 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division that landed near their downed helicopter was a beacon in what - moments before - had been a flurry of enemy small arms fire.

The two-seat Apache would become their ride out of the hot zone.

The daring rescue on July 2 involved a "spur ride," a rarely used but established rescue procedure in which Soldiers are strapped onto the wings of the Apache and taken to safety.

"There's a handful of people who have done (a combat spur ride)," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allan Davison, an Apache pilot from 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment. Davison was pilot in command of the lead Apache. He and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Micah Johnson landed near where the downed pilots had taken cover from small arms fire and loaded the pilots on their aircraft. Their wingman aircraft with pilot-in-command Chief Warrant Officer 3 Troy Moseley and copilot Chief Warrant Officer 2 Seung Choi provided security from the air. All four Apache pilots are from Company A, 1st "Attack" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment.

"(Moseley and I) were stationed in Germany together, and on our first gunneries as warrant officers we went to Hungary for a month," Davison said. "We both got the chance to ride on the outside of an Apache like that. It's something we train for. I don't think a lot of people have done it, but everybody knows if you go down, you're going to hop on. It's a standard brief."

The Apache crews had no way of knowing they would make that elite group a little bigger when they set off on a reconnaissance mission that morning.

They initially heard through radio communication that an aircraft was taking on small arms fire. The Apache crews immediately headed to the location, Davison said.

While they were en route to the area, an announcement over the radio said that the aircraft, an OH-58 Kiowa from Task Force Marne, was down.

Based on what they had seen of forced landings in early 2007, the Apache pilots knew the outlook for the Kiowa pilots was grim.

One of the Kiowa pilots said over the radio that he had spotted the aircraft on the ground. It was burning.

"He said, 'Hey, we got a grid,'" Davison said. "He gave it to our team. We headed over there and found the 58. It was on its side; the nose was burning."

Meanwhile, one of the Kiowa crews had landed and checked the wreckage.

The pilots were gone.

"Their helmets were there, but they weren't there," Davison said. "Our immediate response was, well that's good - but, they're not there. Are they evading, or did they get picked up by the enemy? That kind of sat heavy with us."

The Apache crews began looking for vehicles that may have had the downed pilots inside.

"There was a major hardball road right to the east of the aircraft," Davison said. "Micah (Johnson, who was air mission commander for the Apache team) said we would head out that way, searching the vehicles to see if they got picked up by the bad guys."

About three minutes later came another radio message from one of the Kiowa crews.

"We got another call from (the Kiowa crews) saying, 'The pilots, we found them; they're alive. They're by the crash site,'" Davison said. The Kiowa crews requested that the Apache team pick up the pilots, because the Apaches are more capable of conducting such a mission, Davison said.

As the Apache started to lift off the ground, one of the Kiowa pilots said the downed pilots were on the other side of the aircraft, taking cover in a nearby canal.

"I picked up, went to our left and, sure enough, there they



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Apache pilots from the 1st "Attack" Bn., 227th Avn. Regt., 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., stand next to one of the AH-64D Apaches they used to evacuate two downed helicopter pilots in Baghdad July 2. The pilots are (left to right): Chief Warrant Officer 3 Allan Davison; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Micah Johnson; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Seung Choi; and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Troy Moseley.

were," Davison said. "I set down about 20 meters to their west."

Not only were the pilots alive, they were able to run to the Apache.

"They looked pretty good - kind of shaken up, beat up a little bit, but they were running fine and moving OK," Davison said. "(Johnson) hopped out and helped one of the pilots to the left side of the aircraft and helped the other pilot into the front seat of our aircraft."

For a second, Johnson wasn't sure if the men running toward them were the pilots or not.

"It was hard at first to identify who they were," Johnson said. "They had been in water up to (their necks). When they were coming out, they looked like they had on a completely different uniform, because they were so drenched. (One of the pilots) ran up and said they were taking fire in the reed line before we got to the scene. They were taking fire while they were sitting in the reeds."

Although the pilots had taken small arms fire after the forced landing, the enemy was nowhere to be found after the two Apaches and three Kiowas made it to the site.

"When we showed up, any fire that was directed toward (the downed pilots) probably ceased, because there were five gun ships in the air," Moseley said. "(Insurgents) were not looking for a firefight then. They were looking to run and hide."

Johnson took one pilot to the left wing and helped him strap on to the wing. Then, without a second thought, he put the other pilot in his seat inside the aircraft.

"Honestly, I don't know why," Johnson said. "It looked like they were both in pretty good shape, but one of them kind of looked like he had been through enough, like he was a little shocked, as I would be, too. I told him to get in front."

This was not as simple as giving your buddy "shotgun" and climbing in the back seat. While it may sound like an adventure fitting an amusement park, the ride over Baghdad - where aircraft frequently come under small arms fire - was five to 10 minutes of abusive wind gusts and physical exertion.

"At about (130 miles per hour), it was really a pain," Johnson said.

"I imagine it was probably worse for the (other pilot), because he didn't have a helmet or eye protection. I at least had my helmet and visor. I could tell when we were accelerating, because it started just to rip my head back, and I couldn't move it.

"I was holding on for dear life with my left hand. I had my rifle in my right hand. The sling had come off, so I couldn't sling it around me. I was just holding the rifle with my right hand, and holding onto the aircraft with my left hand, kind of sandwiched

between where the engine is and where the wing starts."

The short ride to Baghdad International Airport felt much longer to Johnson, he said.

"I wouldn't want to go any further than we did, because you feel yourself holding on so tight," Johnson said. "Once you get down, all of your muscles are tense."

While the 1-227th Apache crews took the downed pilots to the airport, Apache crews from their sister battalion, the 4th "Guns" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, provided security over the downed helicopter until Apache crews from the 3rd Inf. Div. arrived to take over.

The "Attack" Apache crews didn't hesitate to support their 3rd Inf. Div. comrades when they learned of the downed aircraft.

"I knew it was our responsibility (as lead aircraft) to go get those guys," Davison said. "Knowing that I had Troy and Seung out there covering us - it was just focused adrenaline - but at the time, I really wasn't worried about bad guys. I just wanted to get those guys out of there. That was my number one priority."

Not too long ago, the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade had been heavily involved in a massive search for three missing Soldiers. The last thing the Apache pilots wanted was for that to happen again - especially knowing how the enemy in Iraq treats its prisoners of war.

"The moment I heard the (Kiowa) was down, I knew right away we had to go down there and help," Choi said. "We had the capabilities; we had the skill and the determination to do something about the situation. My main concern was to find those two guys, because (insurgents) had already captured three Soldiers. I did not want these guys to disappear."

The Apache pilots said finding the two downed pilots alive was the greatest reward for their actions that day.

"We've seen a lot of aircraft shoot-downs," Johnson said. "Everyone that we've all probably seen, it's resulted in burning aircraft and black smoke and usually catastrophic loss of life. If not loss of life, then there have been serious injuries.

"As soon as the first 58 landed, those (pilots) were already gone. It was kind of a shock to us, and it kicked us off to say, 'Hey, we have got to find these guys, if they are out here.' Just to see those two alive, it was amazing. It was great. When we got to BIAP, (the pilot who rode on the left wing) got off. He said he was glad that we showed up - appreciative like I would be if someone came up if I was down on the ground."

They insist that their actions on July 2 were not extraordinary.

"Anybody else would have done it," Davison said. "We just happened to be there."

Acid-Filled Containers Removed from Cache Site

By Sgt. 1st Class Robert Timmons
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - When the second largest cache of Operation Iraqi Freedom was found earlier in the month, not only did Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops spring into action, but Coalition Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) teams did too.

Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment "Tomahawks", attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Division, cleaned up the cache, which included hundreds of containers filled with nitric acid, June 12-15, in the eastern Rashid District of the Iraqi capital.

Nitric acid is a highly toxic substance that is used to make homemade explosives. Coalition chemical assessments indicate that nitric acid stockpiles in excess of 500 pounds have a potential to be a catastrophic event when combined with other ingredients to make explosive material. An estimated 15,000 pounds of nitric acid was removed from the cache site by MND-B troops in three days of around-the-clock work.

"Nitric acid can be added to explosives to increase yield, will damage skin on contact and lungs by inhalation," said 1st Lt. David Pegeros, a chemical officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th BCT. "When distilled or combined with other homemade explosive materials, it can be as explosive as TNT."

On June 11, when the Tomahawks were notified that a cache of hundreds of containers of nitric acid were found in the eastern portion of the Rashid District, it was determined that the brigade's excavation assets would be used to help clean up the site, with assistance from Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

A total of 779 five-gallon containers of the toxic substance



(U.S. Army photo)

Under the supervision of hazardous material teams, Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, excavate nitric acid containers from a cache site in Baghdad's Rashid District June 11.

were found buried at the cache site, which also included hundreds of mines and large air-droppable bombs, as well as four car bombs. All of the conventional explosives were removed and disposed of by explosive ordnance disposal teams, but the nitric acid presented a different challenge for troops.

Soldiers dug up and safely removed 400 jugs of sealed nitric acid June 12, and returned the next day continued to move 307 sealed and partially leaking containers out of the area.

The HAZMAT team arrived, June 14, to remove 72 severely

leaking containers.

On June 15, two HAZMAT teams worked to complete the removal of the damaged containers, which were then safely transported to a Coalition Forces installation for proper disposal.

"When you look at the amount of explosives and nitric acid found and disposed of from one site, the numbers are staggering," said Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, commander of the 4th BCT. "A lot of lives were saved as a result of this tremendous service the Soldiers performed."

Top U.S. Commander in Iraq Enters the "Lions' Den"

By Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - The commanding general of Multi-National Forces-Iraq visited Soldiers operating in the southern neighborhoods of the Iraqi capital to get a better understanding of the battle going on in the hotly contested region.

Gen. David H. Petraeus visited Joint Security Station Black Lion and Coalition Outpost Attack in the northwest section of the Rashid District June 30.

Lt. Col. Patrick Frank, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, said Petraeus' visit to his battalion bore special meaning.

"To have the theater commander come here and visit the Black Lions and see the tremendous work Task Force Black Lion has done in northwest Rashid is a special occasion," he said. "We know that we're the division's main effort as a brigade combat team right now.

"We want Gen. Petraeus to understand the fight that we're in," he added.

Petraeus gained that understanding through a briefing given by Frank about the challenges his battalion is facing.

With troops living so close to the citizens of Baghdad, it allows them to form tighter bonds with the people they're protecting as well as decrease response time to insurgent activity.

Pfc. Kazan Tamer, a member of the 1-28 Inf. personal security detachment from Patterson, N.J., said there were positives and negatives for Soldiers living at the



(Photo by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith, 4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Gen. David Petraeus, commanding general of Multi-National Forces - Iraq, pins the Combat Infantryman's Badge on 1st Lt. Michael Scheer, the executive officer of Company A, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment from Walnut Creek, Calif., at Coalition Outpost Attack in southern Baghdad's Rashid District June 30. Petraeus also pinned the Combat Action Badge and Combat Medic's Badge on Soldiers from Co. A.

