

AnacondaTimes

MARCH 26, 2008

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA



Photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

Learning CPR

Soldiers learn CPR to save lives

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Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Always ready

546th "Gator medics" provide medical assistance

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Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen

Fight for life

Iraqi child fighting from burn injuries

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Photo by Sgt. Gary L. Hawkins

Vice President Dick Cheney is greeted by more than 4,000 servicemembers as he walks onto the stage at Holt Stadium during a surprise visit here March 18.

VP Cheney makes surprise visit to troops at LSAA

Story by Staff Sgt. Tim Sander

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – The chants of more than 4,000 servicemembers was almost deafening March 18. "USA! USA! USA!" bounced around the stadium filled with Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coastguardsmen. They didn't know exactly why they were all gathered in Holt Stadium here, but they did know a very important person wanted to visit them.

Brig. Gen. Gregory Couch, Commanding General of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) approached the podium and began addressing the flag waving crowd, some of whom were perched on top of the humvees and Striker fighting vehicles parked in the area.

"I'm honored to introduce a man known for his patriotism and selfless service to America, and proven record of public service," he said. "He is a product of the heartland; hailing from the great state of Nebraska."

"Ladies and gentleman, would you please help me welcome the vice president of the United States of America!" said Couch.

The stadium erupted in cheers as Vice President Dick Cheney appeared from the back of the stage and walked to the podium.

"Thanks for getting up early to let us say hello," Cheney told the troops. "Some of you know we were in Baghdad yesterday and spent last night here on base."

See **VP Visit**, Pages 8-9

Army Strong Women in OIF

Minn. farm girl takes it to the air

Story by Staff Sgt. Tim Sander

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – When Andrea Ourada was a young girl, growing up on a dairy farm in Lucan, Minn., she had big dreams of becoming a famous actress, singer, dancer and police officer. Even at a young age, one job would never be enough to satisfy her strong will to do great things.

It wasn't until she reached the age of five, when a neighboring farmer needed to land his airplane in her family's field, and later gave her a ride, that Andrea began to see other things in her future. She was going to fly! "I fell in love with it," she said.

After high school, where she participated in a wide array of extra-curricular activities, Andrea enlisted in the Army National Guard at the age of 17, as the first and only female in an engineer company. From there, she continued her education at Minnesota State University in Mankato, and received degrees in law enforcement and aviation, professional flight. Andrea had learned to fly.

During her junior year at Minnesota State, Andrea enrolled in the Army's Officer Candidate School to become 2nd Lt. Andrea Ourada, an Air Defense Artillery Officer. However, ADA, was not what Ourada had in mind when she decided to become an officer. Nine months later, she went to flight school to become a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter pilot. Now Ourada could combine two of her passions – flying and serving her country.

"It was a challenge and it was something different," said Ourada of her choice to fly helicopters. "Growing up in a small town, not many people do something like that."



Capt. Andrea Ourada

Throughout her life, Ourada has had many reasons to always strive to be the best she could be. Her mother is her greatest inspiration because of the encouragement she has always provided, said Ourada.

"I think that 'who you are' makes you more of a role model than what you do," said Ourada. "She has always told me to go out and do what I want to do, but never forget about my friends and family and those who will support me in making that dream happen."

While making those dreams come true, Ourada has always held one thing that kept her striving to be the best. "I've never thought of myself as being a female in any environment; I am myself," she said. "I've never thought of myself as different in any way."

With eight months of her tour in Iraq finished, Ourada's excitement of being reunited with her family – and her faithful dog, Copper, grows stronger every day.

Until that time, Capt. Andrea Ourada has devoted herself to doing the best job she can do.

"I would not want to look back and feel that I didn't do my best," she said.

Provost Marshal Office: Weekly police blotter

Week of March 10-16

The Provost Marshal Office conducted: (201) security checks, (15) traffic stops, issued (18) DD Form 1408 Armed Forces Traffic Tickets, registered (327) vehicles on the installation, (two) minor traffic accidents and (24) common access cards were reported lost, and (10) individuals were barred from LSA.

The Provost Marshal Office is currently investigating: (five) larceny cases, (two) Assaults, and (three) GO1 violations.

If you have any information about any of these crimes, please contact the crime stoppers line at 433-8602 or notify the Military Police Investigations at 443-6190

PMO Recommendations: All personnel should continue to take reasonable precautions to protect themselves; lock doors at all times,

don't open the door for strangers, ensure exterior quarters lighting is illuminated during hours of darkness, etc... Emergency Responder vehicles (i.e., MP, Fire Dept. and Medical are equipped with lights and sirens) yield to all emergency responders when lights and/or sirens are used (pull vehicle to shoulder of road).

If you are stopped for a traffic violation, stay in your vehicle for your safety and the safety of the on-scene officer(s).

Lost & Found: Units are advised that the Lost and Found have various military items recovered. To find out if your lost item has been turned into PMO, contact PMO/Investigations at 443-6105.

By: Staff Sgt. Mirta Jones



Courtesy Photo

Chief Master Sgt. Kristine Mullaney, from the Mayor Cell, gets "attacked" by military working dog CVEN for not adhering to instructions.

ANACONDA TIMES

316th ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch

Anaconda Times is authorized for publication by the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) for the LSA Anaconda community. The contents of the Anaconda Times are unofficial and are not to be considered the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, including the Department of Defense or Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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

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

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20th Engineer Brigade
213th Area Support Group
402nd Army Field Support Brigade
507th Corps Support Group
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Mission Statement: Produce a weekly newspaper that provides the command leadership team a means of disseminating command information to servicemembers on Logistical Support Area Anaconda and subordinate 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) units throughout Iraq. Contents of the paper will target enlisted servicemembers, officers, and civilian staff as well as primarily highlight the mission and experiences of 316th ESC units and personnel, with a secondary objective of detailing the activities of the LSA Anaconda community.

Soldiers learn CPR to save lives

Story by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – In a recent class held at the Jameson Combat Medic Training Center, Soldiers were taught the basics of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the Heimlich maneuver and how to operate an automated external defibrillator as part of an advanced combat lifesaver course.

“CPR is important because it teaches basic lifesaving skills for common situations for both a military and civilian environment,” said Sgt. Jeffrey Creed, an instructor candidate for the course and combat medic with the 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment. “CPR is required for healthcare professionals and when living in a (Forward Operating Base) environment, it is a very good class for Soldiers to have.”

The class was held at the medic training center and was open to anyone who wanted to participate.

“The CPR class offered here is to teach or re-teach basic lifesaving skills for healthcare professionals,” said Creed. “It is a required certification for healthcare professionals, medics, nurses and above, emergency medical technicians and helps to sustain the force training-wise while teaching new Soldiers basic lifesaving skills.”

The students who took the course ranged from military police to a radar operator and all had different reasons for attending.

Spc. Eva Finnell, an equipment operator with the 234th Engineer Company, took the course for her civilian EMT recertification while Sgt. Johnny Collier, a field ordering officer assistant with the 1203rd Engineer Battalion, took the CPR course for his own personal development, he says.

Though the military does not teach CPR in its basic combat lifesaver course, it is important to have in a garrison-like setting.

“For everyone, CPR is a knowledge base. For instance, in the chow hall, if someone is choking on food, (the problem) doesn’t always have to be battle related,” said Staff Sgt. Ramon De La Torre, an instructor candidate with the Headquarters Support Company of the Special Troops Battalion with the 4th Infantry Division in Multinational Division-Baghdad.

Soldiers who took the class were given lessons on the signs, symptoms and treatment of choking and other problems that would require CPR. The class also taught Soldiers how to give rescue breathing, use an AED, as well as give proper chest compressions on an adult, child or infant.

The CPR course expands on the combat lifesaver course, which is taught for combat situations, so a Soldier can be a first responder in or out of the



Photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

Spc. Joshua Durbin, a radar operator with the Headquarters 26 detachment of the 1st Battalion, 14th Field Artillery Regiment, takes a CPR course for self-improvement at the Jameson Combat Medic Training Center, here March 8.

field environment, said Creed.

A servicemember who knows CPR, and is properly certified, can potentially save the life of someone who is having a heart attack, near drowning, fallen or who has sustained electric shock. They can also revive and sustain someone until further medical help arrives, Creed said.

Typically, to be CPR certified in a work environment, you must be 18 years of age or older, said Creed; however, the American Heart Association now has a program online for families as well.

The training center here offers different medic or combat lifesaver related courses throughout the year. To get a list of upcoming courses, go by the Jameson Combat Medic Training Center, located in building 4132.

“Our goal is to teach the students the basics of life support and certify that each one is able to correctly perform CPR,” De La Torre said.

Worship services

PROTESTANT – TRADITIONAL

Sunday 7:30 a.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel
 9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel
 10:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
 11 a.m. Castle Heights (4155)
 5:30 p.m. Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
 7:30 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

PROTESTANT – GOSPEL

Sunday 11 a.m. MWR East Building
 Noon Freedom Chapel (West Side)
 2 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel
 3:30 p.m. Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
 7 p.m. Provider Chapel

PROTESTANT – CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

Sunday 9 a.m. MWR East Building
 10:30 a.m. TOWN HALL(H-6)
 8 p.m. Eden Chapel
 2 p.m. Castle Heights (4155)
 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
 9:30 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
 Wednesday 8 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

PROTESTANT – LITURGICAL

Sunday 9 a.m. EPISCOPAL Freedom Chapel
 11 a.m. LUTHERAN (Chapel Annex)
 3:30 p.m. EPISCOPAL (Tuskegee H-6)

PROTESTANT --MESSIANIC

Friday 8:30 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)

PROTESTANT—SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Saturday 9 a.m. Provider

PROTESTANT—CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday 3:30 p.m. Castle Heights (4155)

ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS

(Sacrament of Reconciliation 30 min prior to Mass)

Saturday 5 p.m. Gilbert Memorial (H-6)
 8 p.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
 11 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

Sunday 8:30 a.m. Gilbert Memorial (H-6)

11 a.m. Provider Chapel

Mon-Fri 11:45 a.m. Provider Chapel

Mon,Wed,Fri 5p.m. Gilbert Memorial

LATTER DAY SAINTS-(LDS)-(MORMON)

Sunday 1 p.m. Provider Chapel
 3:30p.m. Freedom Chapel (West Side)
 7 p.m. Gilbert Memorial (H-6)

JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday 7 p.m. Gilbert Memorial (H-6)

ISLAMIC SERVICE

Friday Noon Provider Chapel (West Side)

PAGAN/ WICCAN FELLOWSHIP

Thursday, Saturday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel

BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

Tuesday 7 p.m. Eden Chapel

Please note, schedule is subject to change.

