

The Daily Roar

VOL. 1, NO. 37

MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION – BAGHDAD

JANUARY 30, 2008

Soldiers bring medicine to local Iraqis

By Spc. Aaron L. Rosencrans

2nd Stryker BCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Multi-National Division – Baghdad and Iraqi Soldiers hosted a Combined Medical Engagement Jan. 25 at the Falahat Girls School in Taji, which is located north of Baghdad.

The medical engagement was intended to bring medical care to a community that had been overlooked in the past.

“This area is predominantly Sunni, so many of the families have been neglected when it comes to medical care,” said 1st Lt. Jon Still, and native of Union City, Penn., who serves as a medical officer and event coordinator with 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, MND-B.

In this phase of the efforts in Iraq, the MND-B Soldiers and Coalition Forces are working hard to train the Iraqi Army to take charge of many of the responsibilities that currently fall on Coalition Forces.

In general, the whole country badly needs regular medical care, and the U.S. is unable to meet all of the needs of the people, said Still.

So, he and other medical teams are training the Iraqi Army to take over the responsibility of caring for the medical needs of their fellow Iraqis.

“We are preparing the Iraqi Army medics to take over this job,” said Still. “They’re learning how to assess what the community needs and provide the appropriate care.”

Coordinating and working with the Iraqi Army has been a little bit of a challenge for some Soldiers, but the medics seemed to work through the issues easily.

“Working with the Iraqi Army can be difficult because of

the large language barrier, but we all focused on taking care of the people,” said Spc. Nicholas Bergmooser, a native of Rocklin, Calif., who serves as a combat medic with Troop C, 2-14 14 Cav. Regt. “Sometimes, the Iraqi medics don’t know everything, but that is why we’re here.”



By Spc. Aaron L. Rosencrans 2nd Stryker BCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

Two Iraqi girls make faces in a door window to pass the time while waiting in line during a Combined Medical Engagement operation at the Falahat Girls School in Taji.

“For me, working with the Iraqi Army has been easy,” Still said. “The (Military Transition Team) has helped out a lot getting them on board with this operation.”

During the medical engagement, U.S. Army medics took a back seat and let the Iraqis take charge.

“We are putting IA medics out front to let them practice,” said Still. “Our goal is to only play more of a supporting role.”

For many of the Soldiers, the medical engagement wasn’t their first time helping

Iraqis in the area. Some have seen some of the horrifying effects of war and violent conflicts.

“The hardest thing I saw was a kid who had half of his back burned,” Bergmooser said. “It was infected and not healing right. We helped dress his wounds and gave him antibiotics. He came back later and his back finally started to heal properly. It’s nice to see some good come out of our efforts.”

At the end of the event, there were still a lot of people waiting in line to be seen.

“We can’t stay here too long because you never know what the enemy is doing while you’re working here, trying to help the people,” said Still. “Not being able to provide medical care to everyone is hard at first, but just being able to give them something is awesome. Some people only come for the free soccer ball and blanket; but for some, we actually have the opportunity to make a difference in their life.”



Hospitality by Pfc. April Campbell, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div
 FAHAMA, Iraq – Easton, Pa., native 1st Lt. Nick Piergallini, platoon leader, 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st CAB, 68th Armor Regt., 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., drinks coffee given to him by Sheik Emad Abdul-Settar Muhammad, the sheik leader for the region of Fahama, on the patio at the sheik’s home in the village of Fahama, Iraq, Jan. 27. Piergallini and other Soldiers with his unit stopped to escort Emad to obtain propane for the people in the area.



Player of the Day
 BAGHDAD – The Player of the Day Award is presented to Sgt. William Land for his performance in the Multi-National Division-Baghdad Fires and Effects Cell. Land developed a more efficient way for Command Post of the Future to load images more quickly, drastically reducing load time from two to three hours to a matter of minutes. His initiative and dedication to duty has saved valuable processing and planning time and that makes him today’s 4th Inf. Div. Player of the Day.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

Wednesday
 Chance of rain
 HI: 60F/16C
 LO: 46F/8C



Thursday
 Partly cloudy
 HI: 48F/9C
 LO: 37F/3C



Friday
 Clearing
 HI: 50F/10C
 LO: 35F/2C



The Daily Roar

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'Courage had nothing to do with it'

By Staff Sgt. Mike Pryor

2nd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – Usually, Soldiers possess better moods on payday. One non-commissioned officer uses payday to help motivate Soldiers.