JSS. One of the good things Tamer mentioned was a better response time to attacks, while the biggest negative is the culinary experience.

"We respond a lot faster to attacks. We're always ready to go at any time," he said. "The canned food is probably the worst thing."

Tamer said the COPs were more

company-focused than the JSS, which serves as more of a mini-battalion headquarters.

For Soldiers like Tamer, living conditions are good at the JSS.

Tamer said the primary difference between living at a COP and JSS as opposed to a larger Forward Operating Base is the level of security, but he still

feels safe living at the JSS.

"(Sergeants of the guard) are on top of it," he said. "I enjoy being at the JSS more than at the FOB, we're always out there, we're always first or second to respond."

The MNF-I commanding general was particularly impressed by the way the Black Lions are conducting detainee operations and immediately made the recommendation that some of their tactics, techniques and procedures get sent to the Counter-Insurgency Academy.

After the briefing, Petraeus pinned medals on Iraqi Army heroes, took a brief tour of the JSS and patrolled to COP Attack in the Aamel region of the Iraqi capital. While at the COP, he pinned the Combat Infantryman's Badge on Soldiers from the Black Lions' Company A.

Cpl. Mark Sanderson, a team leader in Co. A from Thorndale, Texas, said having the MNF-I commander pin on his CIB was a surprise.

"It feels pretty good," he said. "I didn't expect that. It was nice."

While it was nice for the Soldiers to get to visit with Petraeus, the visit also had special significance for their battalion commander. Frank served under the MNF-I commander as the 101st Airborne Division's deputy operations officer while Petraeus commanded the 'Screaming Eagles' in Operation Iraqi Freedom I.

"I have immense respect for him," Frank said. "He's invested an immense amount of time in Iraq, so for him to come down and see the Black Lions and spend some of his extremely valuable time with us means a lot."

Wounded Black Lion Reups Before Medical Evacuation

By Sgt. 1st Class Robert Timmons
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - When a Soldier is wounded by an improvised explosive device and is about to be medically evacu-

ated out of Iraq, one of the last things he would think about is extending his military career.

Not if you are a noncommissioned officer in the Black Lions.

Staff Sgt. Redic Jordan, an infantry-

man with Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division reenlisted in the Army June 30 at the Combat Surgical Hospital in Baghdad, despite being in a roadside bomb attack the day

prior and was being prepared to fly to Germany for medical treatment.

For the senior noncommissioned officer in the brigade, Jordan's choice shows the dedication of the NCO ranks.

"This is an indicator about what Soldiers believe, and how committed they are in the fight here in Iraq," said Command Sgt. Maj. Jim Champagne, the 4th IBCT's top NCO. "They are doing it for their brothers."

"It is a great testament that Soldiers who are in the middle of the fight choose to give the Army more years," he said.

Jordan didn't reenlist for the bonus, said the brigade's career counselor who spoke to him about reenlisting the day he was wounded.

"He came in yesterday asking about what his options were for reenlisting," said Sgt. 1st Class Tito Reed, the 4th IBCT's senior career counselor.

"I was called by 1st Sgt. Gerald Cornell today asking me to get paperwork ready for Jordan's reenlistment. I immediately got it done," he said.

Reed, from Long Island, N.Y., said that Jordan told him he wanted to reenlist not for any incentives, but because he loved the Army.

"He was talking more about reenlisting because he loved the Army itself," he said.

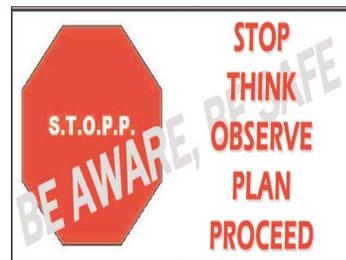
"He needed a way to support his family and the Army was the best way. He said he was going to stay in until they told him couldn't anymore," Reed said.

Capt. Brian Ducote, Co. B. commander administered the oath of enlistment to Jordan at the ceremony.



(U.S. Army photo)

Staff Sgt. Redic Jordan, Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., shakes the hand of company commander, Capt. Brian Ducote, after his reenlistment June 30. Jordan suffered combat injuries and was about to be medically evacuated out of Iraq, but he chose to reenlist prior to departure.



Internet Café Dedicated to Fallen Dragon

By Capt. Allen Hill
610th Brigade Support Battalion

BAGHDAD - Company A, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, officially opened the Sgt. Curtis E. Glawson Internet Café on June 22, at their company barracks annex on Forward Operating Base Falcon.

The Internet Café was dedicated to one of our fallen comrades Sgt. Curtis E. Glawson, who served in Company E, 610th Brigade Support Battalion.

Glawson was killed by an improvised explosive device March 20, when returning from a recovery mission in western Baghdad.

Soldiers, friends, and leaders, from across the brigade attended the ceremony that was what Glawson's company commander, Capt. Rich Helling said was, "A dedication to a truly dedicated Soldier."

The ceremony opened with a welcome from Lt. Col.

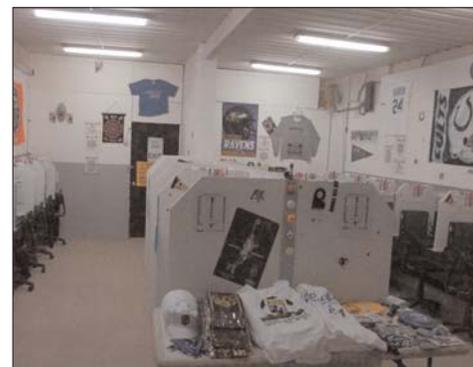
Joseph Birchmeier, the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Brigade Special Troops Battalion commander, before the official ribbon cutting ceremony by the 4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., commander, Col. Ricky D. Gibbs.

Just inside the door of the café, a framed picture and biography of Glawson with messages from members of his platoon, greets visitors.

The interior of the café is decorated with a mixture of sport memorabilia donated from over 30 professional athletic teams in honor of Glawson's passion for sports.

The large turnout for the event showed the impact that Glawson had on his fellow Soldiers.

Spc. Veon Posche, from Raleigh, who was one of Glawson's closest friends said, "This is something that is really special and represents what he was all about. It helps his memory live on and it gives us something for us to remember him by. He was a good friend, he was loved, and we miss him."



(U.S. Army photo)

The new Sgt. Curtis Glawson Internet Cafe, is adorned with sports memorabilia in honor of the establishment's namesake. Glawson was killed by an improvised explosive device in March.

A Tale of Two Neighborhoods:

Adversaries Reach Peace Accord in Al-Fadhli

By Maj. Sean Ryan
2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq - On April 10, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, along with their Iraqi counterparts, started clearing one of the neighborhoods in eastern Baghdad.

It was, at first, a routine mission in the Fadhli area, but soon turned into a bloody firefight lasting five hours with scores of unknown enemy dead and wounded.

The Fadhli area is one of the oldest and poorest neighborhoods in the Iraqi capital, with 300-year-old buildings still in use today. The narrow, twisting roads can be used as lookout points by insurgents to spot approaching vehicles or people, and were a breeding ground for snipers and militia activity.

But that was then. Just a few short months later, Soldiers from the 1st "Red Devil" Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment out of Fort Bragg, N.C., operating in eastern Baghdad as part of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, drove into the heart of Fadhli July 5 delivering truckloads of food rations, medical supplies and water to the residents.

Soon after the April firefight, leaders from the Iraqi Army's 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division, called a meeting with Fadhli leaders, according to Maj. Mike Pratt, Red Devil's operations officer.

The Bridgeport, W.Va., native said, "The IA asked the residents what they needed and how they can help, instead of constant fighting."

Their requests were no different than most in Iraq, as they needed essential services. Pratt said, "They wanted their hospital running, electricity, and jobs for the people."

Lt. Col. Carl Alex, the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment commander, directed a three-week trash removal project in Fadhli that meant jobs for 200 people. The project has ended, but a three-month extension is in the works. In addition, at the Al Tawan Hospital

in Al Fadhli received a 250-kilowatt generator and 10 water drums have been installed to provide electricity and clean water for the hospital's activities.

Attitudes changed quickly among the residents after witnessing the changes in the nearby neighborhood of Ahdamiyah. The Ahdamiyah neighborhood was also in disarray, but once residents began working with Coalition and Iraqi forces, big changes took place. There was reduced violence, increased electricity and the return of essential services.

The leader of the neighborhood told Alex, "We didn't play it right and made a mistake. Our people found themselves neglected by everybody and the improvements and partnership that Ahdamiyah now shares, is something we want, as well. This is a great lesson for us and we are now extending our hand, to shake the hand of the U.S. Forces to work together."

The supplies dropped off to thrilled residents included hundreds of blankets, food packets for over 1,000 families, thousands of dollars worth of medical supplies, and a truck full of bottled water. Residents, young and old, helped carry the supplies inside the medical facility.

This was a significant step with the Fadhli residents, according to Capt. Thomas Delaney, the battalion S-5 officer.

"This is the first tangible aid the residents have ever seen," he said.

"The set of meetings really broke the ice and ever since, violence has decreased significantly. The generator will really help the people, as well," he said.

The neighborhood leader added, "We have already started a plan to distribute power equally to families and will nominate individuals to both protect the generator and start a small collection for fuel."

The next step the residents of Al Fadhli want is to find jobs for the people. In the past, sectarian strife has limited the work force of Fadhli from looking for jobs outside their area.

The neighborhood has already re-opened shops and consumer goods stores located around the mosque, which



(Photo by Maj. Sean Ryan, 2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs Officer)

A young resident of the Fadhli area of eastern Baghdad helps unload trucks July 5 that included hundreds of blankets, food packets for over 1,000 families, thousands of dollars worth of medical supplies, and a truck full of bottled water.

were previously closed for security reasons.

This indeed is a tale of two neighborhoods: the old one fighting the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, and the new one, buzzing with the genesis of electricity, less violence and the prospect of future jobs for the people.

Coalition Force Aid Station Prepared to Treat All

By Staff Sgt. W. Wayne Marlow
2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq - Anyone coming into a Coalition Force aid station will be treated the same, regardless of why they're there.

"Official military policy is anyone...will get the same quality of treatment regardless of who they are or how they were injured," said Maj. Arne Oas, a physician's assistant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion. Oas, of Haymarket, Va., serves as officer in charge of the Forward Operating Base Loyalty aid station.

The medics' job, according to Oas, is to treat all wounded and get them on their way, whether it's a U.S. Soldier returning to duty or an insurgent being detained.

"Everyone gets treated the same," he said. The only difference with suspected insurgents is that they are properly restrained.

Treating someone who moments before might have been shooting at you can be trying, but Oas said the key is to think of the person as a



(U.S. Army photo)

Pfc. Amanda Kenney (right), a member of the 2nd BSTB, checks the vital signs of Pfc. Trevor York from , at the aid station on Forward Operating Base Loyalty.

patient, not the enemy.

"Our job is not to judge or be the jury," he said. "Our job is to treat the patient. It's an unwritten rule of medicine. We view the injury, not the patient. It doesn't matter what you personally think about a patient.