Do you have a story idea?

Contact the Anaconda Times

anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil

Balad servicemembers rescue U.S. teachers in Iraq

Story by Air Force Staff Sgt. Ruth Curfman

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- Airmen from the 64th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron here were called out to rescue two American citizens lost on a hiking trip March 2.

"We initially started hearing information about a possibility of American citizens getting lost during a hiking trip at around 4 a.m.," said Navy Lt. Evan Scaggs, 64 ERQS pilot and flight lead for the rescue. "The Joint Personnel Recovery Center started to gather information about who the people were, where they were and checking to see if there were any other problems, while we were on stand-by for the call."

The recovery center passed on the information, while the flight crew and pararescue crews started preparing for a possible rescue mission.

"We started by working flight path times, number of people needed, finding out what kind of terrain they were in and making sure we were staying away from hostile areas," said Capt. Jared Ostroski, 64 ERQS pilot. "These are some of the steps we take in order to make sure that we know what we are going into before we attempt a rescue."

As the crews waited, F-16 pilots were relaying information regarding the coordinates to where the hikers, who are American teachers, were last seen. There was also coordination taking place on the ground with the hikers' friends who reported them missing.

Once all of the information was verified, approximately two hours later, the crew got approval to go out and retrieve the hikers.

"We loaded up with our flight crew of four people, plus we also had two pararescue Airmen with us," Lieutenant Scaggs said. "Typically, anytime we go on a mission like this one, pararescue makes sure that they load up their medical bags, climbing kits and anything they may need for rough terrain rescues."

"Basically, we bring the rescuers to the site and we are there to make sure they get in and get out as smoothly as possible," said Senior Airman Mike Arview, 64 ERQS flight engineer. "We were called in because the ground search was unsuccessful due to the terrain, but we were ready to go."

After traveling to the location the crew joined in the search with other aircraft to locate the hikers.

"We searched for the hikers for about 30 minutes, talked to the group on the ground, started running low on fuel and had to go refuel, then came back and were

able to locate them," Scaggs said. "It took us a while because they were in an area where one side of this mountain was at an 80 degree angle and the other side was a 90 degree angle, so it was hard to see them unless you came in at just the right direction."

Because of the area the survivors were in, the helicopter crew had to be extremely careful while they were hovering to make sure they were safe as well.

"Once we dropped the PJs off, we realized that if we came in another way, we would be able to hoist them up from where they were rather than having the rescue team pull them up the side of the mountain," said Senior Airman Evan Miller, 64 ERQS flight engineer. "We basically backed into the ravine and hovered for a while, I then had to swing the hoist into the pararescumen and we were able to hoist one survivor and one PJ up to the helicopter. After that, we hoisted the other survivor and the last PJ, with all of his equipment, into the aircraft."

After everyone was safely in the aircraft, the rescue team checked the survivors for any health issues they may have suffered by being out in the area overnight.

"Other than them being tired, dehydrated and cold, they were fine," Scaggs said. "However, one more night out there at about 4,700 feet and they may have suffered from hypothermia or frost bite."

Although this may have seemed like quite an ordeal for the hikers and their friends, this is what the rescue teams train for and are glad to do.

"This was the most challenging hoist I have ever done," Miller said. "This is what I trained for and this was my first rescue, but it was a great feeling knowing that we were able to get in there, get this done and save two people."

Also, this was a historic event in certain ways.

"This was the first time the PJs were able to use their high-angle equipment and I was told that this was the highest elevation rescue mission that has happened in Iraq," Scaggs said.

Although they enjoy their job, there are many steps people should remember when they are going out hiking, camping or participating in any other outdoor activities.

"It was really hard to find these people because they were wearing dark-colored clothing," Scaggs said. "People need to remember that if they are going to be outside, they need to make sure they have something that is made of a bright color so that it is easier to see them."

All members of the flight crew are deployed from



Photo by Air Force Airman 1st Class April Mullens

Servicemembers from the 64th Expeditionary Rescue Squadron fast rope from an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter and secure a 360-degree area here, March 6.

the 66th Rescue Squadron, Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., and the pararescuemen are deployed from the 38th Rescue Squadron, Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

"They did an outstanding job," said Lt. Col. Chad Franks, 64 ERQS commander. "They executed this rescue just like they train. It may seem an extraordinary effort, but that is what these people train for every day."

"I hope people realize, it doesn't matter what service or country you are in, the Combat Search and Rescue team will come and get you," Franks said.

The Army Moves Even Closer To a Paperless Work Environment

Story by Maj. Jim Eldredge

U. S. Army Human Resources Command

Beginning April 1, 2008, the US Army's Human Resources Command will require all Officer Evaluation Reports and Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Reports be electronically submitted to the Department of the Army using My Forms on Army Knowledge Online. The new requirement was announced in MILPER Message 08-51, which notes that rating officials must sign evaluations with digital signatures using the common Access card and use the latest form versions.

"The Army made this decision in order to prepare units to submit evaluations in a fully electronic environment. We're laying the groundwork for a smooth transition to Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System in October 2008," said Lt. Col. Chelsea Ortiz, from the Evaluations Systems Office at the U.S. Army Human Resources Command.

Mr. Dario Velasquez, who runs the Reports Processing Branch for regular Army and Reserve OERs and NCOERs, looks forward to the change. "Electronic submission is reliable, quick, and provides virtually error-free documents for final review and processing at the HQDA level. Because we're getting a better product from the units, our examiners are able to push

the evaluation to the Soldier's Official Military Personnel Records File more quickly," said Velasquez.

Additional benefits of completing evaluations within the My Forms Portal include:

- Digital signatures eliminate the need to print hard copy forms

- Forms have embedded wizards which help rating officials navigate through the process, providing guidance and policy

- Administrative information on both rated officer and rating officials can be automatically filled from the Integrated Total Army data base.

- With just one key stroke, rating officials have ability to create an evaluation report from the counseling/support forms. All required information transfers from the counseling to the evaluation form, reducing the need to cut and paste or retype data.

- Rating officials route forms behind My Forms and use tracking to monitor the history of the form throughout the process. Users may also email forms outside the portal but they lose the benefits of My Forms' tracking.

- Reduced need to expend resources on special mailing costs

- Eliminates printed copies and paper without compromising the personal nature of evaluations.

Exceptions to this requirement include evaluations

from deployed units, Army National Guard NCOERs, which are mailed to state and territory points of contact, and classified OERs and NCOERs. These reports may be submitted in paper format. Deployed units continue to retain all available options for military evaluation submission, to include electronic submissions in My Forms, mailing hard copy reports, and OERs by email (once established as an authorized sender). All other units must submit OERs and NCOERs electronically or request an exemption to use paper format per guidance provided in the MILPER message.

"Go to our website, read the training slides, and go to My Forms. For units that have never tried submitting evaluations electronically, the best way is to just get out there and do it," said Sgt. Maj. Arlita Crawford, Chief, NCOER Policy.

Training on the total My Forms process and specific aspects of electronic submission of evaluations is available under the "What's New?" heading at evaluations, selections, & promotions webpage (<https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/MSD/msdweb.htm>).

Questions on this directive should refer to the MILPER message first, and if that does not address their questions, officials at HRC can be contacted at tapcmse@conus.army.mil.

546th's Emergency Response Team stays ready

Story by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – You can find them at the next 5K run, at most special athletic and social events – but you shouldn't find them when we're under mortar attack because you should be under cover.

The 546th Emergency Response Team out of Fort Hood, Texas, known as the "Gator Medics," respond and provide medical assistance along LSA Anaconda's East Side. Spc. Terry Morse, an emergency medical technician, says the platoon stands ready to treat everything – from bumps on the head to gunshot wounds.

"I feel comfortable with every one of these guys," Morse said. "Every time we get a call we learn how to work with another rescuer."

The 12-person staff works in groups of four to six members. There is a two-person active team that works a 24-hour shift; they are augmented by a standby team that replaces the active team on the watch desk if an emergency call comes in. Depending on the volume of calls or if a team is scheduled to work an event, a third team will be placed on 24-hour alert as well.

If an urgent call comes from the East or North entry control point, the unit is called to action. Coordinating with the Fire Rescue squad, they rush to the scene, assess the situation, and perform life-saving measures. The medics must also wait for PMO to scan the casualties for explosive devices before moving them to a troop medical clinic or to the Air Force hospital. Morse says that the normal time of movement from their station to securing casualties on site is about five to seven minutes.

Staff Sgt. Maurice Hampton, the unit's on-site manager, explained that teams have certain practices that must be held when called.

"We don't (normally) go outside the gate," Hampton said. "If someone's hurt nearby, we'll stage at the

gate to receive the handoff from whomever is delivering the casualties."

He did mention that in rare cases, the team will travel as far as one mile past the gate to pickup or transfer casualties to Iraqi personnel.