Sgt. Tyson Regier enjoyed giving his Soldiers' spirits a lift by reminding them to check their bank accounts.

One payday turned to be a very bad day; almost costing Rieger and his team their lives.

Regier, 22, a scout with Troop B, 2nd Battalion, 325th ABN Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 82nd ABN Div., was conducting a joint patrol with the Iraqi National Police in Baghdad's Sadr City area on the ides of June in 2007.

Regier was acting as the truck commander of the last humvee in the convoy. The rest of his crew consisted of Spc. Ryan Aberle in the turret, Pfc. Sergio Chavez driving, and Pfc. Michael Beaumont in the rear passenger seat. As they began cruising the Baghdad streets, Regier didn't detect anything out of the ordinary.

In an instant, that all changed.

One minute he was watching people walk by on the sidewalk, and the next minute his truck was ripped apart by an explosion.

Regier's humvee had been hit by an improvised explosive device. The blast had crumpled the vehicle, flattening the back end and setting it on fire.

Flames began spreading inside the vehicle, setting off the truck's supply of extra .50 cal machine gun ammunition. To the crew, it seemed as if they were under heavy fire. Regier knew he had to get out of the vehicle, but his door wouldn't budge. There was a small opening a few inches wide where the blast had bowed the door away from the frame. It was so tight Regier had to remove his body armor in order to wriggle out. With an effort, he squeezed his way out through the hole and dropped to the ground.

On the street, he looked around and saw that Chavez and Aberle had also made it out of the burning wreckage. An old man was waving the soldiers into the courtyard of his house for shelter. It was at that moment, with the safety of the courtyard beckoning, that Regier realized Beaumont was still inside the burning humvee.

In an instant, he made up his mind to go back and get his trapped comrade.

"Courage had nothing to do with it. I was scared out of my mind. But there are things more important than fear," Regier said.

Regier and Aberle moved out onto the street. Both had dropped their body armor in order to escape the truck, and they were now completely exposed to the exploding .50 cal rounds and any small arms fire they might take.

When they got to the vehicle, they saw that it was

engulfed in flames and smoke. Regier feared Beaumont might already be dead. But then he saw a hand emerge from the dark cloud of smoke inside and slap against the window. Beaumont was still alive, and struggling to get out. Regier tried to open the door for him, but it was fused shut. He and Aberle pulled on the handle until it melted through their gloves and started to burn away the skin on their hands. Still it wouldn't move.

Regier raced to the door with the opening at the top that he had been able to crawl out of. He pulled himself up on top of the truck and squirmed back inside through the hole, with only his legs sticking out. In the chaos of fire and smoke inside the truck, he saw Beaumont moving around, still in his bulky Interceptor Body Armor. With the IBA on, Beaumont couldn't fit through the exit. Regier screamed for him to take the armor off, but Beaumont didn't understand.

Regier crawled in even further. He grabbed hold of Beaumont and tore his armor off. Then, with Aberle outside holding onto his legs, he began pulling and tugging until both of them were free. As soon as Beaumont was out, the three of them staggered away from the burning humvee and took cover.

It was the first chance Rieger had since the initial blast to gather his thoughts. He looked around. All his crew members had burns and shrapnel wounds, their faces were black with smoke, and their eardrums were blown out from the explosion.

But everyone was alive.

Months later, Regier found he had been nominated for the Soldier's Medal for his actions that day. The medal is awarded to Soldiers who display distinguished heroism, but Regier said he's no hero. He's not even sure if he did the right thing that day.

"For a long time I kept second-guessing myself, thinking, 'What if this happened? What if that happened? Could I have done anything better?' But you know, everybody's alive and in one piece, and that's all that matters," he said.



courtesy photo

Marquette, Neb. native Sgt. Tyson Regier, a scout with Troop B, 2nd Battalion, 325th ABN Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 82nd ABN Div. stands against a bullet-riddled wall near his former base in the Sadr City area of Baghdad.