"You don't get tied down to who it is or the horrible event that happened. You concentrate on

the wound and move on. We adhere to Geneva Conventions. We do what we are required to do by the law of warfare. We are a Coalition guided by certain principles."

There have been two insurgent suspects treated at Loyalty during this deployment. The most recent had a gunshot wound to the abdomen.

"The possibility of injury inside the patient is very large," Oas said of the gunshot wounded patient. "It is a life-threatening injury if he doesn't get treatment. Within two to three hours he would have died, I'm certain."

So without thought to why the patient was there, Oas and his team jumped in.

The procedure included dressing the wound, inserting an IV, and getting an air tube in his throat. Despite all this, the early prognosis was grim.

"He was starting to go downhill," Oas said. "It's much easier or ER than in real life."

Besides Oas, a doctor and seven medics tended to the wounded man.

"Everybody did fine," Oas said. "Everybody did what they were supposed to do and we

processed him fairly quickly."

Because suspected insurgents are restrained, it can be a little trickier to adjust them as the medical condition requires.

"It makes it a little more difficult to check the patient fully, but it's nothing mission-critical. It's not a show-stopper," Oas said. "And he has to travel with an escort, or guard would be a better word."

Despite how insurgents feel toward Coalition Forces, Oas said they usually relent when they realize their situation.

"They usually feel like they're going to die from their wounds so they're usually very receptive to what we're doing," he said. "They let us do what we need to do to treat them."

The medics never see the insurgents once care is completed. As such, Oas doesn't know what their reaction has been after having their lives saved by an American.

Oas said aid station personnel are always ready for whatever emergencies come their way, but that down time is also welcome.

"I'm in a business where you don't want me to be busy," he said.



(Photo by Sgt. Michael Garrett, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Sgt. 1st Class Marshall Hier, a motor sergeant with the 131st Engineer Company, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, fights a flare-up while grilling steaks for his fellow Soldiers at Victory Base Complex in western Baghdad, July 4. Hier and his comrades took a break from their daily routine to celebrate the Fourth of July with a cook-out.



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Robert Yde, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

1st Lt. J.P. Hare (foreground), Capt. Jason Lewis and Spc. Zak Deckard, members of the Haifa Street Project, perform for Soldiers with the 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. during a Fourth of July concert at Forward Operating Base Prosperity in central Baghdad.

Let Freedom Ring Spending the Fourth

By Spc. Courtney Marulli
2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq—The Fourth of July is the celebration of American independence, but it's also a reminder to those deployed to Iraq of just how important freedom is. Being away from loved ones, Soldiers find ways to celebrate America and take pride in what they are doing for another country.

Sgt. Stewart D. Tignor, a member of 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division's personal security detachment, said the 4th of July is a time to get together with family and friends to celebrate the independence they have, the choices they can make.

Tignor, a native of Huntington, Indiana, is on his third deployment, his second to Iraq, and has missed several Fourth of July's at home, but that is what makes him even more appreciative of what he's missing.

"I'd say the best word to describe it is probably humbling," he said. "You take a lot of stuff for granted like just to be able to sit on the back of a truck and watch fireworks."

It's those small things in life that Soldiers really miss, especially around the holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. Those small things are exactly what Tignor said he plans on enjoying when he's home.

Being away from home on the Fourth of July while fighting for the independence of another country, is something that causes conflicting feelings inside.

"It makes me a little bit torn," he said. "One side makes me want to say, 'Do something to get these guys their independence and then we can go home.' But, the other part is proud to be trying to help these people gain independence like what we have and to help them gain rights to live how they want to live."

Tignor said despite the drawbacks of being deployed, he takes great pride in knowing that he's part of a cause trying to bring people a better way of life.

Celebrating the Fourth of July isn't going to stop

just because he's deployed to celebrate in his own way.

"I'm going to sit in my play guitar with Sgt. (Name) whole lot of stories about to roll out on a mission," he said.

Sgt. David L. Williams, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 504th Parachute Regiment, recently attached to Combat Deployment and will be home July.

The Fourth of July and very important holiday's mother takes great pride in said.

Williams, who is a mother always told him a history of America's independence they understood what they

"My mother got me American pride and value

Spending time with other thing else Williams said mother and grandmother American Veterans.

Hailing from Boston, some of the best fireworks of the best barbeques. It's only times his entire family would come together not doing.

"Veteran's Day and only time, along with major together," he said.

Williams said his month of July was a pure holiday and wasn't commercial become.

"It's one of the holidays home the most," he said.

Overall, Williams said five things to him: the official supporting Soldiers, getting



Command Sgt. Maj. Felt, of 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., poses with his troops

Birth of July in Iraq

, so Tignor said he's going y.

y room, drink a 'near beer,' (Mark) Zimmerman, tell a back home until we have to said.

Williams, a member of quarters Company, 1st e Infantry Regiment (curany C), is on his second missing another Fourth of

d Veteran's Day have been in Williams' family as his in being an American, he

native of Boston, said his and his siblings about the 'pendence and made sure ' were celebrating.

'into it," he said of his of Independence Day. disabled veterans is some- was important as both his er work for Disabled

Williams said he has seen s shows and attended some also served as one of the ily, which is quite large, o matter what they were

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ays that makes me miss f the Fourth of July.

l the Fourth of July means icial beginning of freedom, g family together, barbe-

ques and fireworks.

Being in Iraq changed Williams. He said he always saw advertisements for donating money to help the poor or to help fund the education of children in foreign countries, but he didn't really understand the need until he came to Iraq.

"Here, you really see it," he said.

In order to celebrate the Fourth of July, Williams said he will be calling his family and spending a lot of time on the phone. He will also eat dinner and watch the fireworks on television.

Growing up with American pride and pride in the Soldiers defending the freedom's he enjoys, Williams said joining the military didn't change him, but he sees the change in others.

"It makes me happy to see the change of heart in the other guys," he said.

Spc. Cody J. Heath, a deployed theatre accountability system specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2IBCT, 2ID, is currently on his first deployment and is missing all the major holidays with family and friends for the first time.

Heath, a native of Tampa, Fla., said it's hard to be away from his family. I'd like to be home with my family."

Heath said he loves to cook out and celebrate the holidays with family and friends, but that excitement fades when he knows all he'll have to celebrate the Fourth of July is food from the dining facility and a few friends to eat with.

Heath is quick to mention that he has it better than most.

"I've got nothing to complain about compared to those guys who go outside the wire everyday and sometimes stay outside the wire," he said.

Being in a combat zone while trying to secure the independence of another country, doesn't affect Heath. The sacrifice it took to cement America's independence is something Heath feels he can relate to more now that he's been in a combat zone.

"People died to gain that independence and now it's like a replay but for another country," he said. "I kind of know what they're talking about."



(Photo by Pfc. M. Benjamin Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Spc. Takayo Middleton, an infantryman with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Lewis, Wash.,, takes aim during a game of pool July 4 at the Camp Stryker Morale Welfare and Recreation center in western Baghdad.



(Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

ressed as Uncle Sam on Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, July 4.



(Photo by Sgt. Michael Garrett, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Capt. Rudy Sandoval, a San Antonio native and operations officer for the 720th Military Police Battalion, 89th Military Police Brigade is right on target while his competition watches during a game of horseshoes at Victory Base Complex in western Baghdad July 4. .

Logistics: Getting Things Moved on Time

By Spc. Courtney Marulli
2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE RUSTAMIYAH, Iraq - When it comes to fighting a war most people envision the infantryman, running on pure adrenaline, busting down doors and detaining insurgents.

But, there is another part of war fighting that goes unnoticed by many. It's the logistical side.

The 2nd Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division ensures that Soldiers both on and off the many forward operating bases get the supplies they need in order to keep things running.

There are many parts to the logistical side of the house, including maintenance, food, supply, automations, ammunition management and mortuary affairs.

Each one is geared to taking care of a brigade comprised of six battalions. But, with the surge of troops to Iraq, the 2nd BSB is now responsible for three more units.

Maj. Jason Tomasetti, support operations officer of 2nd BSB, said the unit stays busy supporting nine battalions and the various military transition teams in the area of operations.

Supplies move around the area through combat logistics patrols, which are provided with security to ensure the convoys arrive at their destination safely.

Tomasetti, of Colorado Springs, Colo., said everything has gone relatively smoothly, but it wasn't always easy to get supplies they needed.

"There are times when we had to work real hard with Division and Corps to get things," he said.

One of the missions the brigade has undertaken is implementing the Baghdad Security Plan and providing safer market-places for the Iraqi people.

The units placing barriers move the cement walls themselves, but if they need help, the support operations section coordinates to get them the trucks and equipment they need.

The 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment is currently reshaping the historical Abu Nuwas Marketplace and Tomasetti said 2nd BSB is helping by having their own Soldiers attached to 1-504th who provide trucks and equipment.

It is more than just arranging the shipment of goods, as coordination between the support operations and the engineers is essential to ensure route clearance is carried out along. Sometimes, air support is also needed to ensure maximum security.

"With logistics, a lot we do is in the background. (Things) that people don't realize we do," he said. "It's not important if they know, it doesn't matter."

What does matter, Tomasetti said, is ensuring Soldiers get the necessities.

"Anytime a Soldier goes outside the



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Warren W. Marlow, 2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Jason Bedoya, a native of Woodridge, Va., and with Company A, 2nd Brigade Support Battalion, sorts through boxes to be shipped to brigade units. The 2nd BSB keeps 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers stocked with food and supplies.

wire, we make sure they have food, ammo and what they need," he said.

The team Tomasetti has working with him is one he said is irreplaceable. "I couldn't be happier with the crew I have in the SPO shop," he said. "They're very professional and do a great job, especially when dealing with nine battalions. I couldn't ask for a better group to work with."

One of the members of that group is Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Cummings, the brigade maintenance technician.

Cummings, of Colorado Springs, Colo., said his shop is responsible for ensuring all vehicles get the proper armor and enhancements they need to be combat effective.

"We handle all the logistics for anything to do with vehicle maintenance," he said.

In the beginning there were some challenges getting everything set up, but once that was established it has been routine, Cummings said.

He is glad to be involved in a section

that ensures Soldiers get the proper armor on their vehicles.

Aside from maintenance, there are those who are in charge of the Supply and Transportation aspect of logistics and that entails tracking all combat logistical patrols and ensuring items get moved efficiently throughout theater.

Capt. Mary Ricks, the supply and transportation officer, said in addition to transportation, her section also does external missions, such as enabling a unit to have equipment and personnel to move barriers.

"If they don't have the assets to move barriers we do it for them," she said.

Ricks, of Roanoke Rapids, N.C., said they are also in charge of maintaining all the classes of supply and the supply warehouse.

Working in conjunction with the 541st Combat Service Support Battalion out of Baghdad International Airport, enables all the units in the brigade to get what they need in a timely manner.

"They push to us and then we push out to the units," she said of the supplies that come in.

Since the brigade entered Iraqi in November 2006, Ricks said the Supply and Transportation section has driven 23,199 miles and all have been accident free. Company A, has pushed out over 3 million gallons of fuel and there have been more than 144,000 cases of water and 17,000 cases of MREs distributed in the area of operations.