Hampton said the casualty's medical status determines where they go. If the injuries are life-threatening, medics will rush them to Anaconda's hospital. Coalition workers with non-threatening wounds will be taken to a clinic and local nationals with minor injuries receive treatment until Iraqi medics arrive.

If there is a mass casualty alert, the station will join forces with the Air Force's response team. Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Reece says working with the 546th has been a seamless transition.

"They are extremely professional and knowledgeable," said Reece, a member of the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squad, whose group arrived here in January.

"It's almost like there was no transition. When we met on a call, it was like 'You're the fire department? Okay. We'll learn names later.'"

Spc. Sophia Howard is fairly new to the platoon and excited to be a part of the team.

"It's a chance for me to do my job," Howard says. "I've been training all this time to do this . . . I love to get my calls."

Howard makes a point to say she respects her responsibility. "You have to take all calls serious," she said. "You have to know your job . . . be prepared to give (people) the best care possible."

When asked if she ever got scared, Sgt. Hampton jokingly reminded Howard about a child she treated who suddenly went unconscious. Howard immediately responded that she wasn't scared. She was only suffering from a lack of focus.

"I probably froze up for a minute trying to figure out what I was supposed to do first," Howard admitted.

"I never get scared," Howard continued. "You just



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Staff Sgt. Maurice Hampton and Spc. Sophia Howard of the 546th Area Support Medical Company conduct Preventive Maintenance checks here March 11.

get (more) determined to try to keep them alive."

The group's mettle can be tested when they receive calls that leave grim results. Howard recalled a time where one of her co-workers had to hold a dead Iraqi baby until the ambulance reached the hospital for a physician to confirm the death.

"It can be tough knowing you lost someone," Howard said. "(The memory) will get you down. It's important to keep each other's attitudes up and come back from the result."

2nd Lt. Shubhra Jones, the emergency center's platoon leader, says her group has a lot on their plate. Jones says her Soldiers, who are periodically rotated out with medics from the troop medical clinic, look forward to the change of pace.

"Most of them just like being able to get away from being inside," Jones said. "They tell me it's exciting to be able to go out and help make a difference in someone's life."

"Everybody enjoys the job," Jones added. "It has its moments – some days it's super busy – but they handle the situations pretty well."

Chairman of JCS visits 4th I.D. Soldiers

Story by Sgt. Rodney Foliente

Army News Service

FORT CARSON, Colo. – Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Soldiers March 10 at Fort Carson.

Mullen visited the 2nd BCT Soldiers while they conducted training using simulated Iraqi villages and Iraqi contractors role-playing, to prepare the brigade for its upcoming rotation to the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif.

"This is training time," said Mullen to the Soldiers. "Push yourselves to get as much as you can, because you'll need all that."

The visit came as a total but pleasant surprise, said Pfc. Jason Hickman, infantryman, Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 2nd BCT.

"It was a shock. Here we are pulling security and all of a sudden two helicopters land and here comes the highest ranking man in the military," said Hickman.

"It was a great experience meeting him and him talking to my Soldiers and giving them a chance to interact with someone at that high of a level," added Capt. Larry Brown, commander, Co. A, 1-67 AR.

"We're working hard down here and just knowing that leaders at all levels are taking an interest in our training and that (Mullen) would come out to spend time with my Soldiers is a great morale booster," continued Brown.

The Soldiers explained that their mission in the village was to help stabilize the area by working with the villagers and the local leaders, building up the Iraqi Security Forces and weakening the terrorist groups.

They said utilizing actual Iraqis, working through translators and learning more about their culture, brought a greater realism to benefit the training that will help the Soldiers accomplish their mission when deployed.

"One of the nice things about training like this is it really prepares you to be able to carry out the mission and do it in a very successful way," said Mullen.

He told the Soldiers that security in Iraq is much better than it was but that there is still a ways to go.

The group of Soldiers responded by asserting their determination to get the job done.

"Thanks for what you're doing and thanks to your Families for all the support that they give," said Mullen, shaking the Soldiers' hands, patting them on the back and presenting them with his coins of excellence

Reenlistment



Photo by Spc. Thomas Keeler

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Brig. Gen. Gregory E. Couch, commanding general of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), administers the oath of reenlistment to five Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 151st Infantry Regiment of the Indiana National Guard March 13. They are, from right to left: Sgt. Gregory Bossman, Sgt. Sean Raby, Sgt. Vincent Goheen, Cpl. Ryan Darschewski, and Spc. Daniel Miller.

SHOUT OUT!!!

TELL YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS HOW MUCH YOU MISS THEM AND HOW YOU CAN'T WAIT TO GET BACK

Contact the 316th PublicAffairs Office for scheduling.
E-mail Ronald.Reeves@iraq.centcom.mil

Bush on 5 Years: Removing Saddam Right Decision

Story by C. Todd Lopez

Army News Service

WASHINGTON -- Five years ago, American forces marched into Iraq to liberate that nation. Today, President George W. Bush affirmed the decision was the right one.

"Five years into this battle, there is an understandable debate over whether the war was worth fighting, whether the fight is worth winning, and whether we can win it," Bush told a gathering of military members at the Pentagon. "The answers are clear to me: Removing Saddam Hussein from power was the right decision -- and this is a fight America can and must win."

The president also told the gathered military members that their contributions to the war efforts in Iraq have not gone unnoticed, and that he was in fact proud of their hard work and sacrifice in the country.

"The men and women who crossed into Iraq five years ago removed a tyrant, liberated a country, and rescued millions from unspeakable horrors," Bush said. "Some of those troops are with us today, and you need to know that the American people are proud of your accomplishment -- and so is the commander in chief."

The President told those gathered that once they had liberated the Iraqi people from the oppressive regime of Saddam Hussein, his soldiers retreated, took off their uniforms, and blended in with insurgents to help prevent the spread of freedom across Iraq.

"Former regime elements took off their uniforms and faded into the countryside to fight the emergence of a free Iraq," he said. "They were joined by foreign terrorists who were seeking to stop the advance of liberty in the Middle East and seeking to establish safe havens

from which to plot new attacks across the world."

In spite of the efforts of former regime members and terrorists to prevent freedom from taking root in Iraq, American forces, aided by coalition partners, have helped the Iraqi people stake a claim in democracy, and have helped them recover from life under the dictatorial rule of Hussein.

"And as they've battled the terrorists and extremists in Iraq, they have helped the Iraqi people reclaim their nation, and helped a young democracy rise from the rubble of Saddam Hussein's tyranny," Bush said.

Next month, military leaders will come to Washington, D.C., to testify before lawmakers on Capitol Hill about the status of the war in Iraq. President Bush said only after those military leaders, the commanders, have made their recommendation, will he make decisions about the number of troops that should continue in Iraq.

"Any further drawdown will be based on conditions on the ground and the recommendations of our commanders -- and they must not jeopardize the hard-fought gains our troops and civilians have made over the past year," he said.

President Bush said that pulling out of Iraq too soon could allow terrorists to regain a foothold there, to build safe havens, and to strengthen their resolve to destroy freedom in Iraq, the United States and in other free nations.

"If we were to allow our enemies to prevail in Iraq, the violence that is now declining would accelerate -- and Iraq would descend into chaos," he said. "Out of such chaos in Iraq, the terrorist movement could emerge emboldened -- with new recruits, new resources, and an even greater determination to dominate the



Photo by C. Todd Lopez

President George W. Bush speaks to a group of military members March 19 at the Pentagon, on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq.

region and harm America."

In order to prevent terrorists from again taking root in Iraq, President Bush resolved to continue the fight and to continue to do what is necessary to ensure freedom in Iraq and to ensure that America stays safe.

"Throughout the war on terror, we have fought the enemy on every single battlefield," he said. "And so long as the terrorist danger remains, the United States of America will continue to fight the enemy wherever it makes its stand."

Volunteers assemble at LSA Anaconda

Story by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq -- Close to 50 Soldiers with the National Guard and Army Reserve gathered at MWR East here March 12, looking to extend their tours in Iraq.

The group responded to an open query sent to unit commands from the National Guard Affairs office with Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

Col. Jackie L. Reaves, chief of MNC-I's National Guard Affairs, arrived with a cadre of professional counselors to explain what his group was looking for and how they could professionally benefit an individual willing to extend.

Reaves sat with troops intermittently for nearly three hours explaining how the National Guard had a limited opportunity for enlisted members with ranks from private to staff sergeant. The discussion included what positions were available, how long the duty would be, Soldier incentives, location, and how quickly an arrangement could be made by the individual and their commanding officers.

Because Guard personnel fall under the Adjutant General of their unit's home state, orders must be generated by that command. That proved difficult in the past, with a number of documents needing to be verified before a Soldier was released for extended duty.

Now all that is needed is a personnel action form for members of the Reserve and an Adjutant General release memorandum for Guard members. National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Michael Baker, the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Theater Retention NCO, said this form has been approved by all but three states.

The Guard's target audience was Soldiers who have experience working as personal security detail, convoy security and force protection. Reaves said this opportunity benefits the gaining unit by providing Soldiers with up-to-date experience in theater.

Soldiers engaged in a question-and-answer session after listening to the group's pitch. Particularly pertinent issues were promotion and leave possibilities; the transfer and accessibility of sensitive items like weapons and unit equipment; and being gainfully employed.

"I'm not guaranteeing what positions any leadership would place you in," Reaves told the Soldiers, "but what leader wouldn't want to gainfully use Soldiers who brings a strong skill set to their unit?"

The Soldiers present seemed very receptive to the offer. Spc. Daniel Wilhelmson, a vehicle mechanic with the 118th Maintenance Company, saw it as an opportunity to reunite with a loved one.

"My wife's an active-duty Soldier who is getting ready to deploy over here," said Wilhelmson, a Redding, Calif. native who has been in Iraq since August.

Wilhelmson added that he felt comfortable working here. "It's nice to get away from the same old stuff. It's Hooah!"