Those that ensure the computer programs and systems are working also make logistical operations happen.

Spc. Jose Rojas, a logistical supply specialist, works in the Combat Supply Support Automations Maintenance Office of the SPO and his job is to maintain and keep the logistical aspect of the brigade's mission up and running.

Rojas, from New York, said part of his job is to ensure the supply and logistical computers are up and running so people can order and receive what they need to stay mission capable.

His day is typically quiet, which is a good thing.

"Quiet means everything is working how it should," Rojas said. "If we're busy something is definitely wrong. We try not to be busy."

With a satellite system, Rojas and others can monitor logistics for 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment and for 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, which are both detached from the brigade and are operating in different areas of operations.

"We know when they're down before they do," Rojas said.

The entire logistical operation process is a group effort and those working in 2BSB do their best to take care of fellow Soldiers.

Joint Military Seminar Held in Baghdad

By 1st Lt. Brian Cooke
2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery Regt.

BAGHDAD- Battalion leadership from the U.S. and Iraqi Armies held a leadership seminar focusing on joint operations and battle staff operations June 23 and 24.

Senior leaders from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, the "Falcon" battalion, visited Camp Liberty to meet with the senior leaders of Task Force Patriot, the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery.

The two battalions are partner units operating in the western Baghdad neighborhoods of Hateen and Yarmouk.

Falcon and Patriot battalions patrol together on a daily basis and the senior leaders from both battalions have been meeting weekly since April to discuss operations at Joint Security Station Torch in Yarmouk.

However, this was the first chance for the Iraqi leaders to observe the Patriot headquarters in action.

Col. Ali Al-Obaydi, commander of 2/5/6 IA, brought with him his executive and operations officers, and his top noncommissioned officer.

The 2-32 FA's executive officer, Maj. Jim MacGregor, led the formal portion of the seminar, briefing the Iraqi leaders on the composition and function of the Patriot staff.

MacGregor focused on the staff's planning and targeting process, highlighting how the process supports the battalion commander's ability to make timely and informed decisions.

Once the formal briefing was over, Ali and Lt. Col. Mike Lawson, the Task Force Patriot commander, led an open discussion on the major challenges facing the units



(US Army photo by 1st Lt. Brian Cooke, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery)

Senior leaders from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, and 2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery Regt., plus members of the 2/5/6 IA Military Transition Team, pose in front of Task Force Patriot's headquarters in their mission.

Lawson then took the Iraqis on a tour of the Task Force Patriot Tactical Operations Center.

The tour gave the Iraqis a chance to see the way in which the battle staff tracks the battalion's operations and how the staff integrates all of its digital assets to provide an accurate picture of the battlefield to the com-

mander. "We're all soldiers, regardless of the flags we wear on our uniforms," said Lawson.

"We're working together day-in and day-out to defeat a common enemy, and today was simply a great opportunity to remind ourselves why we're here in the first place," he said.

Neighborhood Advisory Council Returns to Hateen

By 1st Lt. Brian Cooke
2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery Regt.

BAGHDAD-Encouraged by improved levels of security, a western Baghdad Neighborhood Advisory Council, or NAC, decided to return to its former headquar-

ters in Hateen June 23.

Hateen, a neighborhood in the western Baghdad district of Mansour, established a NAC during a 2004 initiative by Coalition Forces to improve local governance.

The Hateen NAC originally held its meetings in their purpose-build NAC

Hall, but moved to the larger Mansour District Advisory Council Hall when violence escalated in their neighborhood last year.

In February, Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, assumed control of Hateen as part of the greater Baghdad Security Plan.

The battery's constant presence on the streets has quelled violence in the neighborhood, according to their commander, Capt. Brian McCall, of Junction City, Kan. McCall has attended every NAC meeting since arriving in Hateen and made bringing the meetings back to the neighborhood one of his top priorities.

The Hateen NAC returned to its former headquarters last Saturday.

The Hateen NAC is chaired by Mohammed al-Saadi Abbas, and has three representatives, Hadi Zaid Hamza, Hassan Jafer Choban, and Abdul Karim Hussein Elwi.

The four NAC members met with Capt. McCall on Saturday, along with his Iraqi Army counterpart, Maj. Muhammed of 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Infantry Division, and had what McCall described as an extremely positive meeting.

"The NAC enjoyed being back in their

old building," McCall said, "and were telling old stories about it."

The NAC members discussed a number of infrastructure improvement projects and a program to hire more workers in Hateen.

More importantly, the Hateen NAC decided to permanently move back to their original headquarters.

They also started to design a plan to expand the Hateen NAC Hall and add a park for children on the NAC grounds.

"This meeting was entirely NAC-driven," McCall said, impressed with the focus of the meeting. "This has been a welcome change to the sometimes reluctant pace of Iraqi politics."



(Photo by 1st Lt. Chuck Bloomfield, 2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery Regt.)

Capt. Brian McCall (left), commander of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, attended the Hateen Neighborhood Advisory Council at the council's hall in western Baghdad June 23.



Troops Net Cache, Support

1st Lt. Brian Cooke
2nd Bn., 32nd Field Artillery Regt.

BAGHDAD- Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers, in conjunction with the Iraqi Army, conducted a two-day clearing operation in western Baghdad July 3.

Task Force Patriot, the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, partnered with the 2nd "Falcon" Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Infantry Division for the two-day operation, known as Operation Patriot Strike. The combined force cleared parts of the two neighborhoods of Hateen and Yarmouk in the Mansour District.

The Patriot and Falcon leadership planned the operation together to combat violence in the area. Due to several improvised explosive devices, which either detonated or were found in the neighborhood, Coalition Forces and Iraqi leaders believed there to be an IED cell operating in west Yarmouk.

They designed Patriot Strike to capture the members of this IED cell and clear the area of any weapon caches.

While Soldiers found no members of an

IED cell, American and Iraqi troops did discover one cache of weapons and contraband. Additionally, the combined forces confiscated more than a dozen other illegally-owned weapons, mainly AK-47 assault rifles and pistols, and are confident that they have cleared the area of all illegal material.

"The people seemed happy to let us search their houses. They fully cooperated with us as a way to prove that they are on our side," said Sgt. 1st Class Rickie Jackson, a St. Louis native and platoon sergeant for Battery A, 2-32nd FA. Jackson added that the locals gave his platoon several tips about insurgents possibly operating in the area.

"This was an absolutely tremendous performance by our Soldiers and the soldiers of the Falcon Battalion," said Lt. Col. Mike Lawson, commander of Task Force Patriot.

"In just two days and despite the sweltering heat, our combined forces cleared over 500 homes. This will go a long way towards convincing the people of Hateen and Yarmouk that we're here for their safety," he said.



(U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Ryan Stidum, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery)

Pfc. Ira Shober (right) of Gillette, Wyo., stands ready to search a house while fellow U.S. and Iraqi troops look on during a combined clearing operation in western Baghdad July 3.

New Coalition Outpost in Ameriya

By Sgt. Jack Androski
1st Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.

BAGHDAD - Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers opened another Coalition outpost in the Ameriya neighborhood of western Baghdad.

Ameriya has been the scene of some of the deadliest fighting in Baghdad due to the local Sunni-led Ameriya Freedom Fighters defending their neighborhoods from al-Qaeda insurgents. The citizens of Ameriya, a former Ba'athist enclave, recently turned against al-Qaeda insurgents who were using Ameriya as a base of operations to attack coalition forces and bring violence against the Shia populace in Baghdad.

With the construction of a new Coalition outpost, troops from 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, hope to gain better control over the Ameriya area and stop the violence.

1-5 Cav. has already successfully built two other COPs, one in Khadra and one northern Ameriya. With yet another COP the task force will aggressively target al-Qaeda within the area to help the local Sunnis population rid their neighborhoods of insurgents, and bring peace and prosperity back to this Sunni neighborhood.



(Photo by Sgt. Jack Androski, 1st Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.)

Soldiers from Co. B, 1st Bn., 5th Cav. Regt. take a much deserved break from guard duty at their newly-established Coalition outpost in Ameriya.

Body Armor; Not Just For Looks!

Staff Sgt. Jeremie Oliver, from Chesterville, Maine, shows off the protection that saved his life after being shot by an insurgent in the Baghdad neighborhood of Ameriya June 17. Oliver, from Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, was in his Bradley Fighting Vehicle when he took the round to the chest. Oliver was later seen by medical personnel who cleared him for duty. "I know I am lucky to walk away from this event; however, I also know that it was not luck that my body armor worked," he said.



(Photo by Sgt. Jack Androski 1st Bn., 5th Cav. Regt.)

Displaced Iraqis Find Sanctuary in Industrial District of Baghdad

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD - The Soldiers knocked on the gate anticipating a less-than-kind greeting. Maybe a shotgun blast, perhaps an explosive booby trap or ideally just a stockpile of weapons was waiting on the other side of the threshold.

But the young Iraqi boy who poked his head out told them this might not be the insurgent stronghold they were after.

While patrolling the streets of the Wazariyah neighborhood in Baghdad's eastern Adhamiyah District, Soldiers of Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, expected to find abandoned warehouses, vacant factories and idle machinery. What they found, though, were people living in the Hayy Al Wazariyah industrial park June 26.

With an increasing number of residents of Iraq's capital displaced due to security concerns, the district of Adhamiyah and especially its industrial district, Wazariyah, is increasingly a home for refugees, said Lt. Col. Yahya Rasool Abdullah, the commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division.

Unfortunately, other less desirable people are also calling Wazariyah home, including insurgents and terrorists, who use the supposedly abandoned industrial park as a production and storage site for improvised explosive devices. Groups, such as the Islamic Nation of Iraq and Unity in Jihad, bring their terror tactics along with them to Adhamiyah, Abdullah explained.

Hence the Soldiers of Troop A and their brothers-in-arms, the Iraqi troops of 1st "Fighter" Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, went



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

An Iraqi Army soldier cuts a lock to an abandoned building during a search of Hayy Al Wazariyah, an industrial neighborhood of the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad June 26.

door-to-door, gate-to-gate and lot-to-lot searching for insurgents and their means to wreak havoc on the Iraqi people.

In addition to disrupting anti-Iraqi forces operating in Adhamiyah, the mission, dubbed Operation Falcon Spur, was also intended to improve cohesion between Soldiers and their Iraqi counterparts, said Capt. Erik Kjonnerod, the commander of Troop A.

"We came together a couple of days ago to make up a plan to clear and search the area for weapons and also show the Iraqi people (that) the American Army and the (Iraqi Security Forces) are committed to working together," said the 30-year-old native of Fairfax, Va.

"It's good to start building that rapport with one another," he said.

However, the rapport between the Iraqi Army and the local populace, whether displaced or organic, is equally important for Coalition Forces to cultivate, said Lt. Col. Jeff Broadwater, the commander of 3rd Squadron, which is attached to the 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division.

"We have to gain the trust of the good people and get rid of the bad people," said the native of Radcliff, Ky., to a group of Iraqi and American Soldiers during a rehearsal the day before the operation commenced.