Pfc. Michelle Jennings, a member of the 297th Support Battalion, says she attended because her unit's mission theater time was shortened. With three kids at home to support and a growing love for her job, Jennings said she was more than



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Colonel Jackie Reaves, the National Guard Affairs chief for Multinational Corps-Iraq, addresses National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers March 12 at MWR East. Guard and Reserve Soldiers interested in extending their tour of duty were asked to meet with Reaves and his staff.

willing to stay.

"I'm already signing papers," Jennings, a native of Anchorage, Alaska, said laughing. "People think I'm crazy, but I love doing my job."

Pfc. Brian Wease, a small-arms repair specialist with the 118th, attended the meeting out of curiosity. A North Carolina native, cross-leveled into his unit, Wease was happy to hear that he could make a decision about his future.

"I didn't have control over being cross-leveled," Wease said. "We got a lot of information here. It's up to us now."

To get the word out, the staff sent a message to unit commands. That was followed up by a video teleconference with numerous sergeants major and first sergeants. "Soldiers usually don't know much about (military matters) outside of their immediate authority," Reaves said.

Baker said the ability to volunteer is always present for Soldiers.

"Soldiers can submit for extensions regardless of their skill training," Baker said, "I get new paperwork on my desk every day."

Reaves reiterated that his office is not about twisting people's arms to get continued service.

"Most people (who volunteer) are either going to or are on the cusp," said Reaves. "We just want to ensure the soldiers are able to make the informed choice."

'Little, but strong:' burned Iraqi child overcomes odds

Story by Air Force 1st Lt. Lisa Spilinek

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq – *Editor's Note: The names of the Iraqi mother and son in this article have been changed, at the mother's request, to protect their identities.*

A photo of an adorable little boy with a bowl haircut and big brown eyes was posted alongside a sign that read, "I may be little, but I am strong," but the scarred child within the hospital isolation room didn't look like the boy in the photo -- only the lively eyes were the same.

The three-year-old was the victim of a stove fire that left him with second and third degree burns covering 45 percent of his body along with inhalation burns to his lungs. Under the best health care conditions, the mortality rate for such severe injuries is 70 to 80 percent. In Iraq, it's a death sentence.

Little, but strong Al Amreeki survived.

The credit for saving Al Amreeki's life belongs to the medical staff working at the Air Force Theater Hospital located here, where the boy has been under constant medical care since Jan. 25.

Now Al Amreeki will begin a new chapter in his recovery -- in America. Again, he has beaten the odds.

The boy and his mother will soon board an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III and will travel first to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany and then on to the U.S.

Getting the boy permission to leave Iraq via a medical airlift mission to the U.S. required clearance at multiple levels by civilian and military leadership in Iraq and the U.S., to include approval from the office of the U.S. secretary of defense. The Shriners Hospitals for Children in Cincinnati will provide his ongoing treatment.

Children Without Borders, a nonprofit organization, will serve as the host agency for Al Amreeki and his mother.

"I don't know how to thank the American people. They are a great and kind people because they saved my son's life," said Al Amreeki's mother, Amil, through an interpreter. "I pray to God to not let the efforts of these people be wasted. I want him to be as healthy, and beautiful and cute as he was before."

Yet, Al Amreeki's medical outcome is still unknown.

"He's at mile two of what I would characterize as a marathon of treatment; the first two miles were marked

by a very steep hill," said Dr. (Maj.) David Norton, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group intensive care unit director at the theater Hospital, who is deployed from Keesler Medical Center at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss.

Upon arriving at the Balad hospital, Al Amreeki's injuries were so bad he was considered "expectant" by hospital

protocols, which means a patient's injuries are too severe to treat beyond administering pain medication and death is expected. Despite Al Amreeki's devastating diagnosis, the hospital staff decided to try to treat the toddler anyway, Norton said.

"We decided to give him a chance and he has done very well," the doctor said. "For whatever reason this is a little man who wants to live; he's a fighter."

Over the past weeks Al Amreeki has undergone multiple skin grafts to his face, neck, chest and arms. The hospital technicians have been diligent in sloughing off the dead tissue that was burned in the fire when his nylon clothes melted onto his skin and have aggressively treated his

"I don't know how to thank the American people. They are a great and kind people because they saved my son's life,"

Amil



Photo by Air Force Photo Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

The small arm of a 3-year-old Iraqi burn victim is held by his mother's hand March 10 at the Air Force Theater Hospital. The child has been treated at the hospital here since Jan. 25. Due to the efforts of hospital staff members, the boy will be transported to the U.S. to receive additional treatment.

four bouts of sepsis, which caused the boy to run 107 degree fevers.

"He's kind of our miracle child," said Capt. Michael Riegler, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron nurse, who is deployed from Wilford Hall Medical Center. "For as much as he fought, I felt we could try to fight for him."

For the hospital staff, fighting for the child included tracking down his family members.

On the day Al Amreeki was burned, his mother was outside their home speaking with her mother-in-law.

"Suddenly we heard him screaming. We ran inside and saw this big fire and he was in the middle of the fire. His clothes were sticking to his body," she said.

The boy was first taken to the local Iraqi hospital, but the doctors there said they could do nothing for him, his mother said. They told her and the boy's uncle, who accompanied her, to take Al Amreeki to the "American hospital." To get there, the family would need to go to an Iraqi checkpoint. The boy's uncle took him to the checkpoint without Amil.

At the checkpoint, American Soldiers saw the critically-injured boy and transported him and his uncle via helicopter to the hospital at Balad, where doctors treat battlefield injuries and illnesses of servicemembers and Iraqis alike on a daily basis.

Wounded Americans who arrive at the hospital are usually sent to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, while Iraqis who are too sick or injured to survive in an Iraqi hospital are treated at the hospital until they are well enough to be returned to the Iraqi medical system.

According to Riegler, the uncle visited the boy the first couple of days after he was admitted to the hospital, but was told the boy would likely die. Then the hospital staff no longer saw him; he had returned to his village without leaving his name or contact information.

Two weeks passed and little, but tough, Al Amreeki did not die.

Determined that the presence of a parent would help the boy recover, Riegler and an Iraqi interpreter working at the hospital began trying to track down Al Amreeki's family.

Born in Baghdad and now a resident of San Diego, Basem Hadi, an interpreter at the hospital, had experience tracking people down in the past -- having spent the previous three years as a U.S. government contractor serving with Army Special Forces Soldiers in Iraq.



Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen

A medical team from the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group cleans and applies new bandages to Al Amreeki, a 3-year-old Iraqi burn victim, in preparation for a medical evacuation flight to the United States, March 19.

See **Burn**, Page 15

VP Cheney makes surprise visit to troops at LSAA



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Sander

Vice President Dick Cheney signs a Soldier's cowboy hat during a surprise visit here March 18.

VP Visit, from Cover

"I came to Iraq for meetings with General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, the Prime Minister, and others. Before going on to another part of the country today, I asked for the chance to say a few words to the men and women serving here at Balad. I want you to know that we appreciate you and your comrades, that we never take you for granted, (and) that we're inspired by the tremendous work you've done on this deployment."

"I bring greetings from home and good wishes to all of you from the President of the United States, George W. Bush," said Cheney. "On the president's behalf I want to thank all of you for being part of an extraordinary American team here in Iraq."

"Each one of you has accepted serious duties in a challenging part of the world and the job you do here has a direct impact on the security of the United States," he said. "Our country has been engaged in the broader Middle East now for generations and the work we're doing right now provides the best chance for the security of our friends, allies, and partners and for the long-term peace of the region."

"We're helping them fight back because it's the right thing to do, and because it's important for our own long-term security," said Cheney. "As President Bush has said, the war on terror is an ideological struggle and as long as this part of the world remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export."

"Tyranny in Iraq was worth defeating. Democracy in Iraq is worth defending!" said Cheney. "All Americans can be certain we intend to complete the mission so that another generation of Americans doesn't have to come back here and do it again."

"During this deployment... you've seen incredible prog-



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class David Zerbe

Vice President Dick Cheney awards the Bronze Star for valor to two Soldiers of the 316 Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) during a surprise visit. The Soldiers receiving the awards are Staff Sgt. Shane Lindsey from Greenville, Texas, and Spc. Veronica M. Alfaro from Modesto, Calif.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Sander

A Soldier cheers as Vice President Dick Cheney walks onto the stage at Holt Stadium during a surprise visit here.

ress on the ground in Iraq, not just as witnesses, but as participants,” said Cheney. “A little over a year ago... we made a surge in operations, and the results are now clear: more effective raids to root out enemies; better and more accurate intelligence information from the locals; and higher hopes for the future from the Iraqi people.”

“And across this country, the more that Iraqis have gotten to know Americans... the better they’ve felt about the United States of America,” he said. “They know, above all, that America can be trusted. They know we’re a nation that accepts a hard job, and keeps at it even if others may tire of the effort, and we’ll continue working to help this young democracy to be an example to others, and to be an ally in the war on terror.”

“The president and I, and your fellow citizens, want nothing more than to have you and all of your comrades return home safely at the end of this tour of duty,” said Cheney. “I appreciate your attention this morning; it’s been my privilege to be with all of you. Keep up the great work and thank you for what you do for all of us.”

After the vice president’s speech, Couch asked him to award two Soldiers of the 316th ESC with the Bronze Star for valor.

Spc. Veronica M. Alfaro, a California National Guard medic assigned to Bravo Co., 297th Support Battalion, was one of the recipients.

Alfaro said she was honored to have the vice president present her award.

“It was definitely a moment to remember; definitely an honor and a privilege,” she said.

The other recipient was Staff Sgt. Shane Lindsey, an infantryman assigned to Alpha Co., 3rd Battalion, 144th Infantry Regiment of the Texas National Guard.

Before leaving, Cheney took time to walk around the stage shaking hands and signing autographs on everything from paper napkins to Soldiers’ uniform hats.

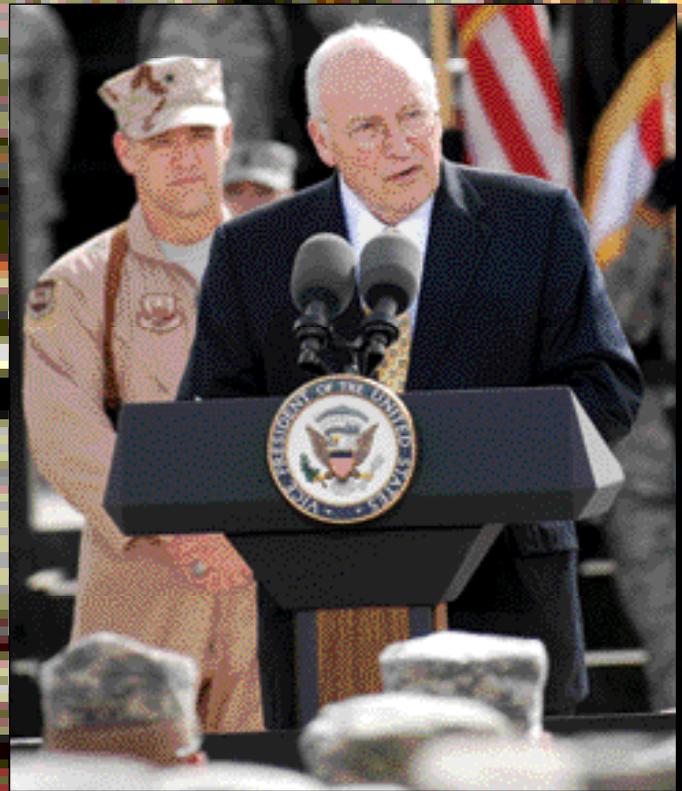


Photo by Sgt. Gary L. Hawkins

Vice President Dick Cheney addresses Servicemembers at Holt Stadium.

Background photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

Vice President Dick Cheney addresses more than 4,000 Servicemembers at Holt Stadium during a surprise visit.

494th TC Soldiers motivated to get the job done

Story by Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st SB, PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Almost twenty years ago, Germans celebrated the fall of a famous concrete wall that, for so many years, segregated and isolated many of its countrymen from one another.

Today in Iraq, concrete walls have a different purpose. Barriers have been erected around a number of structures on forward operating bases and combat outposts throughout Iraq in an effort to protect the service members who reside on them from enemy attacks.

Soldiers of the 494th Transportation Company, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, have traveled through the night on different missions to deliver barriers to other brigades and battalions throughout Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

Although the Fort Campbell, Ky., unit is not the only company in the battalion that delivers barriers, it has been a critical piece to the missions since its arrival to theater last February.

“We’ve done other missions, but since October we have done, pretty much, nothing but barrier missions,” said Sgt. Derek Frey, a motor transportation sergeant with the 494th TC, who was the assistant mission commander for some of the missions.

Due to the efforts of the 494th TC and other companies in the 1103rd CSSB, the battalion has delivered more than 10,000 barriers throughout MND-B.

“(The barriers) have proven to be very effective. There have been multiple engagements and attacks against our forces, and the wall would be in the way,” said Maj. Van Baxley, the support operations officer for the 1103rd CSSB.

“Although a section of the wall is destroyed, the munition, or whatever is used, expended all its energy against the wall and it never reaches its intended target. So it affords a great degree of protection against the enemy,” Baxley said.

Despite the fact that a mission can last anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks, the Soldiers of the 494th TC understand the importance of the barrier missions so they have no qualms about constantly being on the road. At times, they even look forward to it.

“Sometimes it’s exciting,” Frey stated. “We go to different places, different (joint service stations) and different (contingency operating bases). We never take barriers to the same place twice.”

With a barrier mission, the Soldiers are responsible for loading the barriers onto the vehicles, hauling them to the location they will be erected, downloading them and, at times, emplacing them.

“Emplacing the barriers was a new experience. There were a lot of new things we had to learn,” Frey said. “We learned how to handle barriers and how to work with the local national crane operators.”

“Sometimes we would tell the operators to go up and they would go down or we would tell them to go down and they would go left,” said Sgt. Fredrick Dyess, a motor transportation specialist with the 494th TC, with a laugh.

The Soldiers of the 494th TC are proud of the work they have done, but they are even more proud of the fact that, so far, there have been no successful attacks against them on the road and there have been no serious injuries while handling the 10,000-to 12,000-pound walls.

They accredit these accomplishments to the Soldiers who provide convoy security for them as they travel on the roads and to the safety standards the company and battalion have in place.

The 494th TC is scheduled to return home to Fort Campbell this spring, but until their 15-month tour of duty comes to an end, the Soldiers will remain focused on the mission at hand.

“I would say as long as the Soldiers have a designated mission to be on, like the barrier mission, they have a sense of purpose. They have a sense that



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

Soldiers of the 494th Transportation Company, 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, work to download a 10,000-pound concrete wall during a night time barrier mission Feb. 24.

they’re helping,” Frey said.

“Overall, I think that their actions have proven that they’re motivated to do the job and that they’re ready to do it judging by the fact that we haven’t had anybody hurt. They’ve always gotten (the job) done. I can’t say enough about the Soldiers,” Frey said.

Civil Affairs: the gift that keeps giving

Story by Spc. RJ Gilbert

7th Sus. Bde. Public Affairs

COB Adder, Iraq – The 603rd Transportation Company, 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 7th Sustainment Brigade, 10th Mountain Division traveled to Hashim Al Mirkal primary school as part of a humanitarian operation in the village of Al Farhna, Iraq, March 11.

Upon arrival, the Coalition Forces were warmly welcomed by sheiks, village elders and school administrators.

The spirit of good will only grew as Soldiers of the 603rd TC unloaded offerings of friendship in the halls of Hashim Al Mirkal primary school, before distributing them to the elated children.

The mission continued with Soldiers passing out clothes and school supplies.

“It was very fulfilling to see the children’s response to getting the clothing and the supplies,” said 2nd Lt. Crystal K. Hett, a platoon leader for the 603rd TC.

The crescendo of the event was when the soccer balls, basketballs and candy were handed out to the Iraqi students.

“Every frustration from the planning phase was erased by the huge smiles on the faces of those children, especially when we brought out the soccer balls,”

said Capt. John E. Gray, commander of the 603rd TC.

Additionally there was a field medical kit given to the staff.

As important as the donated gifts, which the Soldiers of the 603rd were able to distribute to the to the children, was the lasting impression both on the Soldiers and upon the locals.

“I loved how perfectly the kids could say thank you and how grateful they genuinely seemed,” said 1st Lt. Ann L. Ayers, executive officer of the 603rd. “I also was really excited to see how happy the Soldiers were to be helping out the Iraqi people.”

“Seeing the fruits of their hard work and dedication to help get Iraq back on its own two feet was priceless,” said Gray. “My Soldiers were able to interact with the children, teachers, and sheiks from the area; and it was obvious they were very thankful for our part in improving their quality of life and for taking interest in their village.”

Though the experience was one of joy felt reciprocally by the Iraqi children as well as the participating Soldiers, it could not have happened without the involvement of all elements in the coordination and planning of the mission.



Photo by Spc. RJ Gilbert

Sgt. Rattana Bouakhasith, senior vehicle driver for the 603rd Transportation Company passes out clothing to students at Hashim Al Mirkal primary school during a humanitarian operation in the village of Al Farhna, Iraq March 11.

MESSAGES FROM HOME

Hey,
I'd like to give a "shoutout" to my husband. His name is SSG Eric Caudill. He is with 2-327 Infantry Unit. His platoon is attached to 2/320th FAR at FOB Anaconda.
~ Hey baby, we love you and miss you so much! We're counting down the days til you come home. You're our hero!
~ Anna & the boys (Logan & Jaxon)

Amos,
Thank you and the many soldiers for giving us another day of life and freedom.
God Bless
Mom

I would just like to say that my brother, James S. Grady is a great source of inspiration for me. I would also like to say how much his commitments and sacrifices mean to my family back here in North Carolina. I hope he knows how much he is dearly loved and missed. His wife, Lori, and children, Jacob and Jordan, are also considered heroes for allowing precious time to be taken away from them for the safety and well-being of Americans. In conclusion I would like to thank my brother and every branch of the U.S. ARMED FORCES for the bravery and determination that they show everyday.

This message would be for our Dad- SSG James S. Grady of HHC TF 49/Catfish Air.
Daddy- we miss you so much. We are so proud of you and all the hard work that you are doing. We cant wait to see you come home again though. We think about you every single day! We love you and want you to know that we are so anxious to see you and have fun with you again soon!
Love, Jordan & Jacob
.....
To: SGT. Nichols Jeremiah
" I cant wait for you to come home to our little family and meeting your newborn daughter for the first time. WE LOVE YOU! and are so proud of you! Love always your wife"

SMA Preston addresses Soldiers' concerns in Iraq

Story by Pfc. Christopher M. Gaylord

Army News Service

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston paid a visit to Soldiers and leaders in Iraq recently in order to assess situations in theater as well as listen to concerns.

"I get to Iraq four or five times a year to talk with the Soldiers and really see what's happening on the ground," Preston said. "It really helps the Army leadership stay in contact with what's going on over here."

Preston visited 3rd Infantry Division, 4th Infantry Division and all their units around Camps Liberty and Victory, met with brigades in Taji and visited Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Loyalty.

"The most important thing is questions from the Soldiers," Preston said. "I get a lot of questions about education, professional development and Soldier pay. I spend a lot of time thinking 'what can I do to help them?'"