"It's a great honor to do this operation with you. Today, I see two groups of Soldiers. Tomorrow, I hope to see one," he said.

By conducting cooperative missions, such as Operation Falcon Spur, leaders like Broadwater and Abdullah, are optimistic residents will gain trust in the Iraqi Army.

"There is a big issue right now; between the military and the people there is no trust," Abdullah said. "If the people want to live in prosperity they must wake up. We're here to help our people."

The Iraqi Army must earn the confidence of the people to beat the insurgency, Abdullah said.

Only detaining those he can confirm are involved in subversive activities will hopefully win over the people of the area, he added.

Emphasizing a commitment to the humane treatment of all detainees is something Troop A, like all Coalition

Forces, tries to demonstrate at every opportunity, Broadwater said.

As part of Operation Fardh Al Qanoon, commonly referred to as the Baghdad Security Plan, or the surge, the Soldiers of Troop A are committed to establishing a presence in Wazariyah, Kjonnerod said.

"It was good to get out and talk to people. We talked to a lot of the business leaders in the area. They were very receptive, extremely happy that the Americans were there helping the Iraqi Army do some of the searches," he explained.

Troop A, temporarily based out of Coalition Outpost War Eagle, plans to work with their Iraqi counterparts in Wazariyah over the next year.

They've been patrolling in east Baghdad for less than two weeks.

Though the relationship with the Iraqi soldiers is in its infancy, Kjonnerod hopes to overcome the initial growing pains in order to lay the foundation for a strong, working relationship with the Iraqi Army.

Through engaging the local populace, Kjonnerod said he hopes Troop A and its Iraqi equivalent, gain the tips from residents necessary to weed out insurgents and thereby provide improved security to vulnerable residents of Wazariyah.

For now, the most pressing concern is security, but next to security the number one priority is putting an Iraqi face on operations.

In the future, sooner or later, Iraqi Security Forces will take the lead in security operations as Coalition Forces recede to the background to play more of a support role, he said.

"We're trying to get security to a level where the Iraqi government can continue to grow and develop in the right way," Broadwater said.

"Our Soldiers sacrifice every day. One day that you're away from your family is hard to take. Every great reward comes with a cost. We truly are making a positive difference here," he said.

On this day, the Soldiers of Troop A and their Iraqi counterparts attempt to make a difference, however small, when they met an Iraqi boy at his family's gate and politely asked through a translator to speak to the man of the house.



Soldiers with Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and Iraqi Army troops review permits for weapons seized during a search of Hayy Al Wazariyah, an industrial neighborhood of the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad June 26.

Paratroopers Prove Unshakeable in the Face of Adversity

By Spc. L.B. Edgar,
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD - Only one man knew what was coming. From afar he completed the circuit and braced for the blast's impact. None of the Iraqis going about their daily life were ready and the sound cut through the hustle and bustle of daily life on the streets of the eastern Raabi neighborhood in the Iraqi capital's Adhamiyah District.

The following day, paratroopers of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, nonchalantly passed the twisted metal once a vehicle June 29.

The day's mission was not to dwell on yesterday's vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack, which claimed the life of one Iraqi policeman, wounded two others and injured another two passersby. Rather, the paratroopers gauged the attitude of locals and randomly searched vehicles for weapons, kidnapping victims or illegal identification cards, said 1st Lt. Jeremy Tillman, the leader of the battery's 1st Platoon.

Tillman, a native of Walnut Ridge, Ark., estimated that questions would be answered within 48 to 72 hours.

"We're still milling over the 'who and why' and how to prevent it from happening again," the 25-year old Tillman said. "It was an array of eight to ten mortars in the back-seat of a vehicle. The vehicle was in that position for 30 to 45 minutes before it was detonated. It was remote-control detonated,

so the trigger man had to have line of sight. No trigger man was caught or found."

The attack did not come as a surprise to the paratroopers, who have come to expect the unexpected, he said.

"We all know it's just a matter of time before these things happen in our sector," Tillman said. "An insurgency (wages) guerilla-type warfare to disrupt a good thing; a drop of oil in water that spreads."

While the vast majority of people in Raabi, a neighborhood with a mixture of Sunni and Shia, are supportive of paratroopers' efforts to improve their lot in life, there is a minority intent on wreaking havoc, Tillman said.

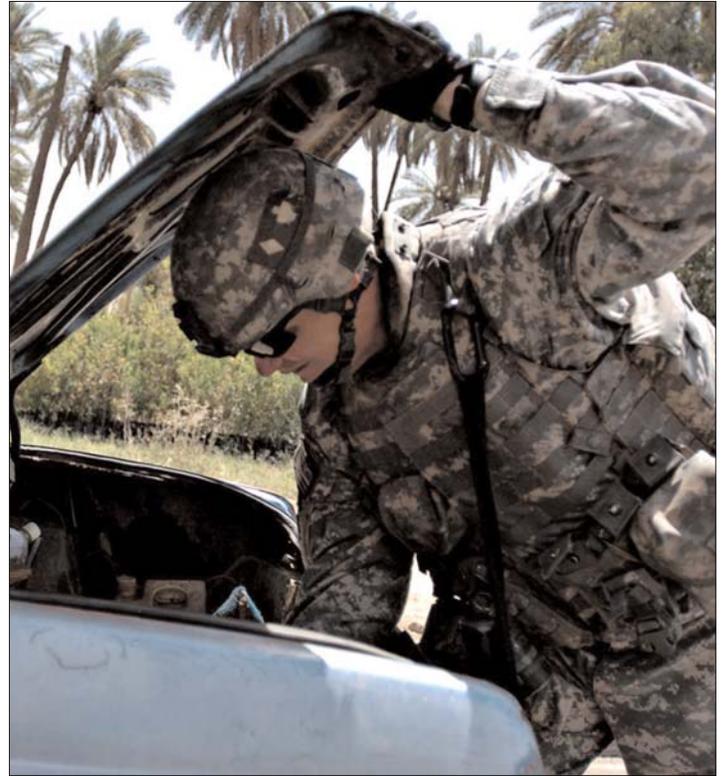
"You've got small factions here and there who are power hungry and greedy religious zealots," he said.

While one or more of those zealots lashed out with a cold and calculated attempt at destabilizing Raabi, the paratroopers of 1st Platoon are still right where residents can find them - every day with the people.

Grounded paratroopers

The genesis of Operation Fardh Al Qanoon brought the paratroopers of the Battalion to Adhamiyah, a volatile district of Iraq's capital. The paratroopers entered Raabi, a neighborhood in Adhamiyah, with a heavy-handed approach in keeping with the operation's focus of clearing neighborhoods. They captured many terrorists and insurgents before moving onto the second phase of the Baghdad Security Plan, engaging the local

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(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Madison, N.C., native Sgt 1st Class John "Smoke" Duggins, a platoon sergeant with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, searches the trunk of a car on the streets south of the "Fish Market" in the Raabi neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District June 28. The search was part of a series of unannounced vehicle checkpoint operations targeting insurgent activities such as car bombs, weapons smuggling and kidnappings.



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

The Candy Man Can!

Buffalo, N.Y., native Sgt. Lavar Johnson, 26, a field artilleryman with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, passes out candy to children in the Grey'at neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah district June 28. By maintaining a constant presence through dismantled patrols, paratroopers provide enhanced security to neighborhood.



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Paratrooper Finds Tasty Treat On Patrol

Gun Barrel, Texas, native Pfc. Josh "Doc" Lovejoy, 21, a combat medic with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, buys a watermelon from an Iraqi produce store north of the Grey'at neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District June 28. Lovejoy's unit spends their days patrolling and engaging the people of Adhamiyah to counter insurgent efforts to destabilize Baghdad.

Paratroopers Continue Operations in Adhamiyah District

Adhamiyah

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populace, Tillman said.

"We dismounted out of the gate. We started patrolling immediately and started getting to know the local people. We're now

to a point where we know their names, we know their faces and we know their families. They trust us. We trust them," said 1st Lt. Larry Pitts, the 2nd Platoon leader. "With the correct mentality, we can make a difference in this sector."

Though the paratroopers of 2-319th are

field artillerymen, they are performing an infantryman's job and utilize the dismounted approach to securing civilians, said Pitts, who hails from Fayetteville, N.C.

"We're with the people every day; 98 percent of our patrols are dismount patrols," Tillman said. "We're dismounted every day. We're good to good people; we're bad to bad people."

Project progress: essential services

While security remains a priority, improving essential services such as adequate sewage, readily available clean water and regular trash pick-up is also an important mission for the paratroopers, said Capt. Josh Richardson, Battery B commander.

The battalion is using a two-pronged attack to improve essential services. Its leadership is working with the upper echelons of the Iraqi government to create long-term solutions.

The Battalion subcontracted a company to place trash cans and regularly pick them up, Tillman said. Plans are in the works for two gas stations to open up in the community, he added.

"We hope to get the people ... essential services, such as electricity. They want essential services," Tillman said. "All the essential services that make your hometown back in America clean, this area needs." Besides improving the quality of life, local projects to provide essential services also create jobs, thereby pumping money into the local economy, Tillman said.

Help on the way

The success of 319th's paratroopers was

put on display for the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, when he visited Coalition Outpost War Eagle, the Battalion's home June 27. Subsequently, 2nd Platoon took Crocker on a tour of Raabi's "Fish Market."

"We took him to some of our previous trouble spots. We were able to show him the change that we've created over the last four or five months during the surge and some of the projects we're working on. With his influence, we'll be able to show the Iraqis' progress," said Pitts, who led the tour.

"It shows the surge plan working. It's safe enough where we can get the ambassador to come down, walk our streets, even have chai (Iraqi tea) with several of the locals," he said.

Crocker's visit was an opportunity for the battalion to showcase its successful dismounted approach to engaging Raabi residents.

"It's important to have somebody with that level of importance in our area, so that we can demonstrate to them that we think we have a foothold for transition. We got to show him some good things and some things that needed improvement," he said.

"Transition is the ultimate goal for us and he saw a population and a Coalition Force that are working pretty well together. We definitely have a ways to go but the people know because we're out there a lot walking the streets that we care about the future of this area," he said.



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Madison, N.C., native Sgt 1st Class John "Smoke" Duggins, 36, a platoon sergeant with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, provides security as residents pass through the streets north of the Grey'at neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District June 28.

Soldier Serves Before He's A Citizen

By Spc. Shea Butler
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Millions of Americans will take the day off work and spread picnic blankets across the land of the free as neighbors and friends fire up their grills, celebrating Independence Day.

Thousands of miles away in Iraq, one Soldier defending America's freedoms, prepares his combat uniform for a ceremony that will change his life. He carefully inspects the placement of his nametape, unit patches, and especially the American flag. The flag of a country that today, he can finally call his own.

After five years of military service, Sgt. Sergio Martinez, 24, with 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, along with 160 other Soldiers, became American citizens during a naturalization ceremony at the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory in western Baghdad.

Another 585 Soldiers chose to mark the anniversary of the nation's Independence by reenlisting during the dual ceremony.