Preston clearly expressed his confidence in the forces on the ground, in current operations and in the progress that has been made thus far, primarily in Baghdad.

"The thing I'm most proud of is that by demonstrat-

ing what right looks like, we've been able to make a lot of progress with Iraqi forces," Preston said. "The Iraqi army is learning from U.S. Soldiers every day. They emulate us in everything they do."

He also noted that in contrast to previous visits, the Baghdad area has become much safer as Iraqi forces and locals are beginning to stand on their own since Saddam's regime.

"As Iraqi forces become more and more competent, they take over more responsibilities," Preston said. "The neighborhoods are safer and you have people out there, so the neighborhoods are getting cleaned up."

With more people getting out in the neighborhoods, you'll see more locals getting work again, Preston said.

"There is more and more activity downtown and there are more and more shops opening up," Preston said. "It's amazing to see the goodness happening in Baghdad."

Preston left with an immense amount of confidence in the current situation and that things will continue to get better.

"It's absolutely amazing what our leadership has accomplished," Preston said. "The direction the Corps is headed in is incredible."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Joy Pariente

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston discusses troop concerns and progress in Iraq while at Al Faw Palace, Camp Victory March 17.



Sgt. Janel Goss

America's warrior

A snapshot of servicemembers in the Global War on Terrorism

Full Name: Sgt. Janel Goss.
Unit: 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.
Job Title: Human Resources Sergeant.
Time in Service: 15 years in the Reserve and Guard, 4 years Active.
Hometown: I was raised in Brooklyn Center, Minn., but currently reside in Sanford, N.C.
Family: Husband, Staff Sgt. Jerry Goss; and three sons, Pvt. Andrew, Daniel, and Jon Goss.
Pastimes: Going to the marina with my family

and friends. You can usually find us having fun on our boat, whether it's wakeboarding, tubing or relaxing at the shore talking and enjoying cold beverages. Otherwise we're hanging out at the house chasing each other around playing tag.

Life Changing Event: My father was sitting at the kitchen table on the day I turned of age to join the service and he asked me if I was ready. I wasn't sure if he would ever let me join the military because I was a woman and I was unsure how he felt about my ability to be a leader. It was the day I had been waiting for my entire life; it was a rite of passage and one of the proudest days of my life.

Lessons Learned: You only get out of life what you put into it.

The person I admire the most: My husband; there is no one I could ever love or admire more. We have been together for over 20 years and he has always provided

for our family without hesitation. Jerry is a wonderful man, a fantastic father and role model for our children. I thank God everyday for putting him in my life.

Why I joined the Army: It is a family tradition that goes back over 6 generations. I'm the first female in my family to join.

If I wasn't in the military I would be: I probably would have had a job with a close affiliation with (the military), like the USO, the VA or another Non-Profit Organization, like the Wounded Warriors Foundation.

The one thing I would change about the Army: I would definitely increase the pay and benefits. Soldiers sacrifice so much and should be compensated for it. I'm proud of the job I have and wouldn't trade it for the world, but I would like to see good Soldiers stay Army instead of looking elsewhere for a bigger paycheck and/or longer timeframes between deployments. I feel we lose a lot of great leadership attrition due to Soldiers wanting more for their families back home.

Why do I continue to serve: I want to be a strong female role model for future generations of women. I try hard every day to lead by example. We (the Army) need more strong women to stand up and be recognized. I have a lot to give and I'm willing to always do the right thing for my Soldiers.

Motivations in life: To stand before God in good conscience and to have helped others to do the same by setting a good example. I have no regrets.

Goals: To be the best at whatever I set my mind to. To always challenge myself and be a good Soldier, wife and mother.

Best part of my job: Taking care of Soldiers and being part of something so great.

ANACONDA ACTIVITIES

INDOOR POOL

Aqua Training: Tuesday and Thursday- 7:45 p.m.

Swim Lessons

-Beginners: Tuesday - 7 p.m.

-Intermediate: Thursday- 7 p.m. *Must sign up with instructor.

-Advanced: Saturday - 7 p.m. *Must sign up with instructor.

Time Trials- 50m, 100m, 200m: Friday - 8 a.m.&p.m.

EAST FITNESS CENTER

Basketball League: Monday-Friday - 7 p.m.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 8 p.m.

Kyu Kyu Kempo: Sunday- 2 p.m.

Modern Army combatives:

Tuesday and Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

Open court volleyball: Sunday- 6 p.m.

Shotokan Karate Do: Thursday- 6:45 p.m., Saturday- 8:30 p.m. and Sunday- 5:30 p.m.

Soo Bahk Do: 6 p.m.

Step Aerobics: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 5:30 p.m.

Wrestling & physical fitness class: Tuesday- 6 p.m. and Saturday- 7 p.m.

Swing dance: Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

EAST RECREATION CENTER

8-ball tourney: Monday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

9-ball tournament: Wednesday-

day- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Game Console Tourney:

Thursday- 8 p.m.

Country Dance Class:

Thursday- 7 p.m.

Dominoes: Friday- 8 p.m.

Karaoke: Monday- 8 p.m.

Model building: Sunday- 1 p.m.

Poetry/ open mic: Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

Poker tourney: Sunday- 6 p.m.

Salsa dance class: Saturday- 8:30 p.m.

Swing dance: Tuesday- 7p.m.

Ping pong tourney: Tuesday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

WEST RECREATION CENTER

8-ball tourney: Wednesday-

1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

9-ball tournament: Monday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Dungeons & Dragons: Saturday- 8 p.m.

Friday nights in Balad: Friday- 8 p.m.

Foosball: Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Green Bean karaoke: Wednesday and Sunday- 8 p.m.

Ice Ball Tourney: Thursday- 4 p.m.

Ping pong tourney: Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Salsa dance class: Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

Spades, Chess and Dominoes: Friday - 1 p.m.

Texas hold 'em: Saturday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Game Counsel Tourney: Thursday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

WEST FITNESS CENTER

3-on-3 basketball tourney:

Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

6-on-6 volleyball tourney: Friday- 7 p.m.

Aerobics: Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m.

Body by Midgett Toning Class: Tuesday, Thursday - 7 p.m.

Dodge ball Game: Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.

Furman's Martial Arts: Monday, Wednesday, Sunday- 1 p.m.

Gaston's Self-Defense Class: Friday, Saturday- 7 p.m.

Open court basketball: Thursday- 7 p.m.

Open court soccer: Monday, Wednesday - 7 p.m.

Zingano Brazilian Jui Jitsu: Tuesday, Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

CIRCUIT GYM

Floor hockey: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 8 p.m.

SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

Movie Times

Wednesday, March 26

5 p.m. Over Her Dead Body(PG-13)

8 p.m. Untraceable (R)

Thursday, March 27

5 p.m. The Eye (PG-13)

8 p.m. Over Her Dead Body(PG-13)

Friday, March 28

1:30 - 4:30 p.m. NCO Ceremony

5 p.m. Strange Wilderness (PG-13)

8:30 p.m. Shutter (R)

Saturday, March 29

2 p.m. Juno (PG-13)

5 p.m. Shutter (R)

8 p.m. Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins (G)

Sunday, March 30

2 p.m. Shutter (R)

5 p.m. Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins (G)

8 p.m. Juno (PG-13)

Monday, March 31

5 p.m. Juno (PG-13)

8 p.m. Shutter (R)

Tuesday, April 1

5 p.m. Shutter (R)

8 p.m. Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins (G)

(Schedule is subject to change)

Movies Coming Soon

Definitely, Maybe (PG-13)

Step Up 2 (PG-13)

21 (PG-13)

Fool's Gold (PG-13)

New Movies

Shutter (R)



Infection director Masayuki Ochiai takes the helm for this remake of the 2004 horror hit from Thailand concerning a photographer and his girlfriend who are involved in a tragic auto accident, and subsequently begin to notice ghostly figures in the backgrounds of their pictures. Joshua Jackson and Rachael

Taylor star in this supernatural frightener.

Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins (G)



RJ Stevens (Martin Lawrence) is a television talk-show sensation who has transcended his modest Southern beginnings to become the most popular self-help guru ever to grace the small screen. There are few Tinseltown dreams that RJ hasn't already achieved, so when his parents announce their 50th wedding

anniversary, the family-oriented television star immediately drops everything and sets his sights on Georgia. As a boy, RJ was always the target of ridicule within his family, but these days things are different; not only does RJ have a ten-year-old son, but his bride-to-be is admired by countless viewers all across the globe on a weekly basis. But RJ's egotistical West Coast attitude simply doesn't fly in the South, and when his lovable but relentless family refuses to cut him any slack due to his current superstar status, he must finally pause and take stock of the man he has become. Louis C.K., Cedric the Entertainer, Michael Clarke Duncan, and James Earl Jones co-star in a Southern-flavored family comedy written and directed by Malcolm D. Lee.

Strange Wilderness (PG-13)



A pair of animal enthusiasts desperate to boost the ratings of their failing television series "Strange Wilderness" set out for the Andes in search of the elusive Bigfoot in this comedy directed by Fred Wolf and starring Justin Long, Steve Zahn, Kevin Heffernan, and Ernest Borgnine. Peter Gaulke (Zahn) and Fred Wolf (Allen Covert) are the energetic hosts of "Strange Wilderness" - television's most unconventional nature show.

Juno (PG-13)



When a teenage girl is faced with an unexpected pregnancy, she enlists the aid of her best friend in finding the unborn child a suitable home in this coming-of-age comedy drama from Thank You for Smoking director Jason Reitman. Juno (Ellen Page) may seem wise beyond her years, but after sleeping with classmate Bleeker (Michael Cera), the pregnant teen quickly realizes how little she really knows about life. Thankfully, Juno has been blessed with parents (J.K. Simmons and Allison Janney) who trust their daughter's judgment, and a best friend named Leah (Olivia Thirlby), who's always willing to help out in a pinch. With a little help from Leah, Juno soon comes into contact with Mark (Jason Bateman) and Vanessa (Jennifer Garner) -- an affluent suburban couple who have been unable to conceive a child of their own. Mark and Vanessa seem like they would make great parents, and are eager to adopt Juno's unborn child. Now, as adolescent Juno is faced with a series of very adult decisions, she will draw on the support of her family and friends in order to discover who she truly is, and discover that one bad choice can have a lifetime of consequences.

Helo maintenance



Photo by Air Force Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq -- Staff Sgt. Tait Delzer, 64th Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit crew chief, re-installs a tail rotor cover on an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter here, March 12. Balad crew chiefs performed an inspection on the aircraft after it had been flown 300 hours. During such inspections, all aircraft panels and covers are removed for preventative maintenance on aircraft systems and equipment. Delzer is deployed from Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

PVT. MURPHY'S LAW

S-1
(Administration)



Upcoming sports on AFN

Wednesday 3/26/08

NCAA BB: NIT quarterfinals live 2:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NHL: Philadelphia @ New York Rangers live 2:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: NIT quarterfinals live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NHL: San Jose @ Phoenix live 5:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA: San Antonio @ Orlando replay 4:00 p.m. AFN/sports
 MLB: Boston vs. Oakland live 9:00 p.m. AFN/sports

Thursday 3/27/08

NCAA BB: NIT quarterfinals live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA: Phoenix @ Boston live 2:00 a.m. AFN/sports; replay 10:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NCAA BB: NIT quarterfinals live 4:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 HS BB: McDonald's High School All-American Game live 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 NBA: Charlotte @ Los Angeles Lakers live 6:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA: New Orleans @ Cleveland replay 3:00 p.m. AFN/sports
 MLB: New York Mets @ Atlanta live 8:00 p.m. AFN/sport

Friday 3/28/08

NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 2:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 4:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA: Dallas @ Denver replay 6:00 p.m. AFN/sports
 NBA: Portland @ Golden State replay 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports

Saturday 3/29/08

NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 2:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 4:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 4:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NHL: San Jose @ Anaheim live 5:00 a.m. AFN/prime
 NCAA BB: Women's NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 7:00 p.m. AFN/
 AFL: Tampa Bay @ Philadelphia live 9:00 p.m. AFN/prime
 NCAA BB: Division 2 championship live 9:30 p.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: Women's NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 9:30 p.m. AFN/
 sports

Sunday 3/30/08

MLB: Chicago Cubs @ Seattle live 12:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 MLB: Chicago White Sox @ New York Mets live 12:00 a.m. AFN/prime
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament elite 8 live 1:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 NBA: Cleveland @ Detroit live 2:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament elite 8 live 4:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NCAA BB: Women's NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 4:00 a.m. AFN/
 sports
 NBA: Charlotte @ Portland live 5:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: Women's NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 6:30 a.m. AFN/
 sports
 NHL: Ottawa @ Boston replay 8:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 IndyCar: Homestead-Miami 300 replay 10:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 BOXING: Cory Spinks vs. Verno Phillips replay 1:00 p.m. AFN/xtra

NBA: Phoenix @ New Jersey replay 3:30 p.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA: Golden State @ Denver replay 6:00 p.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: Women's NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 7:00 p.m. AFN/
 sports
 NASCAR: Sprint Cup Series: Goody's Orange 500 live 8:30 AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament elite 8 live 9:30 p.m. AFN/sports

Monday 3/31/08

NCAA BB: NCAA Tournament elite 8 live 12:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NBA: Philadelphia @ Cleveland live 1:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: Women's NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 2:00 a.m. AFN/
 sports
 MLB: Atlanta @ Washington live 3:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NBA: Dallas @ Golden State live 4:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NCAA BB: Women's NCAA Tournament sweet 16 live 4:30 a.m. AFN/
 sports
 PGA Tour: Zurich Classic replay 10:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NBA: Houston @ San Antonio replay 5:00 p.m. AFN/xtra
 MLB: Toronto @ New York Yankees live 8:00 p.m. AFN/sports
 MLB: San Francisco @ Los Angeles live 11:00 p.m. AFN/sports

Tuesday 4/1/08

MLB: Anaheim @ Minnesota live 2:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NHL: Pittsburgh @ New York Rangers live 2:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 MLB: Houston @ San Diego live 5:00 a.m. AFN/sports
 NBA: Denver @ Phoenix live 5:00 a.m. AFN/xtra
 MLB: Milwaukee @ Chicago replay 10:00 a.m. AFN/sports

Innovation increases productivity at CRSP yard

Story by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude

1st SB, PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Two innovative noncommissioned officers and a curious Chief Warrant Officer of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, believed accurate information in the hands of decision makers, at a faster rate, could create increased productivity gains in the brigade's central receiving and shipping point yards - and it has.

"I got involved after a visit by Staff Sgt. Cresse," said Chief Warrant Officer Nadine Johnson, the support operations transportation mobility officer for the 1st SB.

"We had problems with the existing software at the Taji CRSP and he brought up the idea of building a whole new database. He wanted to tie it in with the database he was currently working on for the (transportation movement request) section," explained Johnson.

For Staff Sgt. Mark Cresse, the TMR manager for the 168th Brigade Support Battalion, the idea for a database came several months prior to meeting Johnson as he observed the archaic method currently utilized by his command.

"The system that was used to track TMRs was based on counting colors on a spreadsheet" said Cresse. "There had to be a better way."

It took Cresse months of trial and error before his third adaptation of the TMR database was installed, tested, and observed to be working.

"After version two blew up, I made version three and it ran great, so I contacted 1103rd and they agreed to let me install it there to see if it improved their operation," said Cresse.

He installed the software and improvements were indeed made. Cresse continued to make small changes to his TMR software, but wanted



Photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude

Sgt. Michael Muntifering the Victory Base Complex CRSP Yard data base noncommissioned officer in charge, 192nd Quartermaster Company (center) instructs Master Sgt. J.D. Miller, the support operations noncommissioned officer in charge for the 1103rd CSSB (right) and 1st Lt. Erik Solberg the road master officer in charge for the 1103rd CSSB, on the recently installed Transportation Movement Request Workspace software he helped develop.

to do more. His chance came after he received a request from brigade to visit Camp Taji and assist them with an issue they were having.

"When I made a trip down there I got together with Warrant Officer Johnson and I told her I could make one for the CRSP also," recalled Cresse.

With only a little knowledge of CRSP yard operations, Cresse paid a visit to Sgt. Michael Muntifering, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Victory Base Complex CRSP yard database.

"I asked him to help because he knew how to run a CRSP and how to work in Microsoft Access," said Cresse.

"I got involved after a visit by Staff Sgt. Cresse. He had problems with the existing software at the Taji CRSP and he brought up the idea of building a whole new database. He wanted to tie it in with the database he was currently working on for the TMR section," stated Muntifering.

The two of them went to work on the new database. Cresse focused on data coming in, Muntifering focused on data going out and Johnson provided oversight.

"My role was giving guidance on what the database should be able to do for us," recalled Johnson.

The project came with a series of challenges for the Soldiers.

"I had to re-learn Access. I took a basic course my freshman year of college, but we didn't go nearly as in-depth as Staff Sgt. Cresse and I did. We would continually come up with new ideas for the database, and trying to implement those ideas in terms of code and functionality was the

hardest part," said Muntifering.

"After about a month, we got a good product together that reduced errors and was compatible with the other databases. Now the brigade is working off multiple interacting systems that have improved movement through increased visibility of cargo," stated Cresse.

At its base, the software cuts much of the work out of the research. Transportation battalions and other customers can now obtain daily updates to the past thirty days of data, thus eliminating time consuming phone calls to obtain the same information.

"Also, the TMR managers within the battalions are better able to see what we're dealing with now that everyone is using standardized data. The process of CRSP and TMR scrubbing has been automated. The same goes for troublesome cargo at the CRSP. If a piece meets certain criteria, it is automatically flagged and allows for quicker research. It's pretty cool," stated Muntifering.

"The database is already having effects on how we do business," said Johnson. "It's more efficient. It gives me more up-to-date and vital information quicker and it's easier to search...I can see right away if something is incorrect; I am able to give a more accurate picture to the commander."

Never ones to rest on the past, Cresse and Muntifering are already looking at ways to expand the software to others.

"It would be great if the Army finally standardizes transportation logistics theater-wide. It would be fantastic if everyone used the same type of data and the same systems. Even if it weren't our system, it would be neat to know that I may have had a hand in spurring that change," said Muntifering.

"I love what I do now so I am going to make every effort to make it to warrant officer so I can really make some good things happen for transportation. I am a lifer so I want to do as much as I can," stated Cresse.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Bryant Maude

(left to right) Chief Warrant Officer Nadine Johnson, support operations transportation mobility officer for the 1st Sustainment Brigade listens in as Staff Sgt. Mark Cresse the transportation movement request manager for the 168th Brigade Support Battalion, trains new users from the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, on the Transportation Movement Request Workspace software he co-authored.

Women's History Month Prayer Breakfast



Photo by Spc. Charlotte Martinez

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Sgt. Maj. Deborah Carolina-Godbolt, a member of the 316th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), gives the opening remarks at the Women's History Month prayer breakfast March 12, here. Godbolt said she recognizes all military women as unique women

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Burn, from Page 7

Basem said he would ask every Iraqi person he encountered at the hospital and on the base, since 90 to 95 percent of the Iraqis that come through the hospital are from Salah ah Din. "The Iraqi family is very extended. If the father doesn't come, then the mother, if not the mother, then the uncle -- somebody."

Eventually, his queries led him to a man in the Iraqi Army in a nearby city who said he knew of a family that had a burned child, but little was known about the family except that the father had been killed about a year ago by insurgents and it was rumored that the mother had remarried.