Pvt. Roger Davis, who was a part of the reenlistment portion of the ceremony, was moved by the naturalization of his comrades in arms.

"You hear about people fighting to become citizens, but to actually see their dreams come true was amazing," Davis said.

Martinez, who is on his third deployment to Iraq, said he is looking forward to telling his sons his dreams have come true.

"I want to tell my sons that if you want something, you have to work for it like I did," Martinez said. "I don't want them to take their freedom for granted."

Martinez came from Mexico to America when he was a



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Sgt. Sergio Martinez, with 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., works on his humvee at Camp Liberty in western Baghdad July 4. Martinez, along with 160 other Soldiers, became an American citizen during a naturalization and reenlistment ceremony at the Al Faw Palace on Camp Victory on July, 4.

5-year-old.

"I didn't mind serving even though I wasn't a citizen," Martinez said. "I serve as a 'Thank you,' to America for the things she has given my family and me."

Now that he is a citizen, he is looking forward to furthering his military career by joining the Army Special

Forces, which wasn't an option as a non-citizen, Martinez said.

Not only does citizenship allow him to advance in his career, but he is now allowed to vote for the first time in 19 years of living in America.

"It's going to be nice to vote for the person I think should be president," he said.

Checkpoints

Longwood, Fla., native, Sgt. David Smith, 23, a field artilleryman with 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, passes the debris of a car bomb on the streets south of the "Fish Market" of the Raabi neighborhood of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District June 28.



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

PMCS: An Acronym for Health, Success

By Capt. Allen Hill
610th Brigade Support Battalion

BAGHDAD - It is an acronym that spells mission success for the Soldiers of Forward Operating Base Falcon, but ask the Doctors and Physicians from 610th Brigade Support Battalion and they will tell you that it does not just apply to the maintenance checks on our vehicles and equipment.

Preventative Maintenance Checks and Services, or PMCS, should be executed on everything that we do in our daily lives while deployed. These preventative measures set a standard for us to live by and ensures that we are taking all the necessary steps needed to stay healthy and safe throughout the rotation.

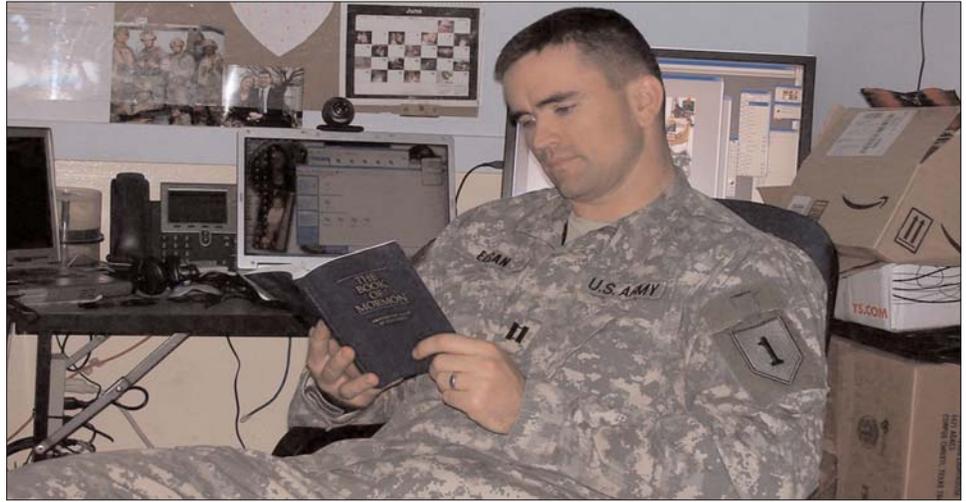
Physical training and the right amount of sleep helps a Soldier maintain his mental awareness.

"Daily physical training is important to keeping the body alert and the mind focused in this environment," said Capt. John King, Company C, 610th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's Physician's Assistant, from Swartz Creek, Mich. "A balanced mix of strength training and cardiovascular exercises will help keep the heart healthy and will help avoid fatigue after long hours of work. The right amount of sleep and sleeping when you can will help keep you vigilant and prepared for the next mission."

"It's about eating the right foods at the right time," said Dr. (Capt.) Ross Witters, from Omaha, Neb., about the importance of a balanced diet.

"Because we are in such a rush most of the time, it is easy for us to go in and grab all the fried foods," he added. "This type of food can cause the body to slow down as essential nutrients and vitamins are missing. Focusing on a balance of meats, vegetables, and the right amount of dairy products gives the body the energy it needs to burn without building up unnecessary fat."

In regards to smoking, Witter said, "Like any machine, you have to keep the air filters clean. Your lungs are the body's air filter. Smoking clogs up those filters with harmful smoke, toxins, and tar. This leads to the body not functioning as well and even-



(U.S. Army photo)

Capt. Steve Elgan, a communications officer for the 610th Brigade Support Battalion, takes time to read the Book of Mormon. Elgan said he makes sure to spend a little time each day reading spiritual books. Keeping the mind, body and soul healthy ensures Soldiers will be fit for any conditions they may encounter.

tually breaking down. By maintaining the body with a good diet and avoidance of smoking and other tobacco products, one ensures that the body will continue to function properly, like a well-oiled machine."

Dr. (Capt.) Brian Derrick, the Brigade Surgeon, from Ellensburg, Wash., talked about the importance of hydration.

"Substituting the body with 'Rip-Its,' coffee and soda contributes greatly to dehydration," he said. "In this environment Soldiers need to be consuming copious amounts of water to keep the body fluid. If there is physical activity involved, incor-

porating an electrolyte replacement drink, in conjunction with water, will help a Soldier avoid those dangers that come with dehydration."

The practice of a having good spiritual habits is what Chap. (Maj.) Greg Thogmartin from Princeton, Mo., said enables Soldiers to focus on doing what is morally and ethically right.

Preserving combat strength goes beyond the daily checks on vehicles and equipment. For a Soldier to function, he must conduct PMCS on himself and look out for the Soldiers around him.

Combat Stress; Helping Soldiers Help Themselves

By Pfc. Benjamin Gable
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - A Soldier rolls over in bed, squinting through their sleepy

eyes, the alarm clock ringing out of control - overslept again. Hastily throwing on their uniform, boots unlaced, pants sagging from forgetting their belt in the mad rush to get to work, they run straight into the first sergeant.

One look from the first sergeant and they know that was the last straw. The hammer is about to drop. Feeling frustrated and possibly facing punishment, they feel completely overwhelmed with problems at home and here. The Soldier has no idea where to turn for help.

The Soldiers with the 113th Medical Co., Combat Stress Control, are here to help.

There are a myriad of problems and issues any Soldier can face when in a combat environment and serving their country so far from home. The combat stress control team, a reserve unit from Stanton, Calif., offers Soldiers everything from a three-day restoration program, to individual classes and one-on-one counseling to help with these strains while deployed.

"This program offers Soldiers a chance to regroup and restore pride to carry on their duties," said Lt. Col. Hattie Hayes-Cushenberry, a psychiatric nurse with the 113th Medical Co. "The combat stress program is not a bad thing, it's a selfless service."

The center deals with three main areas including stress within the unit, home front stress, and stress related to battle fatigue. Any of these can weigh heavily on an individual Soldier.

"Some Soldiers can work through problems by themselves," said Sgt. 1st Class

Christopher Gonzales, a Las Vegas native and psychiatric specialist with the 113th Medical Co. "But for those who may not be able to, we are here for them."

The three-day program offers Soldiers a chance to leave the stressful environment they are in and have an opportunity to speak with a counselor in a neutral, one-on-one setting.

"All we have is each other," said Spc. Christopher Haney, a 24-year old psychiatric specialist with the 113th Medical Co. "It's important we watch out for our buddies any way we can."

Individual classes range from positive thinking and anger management, to death and bereavement and maintaining military bearing in stressful situations. The center is open 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week.

No matter what problems or issues a Soldier faces, there is a combat stress counselor waiting to help, said Haney. Whether there are problems within the unit, issues with a spouse or loved one, or stress from routinely going outside the wire, the combat stress program offers Soldiers a chance to get away and seek help for their specific needs.

The Camp Liberty Combat Stress Center is located near the Witmer Troop Medical Clinic, across from the Camp Liberty Mayor Cell. They can be reached on VOIP at 242-4642, or online at www.combatstresscenter.com.



(Photo by Pfc. Benjamin Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Spc. Christopher Haney, a 24-year old mental health specialist with the 113th Medical Co., Combat Stress Control, meets with a Soldier who wanted to take part in the three-day mental health program at Camp Liberty, July 6.

Cavalry Children Enjoy Puppet Show

By Sgt. Robert Strain
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas - The 1st Cavalry Division's Family Readiness Group held a puppet show for its youngest members, children in first through fifth grades, June 29 at the Catering and Conference Center here.

The one-person puppet show, called Nana Puddin' and put on by ventriloquist Nancy Burks Worcester, focused on teaching the kids about things like safety and self esteem, while at the same time making them laugh.

Messages like "If you try, you can fly," "Muscles aren't always what gives you strength," and "Beauty isn't how you dress," are some of the things Worcester tried to get the kids to realize during her one-hour show called "Extreme Makeover: Animal Edition."

Worcester used animal puppets such as a crocodile and a weasel, who added jokes and comments, to keep the kids interested and on their toes.

The biggest message Worcester tried to spread is you don't need to have superpowers or be rich and famous to be a hero, and that all the children's parents are heroes.

She explained that those things don't make someone a hero; it's knowing what the right thing to do is in all situations.

"You have to know the right thing to do and do it," Worcester said.

The division is expanding its FRG events to include kids of all ages in order to give them something to take their minds off of the deployment, said Col. Larry Phelps, the 1st Cavalry Division's rear detachment commander.

Phelps said that events like these benefit everyone involved, not just the kids and teens.

The spouses benefit from a "night off"



(Photo by Sgt. Robert Strain, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

With the help of Larry the Crocodile, ventriloquist Nancy Burks Worcester, a performer with the group "Nana Puddin'," tells a story of three little pigs to children of deployed 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers June 29 at Fort Hood's Catering and Conference Center. Worcester and the division's Family Readiness Group put on an educational puppet show for kids in first through fifth grades as a part of the division's expanding FRG programs for children.

they can enjoy.

The Soldiers and other volunteers from the Central Texas community benefit from some really fun events, such as skating, rodeos and baseball games, Phelps

explained

"We are indebted to 'Team Hood' and all the great support we get from the Central Texas good neighbors," Phelps said. "Without these great folks, events like these

would not be possible."

The division plans to host an event for "Tweens," or pre-teenagers. They will be hosted by the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment July 20.