An appointment was set up by the Iraqi Army for the uncle to meet Basem and Riegler at the gate leading to Balad Air Base.

"I grabbed Mike; I told him, 'we got it!'"

Basem said of finding the little Al Amreeki's family. "Now I started to see hope."

When the uncle arrived at the gate he told Basem and Riegler that it was true Al Amreeki's father had been killed by insurgents, but Amil was unmarried and Al Amreeki was her only child. Shortly thereafter, Amil accompanied him to the gate to meet again with the pair from the hospital.

"She asked me, 'how is my baby?'" Basem said. "I gave her hope. At the time his face was so swollen, I teared up, but she knew who he was."

Reuniting the family was only the beginning of the hurdles that Riegler and Basem would overcome in trying to help Al Amreeki, whose medical condition was, and still is, precarious.

The pair knew that even if Al Amreeki lived, his scarred face and body would make his survival in a culture critical of deformities difficult

to say the least. Additionally, once the child returned to the Iraqi health care system, he would not receive the intense physical therapy and occupational therapy he would require for years to come. This made the pair seek out additional help from nonprofit organizations in the U.S.

"It was almost impossible, but not quite," Riegler said of finding Marjorie Westerkamp, the transportation coordinator for the Shriners Hospitals for Children. "There were huge bumps in the road."

Those bumps included getting permission from the Iraqi government and Ministry of Health to allow the boy and his mother to leave Iraq under a humanitarian parole visa as well as coordinating to get them flown from the country on an Air Force medical evacuation mission, during which the aircraft serves as a flying hospital. Since air travel can bring on additional medical challenges for patients, they receive even more care in the air than on the ground during medical evacuation flights.

"It's fine if we get tired," Basem said of their constant work toward getting the child moved. "I felt we had to help this human being. I feel like it's my baby."

Al Amreeki is the fourth Iraqi patient brought to the hospital for burn treatment. There is no charge for any care or services provided within Shriners Hospitals for Children.

"We've been working for weeks to get Al Amreeki here," said Marjorie Westerkamp, who is a registered nurse and transport team coordinator at the Cincinnati hospital. "It's only with a lot of effort and collaboration can you get a boy from the other side of the world and a war zone to Cincinnati for burn treatment. Shriners Hospital is so happy to be able to provide burn care to children in need it is what we do everyday."

The entire process took more than six weeks

"I have hope. I see [Al Amreeki] as the Iraqi people - one people, one country,"

Mr. Basem



Photo by Air Force Photo Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen

Capt. Michael Riegler, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron nurse, hugs Amil, the mother of Al Amreeki after she formally thanked the staff at the Air Force Theater Hospital here for saving her son's life.

to coordinate and included a required trip to Baghdad to complete paperwork for Amil - a city larger than any she had been to before.

Now Amil and Al Amreeki will travel to Cincinnati, but Amil said that the next part of their journey to recovery would not have been possible without the work of the medical personnel at the hospital at Balad.

"I'm his mom, but the nurses, male and female here, they are more than mom or dad to him. They love him and take good care of him. They check his IV and stop by to visit. The words 'thank you' are not enough," she said.

As the boy grows, his lungs will return to "close to normal" status, Norton said, but his growth will also cause his scars to pucker and his skin to grow tighter. Over the years, Al Amreeki's scars will need to be opened periodically so the boy will be able to grow at a standard rate.

For now, Al Amreeki will receive treatment in the U.S. for a year, after that time, his situation will be re-evaluated.

For the two men who heavily invested themselves in getting Al Amreeki to the U.S., his story has become one of hope for a people and a nation striving to unite and succeed.

"You're American; I'm Iraqi and the two of us got this done," Basem told Riegler.

For the captain, a father of a five-month-old girl and a three-year-old boy, Al Amreeki's story is a huge success. His current deployment is his first after becoming a father.

Having served just over a year in the Air Force following an inter-service transfer from the U.S. Navy where he served 19 years, Riegler has spent little time treating children, until now. In his position at Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, he works in the adult ICU and as a Critical Care Air Transportation nurse.

"It's almost like winning the lottery. This child is one of the few who will have a chance," he said. "I'm hoping he's something special - a symbol for this country. We've given the family this hope. I'm beyond happy for them."

Basem also said young Al Amreeki's story was special.

"I feel that [Al Amreeki] is the Iraq situation and I need him to survive as much as Iraq. A lot of people I see don't have hope in the Iraqi future, but I have hope. I see [Al Amreeki] as the Iraqi people - one people, one country," he said. "Everybody said [Al Amreeki] would die. Now everybody knows him and everybody loves him."

Indeed, Al Amreeki may be little, but he has proven he is also strong.



Photo by Air Force Photo Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen

Al Amreeki is surrounded by Capt. Michael Riegler, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron nurse (left), Basem Hadi, an Iraqi interpreter, and his mother, Amil.

Maybe it's more than just a game

Story by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Anaconda Times staff

LSA Anaconda, Iraq – When I approached my supervisor about doing a sports column, I had some regret about my choice. To me, it usually meant some guy with a cheesy mug shot on the sports page who believes he can educate you with some home-spun wisdom about the sports world. Inevitably, that guy is either hated or dismissed.

If you want the latest score and why LeBron James will be a better NBA player than Kobe Bryant, there are a thousand voices willing to debate that point . . . and most are paid more than I am. Call me when the "And 1" street basketball team challenges the Harlem Globetrotters.

However, there are some sporting events I find that are bigger than the game; the NCAA Division I College Basketball tournament is one of them. Nicknamed "March Madness," here is an event that has the ability to evoke emotions in a way no other sporting event can.

People normally adopt sports teams because of location, childhood experience, or just the colors they wear. But every year, 65 communities of higher learning scarp on hardwood floors to be called the very best.

While most people see games, but I see stories and powerful images.

Take a team like the Georgia Bulldogs, which captured an automatic invitation, stunning experts and their own fan base by beating four high-ranking teams in three days while simultaneously escaping a tornado. This team normally plays as well as the bootleg DVD you buy from the bazaar. However, they reminded me if you get an opportunity to improve your life, you shut up and take it.

They faced a team called Xavier. Intelligent folks recognize this school as one of the oldest Catholic institutions in the nation, but I have to say, when I watch them play, I see 15 guys wearing a jersey with another man's name on it. Proudly.

I know we have Tommy Hilfiger and Sean John, but at least we know of these people. Why not Moses University? He brought us commandments! Ten of 'em! How about the Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego School of Higher Learning? I think I could benefit from guys who thumbed their nose at their boss, withstood searing flames, and walked out with a pay raise. That's a skill I want.

I also think geography. I watched Oklahoma University travel to Birmingham, Ala., to play a team from Philadelphia (St. Joseph) this weekend. I realized two groups of people are willing to travel hundreds of miles to a place that is largely unfamiliar to them, watch guys they remotely know play for 40 minutes, then go



Spc. Anthony Hooker

right back home within 24 hours. If I'm traveling that far for fun and leisure, that's a weekend trip. I don't care if I'm the only one from my school staying around, at least one team is doing well and that means somebody's throwing a party. I call it opportunity integration.

I also see Oregon in a bracket and wonder what connection could I, being raised in the South (Florida and Georgia) get from a school that wear helmets and sports gear that flaunts a giant O. If you get the cheerleaders of Oregon and Xavier together, you can play Tic Tac Toe!

Oregon's nickname is the Fighting Ducks –which you know you want to laugh at, but it would shock you to learn that Oregon's mascot is none other than the esteemed Donald Duck, who, with the blessing of a handshake agreement from Walt Disney, can terrorize any foe who dares to challenge his university. If you've ever watched Donald in a Disney short, you KNOW he can get a little CRA-A-ZY. . .

Oregon is also the alma mater of the guys who created the Nike brand, Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman. These two guys probably realize possibly no more than 10 percent of Americans know who they are, but millions of people in hundreds of countries shell out billions just to wear clothes and shoes that feature backward check marks. That Oregon business department must be the bomb!

On a serious note, Baylor University will be a part of the tournament this year. The country's largest Baptist institution, this school has withstood stigma after stigma. Not only did they have to overcome the shooting death of a player by his teammate, but then watched as the team's moral compass, the head coach, masterminded a scheme where the murdered player was to be passed off as some low-level drug dealer. Luckily, someone on the staff had enough intestinal fortitude to uncover that plot (Abar Rouse is his name and he never got enough credit for that effort.) Horrible.

Baylor also has the unfortunate circumstance of residing in the same area as the Branch Davidian compound. Seeing how that episode ended, David Koresh could've used a degree from Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego.

Seeing this school recognize that athletics are a uniter and not a divider compels me to root for them throughout the tourney. Sixty-five groups come together for a month and cheer their heads off for community pride and a chance for glory. Even better, it's not the same teams every year. And THAT is the beauty of March Madness.

Who do I think will win? Well, if you have to know, I'm looking at North Carolina and UCLA to be in the Final Four. Everything else is a crapshoot.

By the way, I see Oral Roberts is in the tournament. This is a school whose founder pretty much said, "While I'm alive, you will wear clothing with my name stitched all over and learn to love it!" Say what you will about his intent, but you have to appreciate the swagger it takes to put your name on other people's chests.

I'm out like a 16 seed playing a No. 1.

Rejected



Photo by Spc. Ryan Hohman

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Spc. Fred Bester with the A company 3rd Battalion 144th Infantry Regiment, based out of Killeen Tx, blocks the shot of a fellow servicemember while practicing before a game.

Boxing it up



Photo by Spc. Ryan Hohman

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – Pfc. Minnifree Tommitrea with the 546th Emergency Response Team based out of Fort Hood, Texas, hits a speed bag as part of her training to one day be on the Army boxing team.