Safety Note

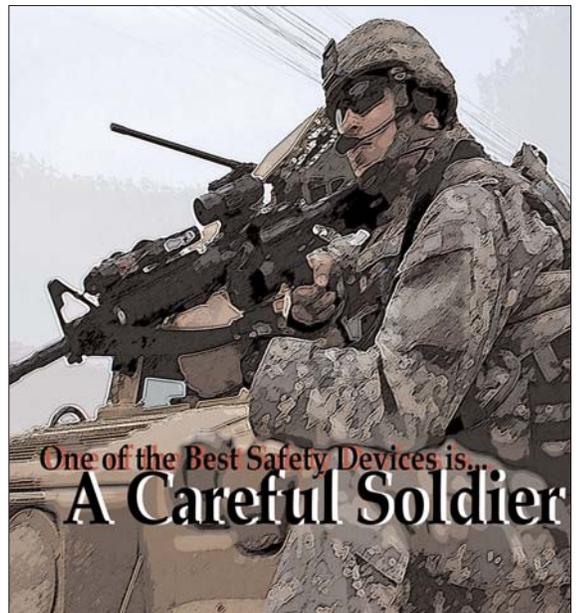
Electrical Fire Hazard

Most circuits are limited to 20 amps at the circuit breaker box. Power strips are normally rated at 10 or 15 amps. **The power strip will burn before the circuit breaker trips.** Ensure lights, heaters, coffee pots, computers and other equipment don't destroy your area of operation.



BE SAFE, GET HOME!

To the left is an example of what can happen as a result of carelessness.



Airman Flies to Soldier's Aid

By Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - An airman attached to the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with a "V" Device for Valor June 8 for his actions that led to the saving of a Soldier's life.

Special Agent Travis Guthmiller, a member of Weapons Intelligence Team 10 of Task Force Troy from Jamestown, N.D., was responding to a weapons cache-finding in the Doura region of southern Baghdad on April 1 when the rear vehicle of his convoy was struck by an improvised explosive device.

The deep-buried IED blasted off the front end of the humvee, ejecting the gunner from his turret and dropping the truck into the crater.

When the dust settled and Guthmiller could assess the damage, executing was the only thing on his mind.

"I was kind of just on auto-pilot," he said. "You had to do what you had to do while you're out there and make sure it got done."

Guthmiller did what he had to and more. After sweeping the area for secondary IED's, the airman brought the lead vehicle closer to the blast site for extra security.

When that extra security was established, Guthmiller, who is combat lifesaver qualified, assisted the medics however he could. After bringing a litter from the Explosive Ordnance Disposal truck and loading it, the convoy took off for the hospital.

On the way to the hospital, Guthmiller continued to go beyond his responsibilities by keeping the injured gunner's head still and insuring he could breathe normally.

The airman said the gravity of the situation didn't fully

sink in until the next day when he had time to think.

"I was kind of just thinking the next day 'That could have broken out into some crazy fighting. That could have been pretty hairy,'" he said

1st Lt. Brett Gillet, a platoon leader with the 47th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company from Killeen, Texas, said the Guthmiller's combination of situational awareness and action caught his eye.

"Anybody can react and say, 'Okay, let's go to the scene,' but he went to the scene, looked around at security, and noticed security wasn't as good as it could be," Gillet said. "He looked when he was in the truck and recognized that he was in the best position to help instead of just sitting there and saying, 'Okay, medic, you do your job, and I'll do my job.' There wasn't any hesitation."

Guthmiller, who is attached to Task Force Troy out of Minot Air Force Base, S.D. said receiving an award from a service aside from his own was a special feeling.

"It felt really good. I was surprised a little bit, but it's cool to be an Air Force guy getting an Army award."

Gillet said Guthmiller's actions were worthy of his new decoration.

"If you asked (him), he'd say he's just doing his job," he said. "Maybe it is, maybe it isn't, but it's still saving a guy's life, and it's a pretty award-winning thing."

Despite receiving the recognition, the airman, who has been working with joint service units since August 2006 and at Forward Operating Base Falcon since January, passed credit onto everybody who was at the site that day.

"That was a really good, concerted effort by everybody that was out there," he said. "I got a medal for what I did, but the guys out there, everybody just came together. It was really cool."



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert Timmons, 4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Col. Ricky D. Gibbs, commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, pins the Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device for valor onto Special Agent Travis Guthmiller, from Jamestown, N.D., June 8 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in the Rashid District of Baghdad.

Air Cav Soldiers Recognized for Actions in Combat

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division gathered here June 25 for a ceremony where five received Combat Action Badges with one also receiving a Purple Heart.

The CABs and Purple Heart came from an incident on March 25, when the aircraft the Soldiers were in came under small arms fire.

As safe as air travel is, there is always an exception to the rule, as the Soldiers of Company C "Ghost Riders," 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, learned.

Fort Worth, Texas, native Sgt. Jonathan Dillenberg, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief for Co. C, earned his CAB and Purple Heart all in one shot, he said.

Dillenberg, along with the rest of his crew, were headed to pick up some passengers from Baghdad, March 25, when a bullet passed through a cabin window and fragmented when it hit the top part of the frame to one of the passenger seats, said Bethel, Alaska, native Chief Warrant Officer 2 Kris Nicholson, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot for the Ghost Riders and fellow CAB recipient.

A piece of the bullet was lodged into Dillenberg's left forearm, said



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Fort Worth, Texas, native Sgt. Jonathan Dillenberg, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief for Company C "Ghost Riders," 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, salutes Traverse City, Mich., native Col. Dan Shanahan, commander of 1st ACB, after having his Purple Heart pinned on during a ceremony at Camp Taji, Iraq, June 25.

Nicholson.

Luckily, there were no passengers on board yet, said Dillenberg.

"If there had been a passenger in that seat it would have been (deadly), so it was

good that there weren't any," he said.

Immediately after the crew realized they were being shot at, the Soldiers used evasive maneuvers to ensure the safety of the aircraft and crew, said Baldwin, Fla.,

native, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Carl Duncan, a Ghost Rider pilot who also received a CAB.

After they conducted a quick self-evaluation to make sure no one else was injured, they continued on to their planned destination, said Dillenberg.

"We flew ... to pick up our passengers. I decided (my wound) wasn't that bad. We finished our mission," he said.

The infliction of the wound didn't hurt as bad as when they took the piece of bullet out, said Dillenberg with a smile.

If there was one thing that Dillenberg learned from the incident was that the training that they do all the time is well worth it, he said.

"All the training that we do and how everything is standardized really helped out in that situation," said Dillenberg.

"It's a higher stress level and everybody knew what they were supposed to do because we trained (to do it)," he said.

After the ceremony, Duncan smiled and asked his commander for the story of the incident not to be posted on their unit's family readiness group web site.

He didn't want his wife to know he was in any danger.

After the laughter subsided in the room, the request was dutifully denied.

Ironhorse Hero Tells His War Story, Praises His Troops

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - When the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's Staff Sgt. Matthew Schilling, a squad leader for Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, thinks back to the mission that earned him a Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valor, the images in his mind are crystal clear.

Schilling, a scout, who hails from Houston, Mo., remembers nearly every detail of what happened during the hour-long ambush at Falahat, Iraq Feb. 16 in vivid color and relates them as though what he did was 'no big deal,' he says, instead preferring to give the glory to his Soldiers and his platoon leader who also lived through the experience.

The mission began simply enough, said Schilling.

His platoon was to go with the Iraqi Police on patrol boats to do patrols on a river near Falahat to keep the waterways clear of possible insurgents trafficking weapons. Tips received indicated that insurgents were using the river to transport weapons and gain access to areas from which they could launch attacks on civilians, Iraqi security forces and coalition troops. The plan also included stopping and checking houses near the banks in a search for weapons and suspected insurgents.

Four boats were on the patrol with Schilling's being the lead boat.

For the mission, Schilling was joined by four Iraqi Police officers, his platoon leader, 1st Lt. John Dolan of Maple Grove, Minn., and two of his Soldiers-Mulberry, Ind., native Spc. Aaron Allmandinger and Prescott, Ariz., native Spc. Dusty Chitwood-along with their medic, Milwaukee native Spc. Dan Koeber.

Having gone only two kilometers down the river, Schilling's boat and the other patrol boats were soon hit by machine gun fire from a very large, well-organized enemy ambush involving nearly 100 insurgent fighters, he said.

"We were coming down the river during

the day, and whoever saw us had set up a nice long ambush with machine guns on both ends and a lot of people with weapons in between," said Schilling. "Once they started shooting, we returned fire but could not sustain it because there was too much heavy machine gun fire."

The insurgent forces fired at the boats from houses and roof tops on one of the banks of the river.

"As soon as our lieutenant gave the order to turn the boat around, he was shot in the arm and the IP driving the boat was shot in the stomach-when he went down he yanked the boat wheel and we sailed off into an island and crashed," added Schilling.

As enemy rounds peppered the boat pieces of shrapnel flew up hitting Schilling in the mouth and flying at others in the boat as well. Another Iraqi Police officer was also wounded in the ensuing gunfire.

"I was spitting out chunks of aluminum which came from the boat," said Schilling.

"Our boat sounded like a metal shed when it's raining," added Dolan.

The other boats in the patrol had not seen Schilling's crew crash and were also under fire and trying to push up the river.

"In reflection, some guys were mad that no one came immediately after us, but they were also reacting to the situation," said Schilling. "Things may have been worse if another one of the boats had come back. We may have had some of our guys killed or another boat destroyed."

Making it onto the banks of the island, Schilling organized his troops and assisted the IPs, sending them into the reeds of the island for cover and helped his Soldiers set up a defensive perimeter, while continuously under fire.

Schilling returned to the boat by himself so that he could gather up extra weapons, ammo and other needed gear, running back and forth from the boat to where his Soldiers were.

Once he had all the supplies out of the boat, Schilling then threw a grenade into the boat to damage it and keep it out of insurgent



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Kokel, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Col. Paul E. Funk II (left), commander, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pins the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for valor to the uniform of Houston, Mo., native Staff Sgt. Matthew Schilling, a scout for Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment at Camp Taji, Iraq June 18.

hands as well as to create a distraction.

"While we moved into the reeds, we weren't receiving as much fire and as we kept moving, they (the enemy forces) were focusing more on the boat burning," Schilling said.

Eventually, while still under fire, they found a clearing, setting up a better fighting position and treating their wounded. The area also served as a place to wait for evacuation helicopters.

While they waited, Schilling, Allmandinger and Chitwood continued fighting as Koeber treated the wounded and Dolan called in for aviation assets from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division based on Camp Taji.

"Communications were a little sketchy," said Schilling. "The lieutenant had lost a lot of blood and about all he could do was call in to get us some air evacuation and medical evacuation helicopters."

It was at this time that the enemy began sweeping the area.

"I was becoming dizzy from blood loss and my sleeves were just soaked in blood and my arm was turning purple," said Dolan, who in addition to his wounded arm received a softball-sized bruise to his ribs from a bullet hitting the plating on his vest armor. "We thought we were going to get over run. We were 100 percent sure that we were going to die. That's why no one freaked out, we just said 'let's do our job and take these guys out.'" Once the helicopters were in sight, Schilling signaled them.

"The enemy shifted their fire back to us, and that's when all hell broke loose," said Schilling, whose cheek was grazed by a bullet while at the same time his rifle sling was shot off and his pants were sporting a couple of fresh bullet holes, fortunately not accompanied by wounds. "Soon though, the helicopters were on their way and it was good for us because we were running low on ammo. Once the birds arrived, the enemy fled."

Once the wounded were evacuated,

Schilling, his Soldiers and the two remaining IPs left the area on air evacuation helicopters.

Schilling said he now takes the incident in stride and never really intended to ever be called a hero.

"I was just doing what I was supposed to do," he said. "All of our guys were doing what they were supposed to do and they're a great bunch of guys. It only took a little bit of orchestration."

"The lieutenant and I joke about it, but I felt like I was really jacked up at the time, but it didn't seem like that big of a deal," added Schilling. "Luckily, we took extra ammo with us that day, and I really believe that someone was watching over us."

Dolan said he was pleased with his Soldiers and the way that Schilling took charge during the mission.

"I'm very proud of my men, how they handled everything-all of them reacted courageously," said Dolan. "Staff Sgt. Schilling receiving the Bronze Star with V was well-deserved and I have no problem calling him a hero."

"He's really one of the most humble guys I've ever met who never wants any attention for himself-he gives all the credit to his Soldiers," added Dolan.

Allmandinger said not only is his squad leader a great noncommissioned officer but he played a vital role in keeping the troops alive.

"He took charge and risked hostile fire and kept us all together," said Allmandinger. "If he hadn't been there, things definitely would have been a lot worse."

In all, according to Schilling, 22 enemy fighters were killed in the engagement while more than 50 insurgents were wounded. Schilling also said that the Iraqi Police officer shot in the stomach while driving the patrol boat later died of complications from his wounds. No other Iraqi security force personnel or U.S. Soldiers were killed in the ambush.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

While building relations with Iraqis during a patrol, Houston, Mo., native Staff Sgt. Matthew Schilling, a squad leader with Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, prepares to take tea with a local Iraqi family near Taji, Iraq July 3.



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Tug-O-War!

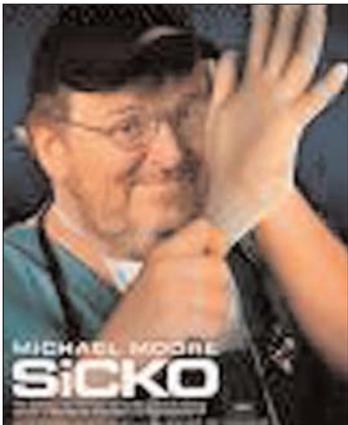
Soldiers from the 615th Aviation Support Battalion "Cold Steel," 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, pull with all their might as other Cold Steel warriors do the same on the other end of the rope in friendly tug-o-war competition during the battalion's sports day July 8 at Camp Taji, Iraq.

Michael Moore:

Crazed 'Sicko' or a Hero for Healthcare?

Michael Moore. Enough said, right? I know what you're thinking, "That oversized, crazed, far-off-the-deep-end liberal!"

He's not a favorite of everyone, for sure. Yet despite Moore's name attached to the film "Sicko," - a documentary that takes a strike at the flawed American healthcare system - it really made me ponder, "Could there be something wrong with our glorious nation's medical



(Photo courtesy of the barrett86movienews)

Michael Moore's "Sicko" movie poster.

system?"

Grab your stethoscopes and latex gloves and let's go!

Throughout the film Moore takes us on a tour through other countries - Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and takes an in-depth look at their "socialistic" way of providing healthcare.

Moore convincingly tackles the frenetic world of healthcare, Health Maintenance Organizations and the U.S. medical system with some face-to-face horror stories of people like you, me, our parents, our grandparents or even our children. With the one-two combinations of those up-close-and-personal accounts of denied claims and facts like "The U.S. places 37th, right above Slovenia, when it comes to healthcare," Moore hits this one out of the ball park despite the strikeout with "Fahrenheit 9/11."

It's really quite sad that these people could be from your own family - some successful people with full-time jobs, working all their lives and who have insurance and then, ...a stupid heart attack or cancer creeps into their lives, or a mother who rushes over in an ambulance with her baby girl to a hospital only to be told to go to an HMO-approved hospital.

But wait! Moore finds the one place where American universal healthcare IS pro-

vided: (Drum roll, please!) Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. That's right, the detainment naval base confining the most dangerous criminals, including several individuals in connection with the 9/11 attacks. He points out that the terrorists get better healthcare treatment than some Americans do. (Medics who work at detention facilities know what he's talking about - around-the-clock treatment for the guy who just got caught emplacing an improvised explosive device).

Hold up! Moore is wrong and all us velcro-strapping, combat boot-lacing, Army combat uniform-wearing people should know that we all have universal healthcare, courtesy of the Department of Defense.

We don't worry about co-payments, nor are we forced to battle it out with insurance companies about getting treatment or having a surgery done. Lucky us!

But, wait a minute, what about my parents? And what if I eventually want to put the M-16 down and walk into the civilian sector? I might stay in and I might not - who knows.

Perhaps when I finally do take the uniform off, I'll have to hop on a plane with an unshaven beret to Paris (Pair-eeee!) or drive across the border into Montreal or spend Crimble (English slang for Christmas) in London having tea and crumpets with the

Random Reviews

Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma



queen - just so I won't have to worry about knowing which finger I love more: a \$12,000 ring finger or a \$60,000 middle finger. (Watch the movie and you'll know what I am talking about).

Did you know in recent poll conducted by New York Times, CBS News and MTV, 62 percent of 17-through-29-year-olds said they would support a universal, government-sponsored national healthcare insurance program? I guess the "All for one and one for all" mentality still exists.

As the credits start to roll, like a book worth reading, song worth hearing or, in this case, movie worth watching, it provokes something worth your time - emotion and thought. Whether "Sicko" agitates the Moore-hater within you, or you come out with a couple more facts about healthcare to chew on, it's definitely worth watching.

(It gets 4 out of 5 stars.)

Soldiers Compete in Weight Lift Contest

By Pfc. Ben Fox
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAQOUBA, Iraq - A Soldier stepped up to the weights on the stage and looked out at the crowd. Focusing, he bent down to grab the bar.

Shouts of encouragement erupted from the crowd.

"Through the roof!"

"Pull hard!"

"Pull it up!"

The Soldier suddenly burst upward with strength. His

face was deep red and the veins in his neck were sticking out, but he kept pulling up.

Only about half way up he was stuck, pulling with what he thought was all of his strength.

The crowd erupted again, yelling encouragements to bolster the Soldier's confidence.

Finally, the Soldier was able to pull the bar all of the way up and the judge motioned for him to go back down.

The weights came back down and the judge gave the thumbs up.

This was all a part of a dead lifting competition at

Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, June 30.

There were 22 competitors from all different weight classes and even three females.

Sgt. 1st Class Alfred Jackson, 2-1 Cavalry Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, ended up winning the competition after lifting 530 lbs.

Despite his victory, Jackson claimed that he wasn't in the competition just to win.

"Power lifting isn't about winning, it's about setting goals and accomplishing them," said Jackson.

Jackson said he has experience competing in weightlifting championships outside of the Army and likes to compete in all different kinds of events.

Sgt. Genaro Gutierrez, Co. A attached to Co. C, 1-12 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, joined the competition despite having never dead lifted before.

"I did better than I thought I was going to," said Gutierrez. "The only way to get better is to practice."

Gutierrez also said he was impressed with the females competing because it showed that the sport is not just for men.

"That was my third total time dead lifting," said Spc. Edward McMunn, Headquarters, Headquarters Troop, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. "I'm happy with my results."

"I could have done better, but I was second guessing myself and didn't do it properly," said McMunn. "The next time we do something like this I just have to give it my all."

The event helped Soldiers break up their everyday routine.

"I like to see Soldiers come out and break up the monotony," said Jackson.

"It makes you want to compete like you are some kind of professional," said Gutierrez. "It relieves a lot of stress from being where we're at."

"It's a good stress reliever, especially when you are deployed from your loved ones," said McMunn. "It's a lot of fun and it builds character I guess."

McMunn said that seeing others lifting more than he did made him want to improve on the event.

"It's making me want to push even harder to lift even heavier," he said.



(Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Victoria Parker, 571st Military Police Company, lifts weights during a dead lift competition at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, near Baqouba, Iraq, June 30. The competition allowed Soldiers to enjoy friendly competition and take time away from their daily routines.

Golf: It's Not Just for Old Geezers in Knickers

Stewardesses is the longest word typed with only the left hand. On average, 12 newborns will be given to the wrong parents every day, and fat people are more buoyant in salty water.

None of these things have anything to do with my column, but now that I have your attention, read my story, then go check your trailers for babies.

Golf is my new favorite sport. After years of playing baseball, basketball, football and any other sport they make equipment for, I have finally realized it's time to hit the links. Not just for my body's sake, but because golf is the greatest sport every invented.

I've played golf off and on throughout the years. It's the most fun I've ever had while drinking and swinging a stick.

One thing about golf, though, is that it's only as fun as the people you play with. Here are some examples.

Dad: First let me say I love my dad dearly. He has taught me everything I know about life and sports.

I do have a blast teeing it up with

him, but he drives me insane when we play. As soon as I get ready to hit, I hear in the background, "Keep your head down, Ben." "Don't try to kill it." "Make sure you have the right club." "You were adopted." (OK, I made the last one up, but you get the point.) It kills my concentration and I end up slicing into someone's bay window on their house.

He makes up for it, though, by giving me an extra mulligan, but you can see my point.

Nathan Newton: Nate is the luckiest person on this earth when it comes to golf. Let's just say the trees are good to him. He is the guy that no matter how many times he hits it in the woods; the ball always ends up in a perfect lie with a clear shot to the green. He is the guy that always keeps an extra balata in his pocket.

Nate once hit a ball clearly a hundred feet into the woods, then went to "look" for it, and found it nestled gently in the light rough about thirty feet from the green. He then gets up and down in three

and says, "Par, not bad." We give him his "par," but we never bet with him.

Bryce Eaton: I've never played golf with Bryce, but he is something of a legend in my hometown.

He's not yet reached the 7th grade and he is already the best golfer at Arrowhead Country Club, our golf course. And just for the record, there are some pretty good golfers who call Arrowhead home.

He has won many tournaments and travels the South with his Dad, Dusty, to find competition.

I asked my brother once if I, (not being the best golfer ever) could beat him. I didn't get an answer in as much as he just laughed hysterically. The last thing I need, is to get drug on the golf course by a kid who hasn't taken Algebra 1 yet. On second thought; I would play him, but only if he lets me play from the ladies tees.

People with way more rank than you: Before we deployed, I played in a tournament with Maj. Kevin Inglin, Sgt. Maj. Len Harris, and Sgt. Michael Garrett, all of whom are my bosses in my unit. We

Trigger Pull

Pfc. Benjamin Gable



had a lot of fun, but finished close to last place.

You know, the only time a 100 is good on a scorecard is when that's how much money you won.

Let's just say I didn't make a case for promotion that day.

I plan on hitting the courses when I get home to improve my scores, and self-esteem, for that matter.

All you golfers out there, be careful who you play with. I am thoroughly convinced it determines your score at the end of the day. If you are reading this and you are, or at one time were, a golf pro, hit me up on global, the homeowners at Arrowhead will thank you.